

DRAFT

REPORT OF A VISIT

TO

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT COLORADO SPRINGS

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OF THE

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

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I: INTRODUCTION

This report is based upon a visit to the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) for a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation at the doctoral degree-granting level. This visit was conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools on March 10-12, 1997. The visit began Sunday evening, March 9, with a reception held by Chancellor Linda Bunnell Shade during which she provided an orientation to the University and a faculty member presented an overview of the University's recently completed institutional plan. The team met later that evening to review schedules and share impressions from reading the Self Study and other materials supplied in advance by the institution.

Monday and Tuesday, team members held meetings with campus-level administrators; deans and other heads of units; campus-level governing bodies and committees; and faculty, staff, and students. Several team members had a meeting with the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University of Colorado System and with three members of the University of Colorado Board of Regents. Monday afternoon the team attended a reception with representative community leaders at which the Chancellor made a presentation on University/Community Relations, and Tuesday afternoon the team held separate open meetings for students, faculty, unclassified staff and classified staff. Team members shared their impressions and reached their conclusions in a meeting Tuesday night. Wednesday morning, they prepared their contributions to the team report before the exit meeting.

UCCS is one of four campuses of the University of Colorado. Governed by a Board of Regents consisting of nine members elected for staggered six-years terms, the University functions

as a System and is administered by a President and his staff. System-wide organizations of faculty, staff, and students address issues of common concern. Each of the four campuses is headed by a Chancellor who has a staff, and each campus has its own faculty, staff, and student government organizations. The University of Colorado, like other higher education institutions in the state, is subject to decisions made by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The Commission allocates funds for higher education appropriated by the legislature and has, since 1985, exercised a strong supervisory role in program approval and other matters. UCCS is authorized by the CCHE to offer baccalaureate liberal arts and sciences and professional programs and graduate degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences and selected professional fields. The University has CCHE approval to offer one doctoral program in electrical engineering, and the institution is currently seeking CCHE approval for a second Ph.D. program in computer science. In the fall of 1995, UCCS offered 22 bachelor's programs and 15 master's programs and one Ph. D. Program and enrolled 4121 (1526 FTEs) undergraduates and 1785 (313 FTEs) graduate students.

UCCS has its roots in the 1920s as a set of courses offered in Colorado Springs under the aegis of the Extension Division of the University of Colorado. In 1965, the Colorado Springs Center of the University of Colorado was established as a four-year degree granting institution. From 1965-1970, UCCS was accredited through the University of Colorado at Boulder. In 1970, the Colorado Springs campus was unexpectedly visited separately by the North Central Association's Commission on Higher Education and placed on probation. Following an evaluation visit in 1972, probation was removed and the institution was accredited for a five-year period. In 1977, the campus achieved reaccreditation for a ten-year period, and that accreditation was renewed at the doctoral level, with doctoral offerings limited to one program, for another ten-year period in 1987. This evaluation team

is charged with making a recommendation to the NCA Commission on Higher Education concerning the continuing accreditation of the University at the doctoral degree-granting level.

The University's Self Study is informative and inclusive. Particularly useful are its description of how the institution responded to concerns and suggestions in the 1985 NCA report and its highlighting of significant changes in the institution since the last NCA evaluation. The Self Study is comprehensive in its coverage of areas and subjects, and many sections on departments and other units describe, in addition to their accomplishments, current needs and shortcomings.

Team members are grateful for the careful arrangements made for their visit and for the generous assistance they received during its course from administrators, staff, faculty, and students. The thorough preparation for the visit, its smooth organization, and the efficiency with which additional materials were produced during the visit enabled us to become familiar with the institution in a brief period.

Section II of this report contains the team's evaluation of the University in accord with the NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education's General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation. Section III contains the summary evaluation. Section IV contains observations and suggestions from the team in their role as consultants. Section V contains the team's recommendations.

II: EVALUATION FOR AFFILIATION

General Institutional Requirements

Every institution affiliated with the NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education must demonstrate that it meets twenty-four General Institutional Requirements which are grouped

within seven headings: 1) Mission, 2) Authorization, 3) Governance, 4) Faculty, 5) Educational Programs, 6) Finances, and 7) Public Information. The University lists the General Institutional Requirements on pages 10 - 17 of its Self Study and states briefly how it meets each requirement. Having verified the accuracy of those statements during the course of the visit, the team concluded that UCCS satisfies the General Institutional Requirements.

Criteria for Accreditation

Every institution accredited by the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education must also show that it fulfills five Criteria for Accreditation. After studying the materials presented by the institution and following our on-site meetings, the team concluded that UCCS fulfills these five Criteria. This section of the Report provides support for that conclusion while also suggesting ways in which the University might strengthen itself as an institution.

Criterion One: The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs "has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education."

The mission of UCCS, as printed on the first page of the catalogue, states simply that it is a comprehensive baccalaureate liberal arts and sciences institution with selective admission standards and that it will provide selected professional programs and graduate programs that serve the needs of the Colorado Springs metropolitan area. The statement of mission is followed in the catalogue by several paragraphs that emphasize UCCS's commitment to serve the people of its area by

emphasizing high quality teaching and encouraging research and creative work that enriches teaching and the cultural and economic well-being of its service area. Those paragraphs are followed, in turn, by a "Vision Statement" which expresses the University's determination to "provide a public undergraduate education unexcelled in the state and selected excellent graduate programs." Among the core values enumerated in the Vision Statement are "excellence, student success, accountability and public communication, enriching environment, quality teaching, innovation and change, and lifelong learning." The University has recently developed a broad-based University Plan for its future based on its core mission and its vision statement. This plan will be discussed under Criterion Four.

UCCS's mission, vision statement, and long range plan, which contain its central purposes, are appropriate for a public institution of higher education in the Colorado Springs area. The University has defined for itself a critical role in the continuing economic and cultural development of an area that is growing and attracting more high technology companies. The faculty, staff, and students of UCCS, its administrators at the campus and system level, members of the University of Colorado Board of Regents, and the citizens of Colorado Springs with whom we spoke understand the mission and purposes of UCCS. The University enjoys strong support among all its constituencies and has a good working relationship with people from the community. They recognize UCCS is playing a critical role in the development of the Colorado Springs area. There is also skepticism, especially among some faculty, about the University's ability to attract the public and private resources it will need to realize the goals it has set for itself. In this matter, the University's future success in gaining the support of local business people, politicians, and community leaders will be the determining factor.

Criterion Two: **The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs "has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes."**

After reading the Self Study, which describes the university's resources -- human, financial, and physical -- and their organization and after questioning many people during our visit, the Team concluded that UCCS's resources are minimally adequate and sufficiently well organized to enable the University to continue accomplishing its purposes. Without repeating information in the Self Study, the team would like to make several points about the University's resource base and its organization.

Physical Resources:

The University is very fortunate to have an excellent site on a hill overlooking the city of Colorado Springs and facing Pike's Peak. In the past few years it has acquired additional contiguous acreage for future expansion. Since the land wraps around a steep hill, careful planning has been necessary to maintain the unity and integrity of the campus. Long range physical plans are well thought out with respect to the location of buildings, their design, and the use of the diverse, challenging terrain.

The team has identified several physical resources problems. After a large, well-designed office/classroom structure is finished this fall, the campus will continue to suffer from severe space limitations. Many faculty and staff members will continue to be housed in facilities -- notably the original Main building -- that are in need of renovation. The Library has outgrown its space. It is especially important for the library of an urban campus to have adequate study space for commuting students. In visiting the Library, team members noted serious overcrowding of people and materials. The growth of the student body and the growth of the Library's collections have outstripped the

available space.

A second problem noted by the team arises from the addition of new space without sufficient resources to maintain it. The very large classroom/laboratory building that is nearing completion will place a considerable demand on the University's already-strained budget. The University's conservative estimate is that a minimum of \$80,000 per year will be needed to operate the new building. The University, we learned, has received no additional resources to care for the 76,000 square feet of new space that has come on-line in recent years. It is short-sighted, we believe, to provide beautiful new buildings via bonding and then fail to provide the operating funds needed to care for those buildings.

A third problem is that of "controlled maintenance," the repair work that must be done to keep current buildings inhabitable and prevent further damage that requires more costly repairs in future years. The University has a sound 5-year controlled maintenance plan, but there is no indication that funds will be made available by the State to implement it. The team believes the long-range self-interest of the State of Colorado would be well-served by a proactive approach to controlled maintenance.

Finally, UCCS is determined to become a prototypical twenty-first century university and has a unique opportunity to do so given its location and its projected enrollment growth over the next decade. To realize this goal, UCCS must provide up-to-date computer technology both for instruction and for hands-on use by students. The new classroom/laboratory building, scheduled to open in fall 1997, will be well stocked with computer hardware for instruction and student use. Elsewhere on the campus, computers are becoming outdated and requiring a great deal of maintenance. The University needs to develop a detailed plan to keep itself up-to-date

technologically. It needs to place a high priority on obtaining funds to replace outdated equipment and maintain existing equipment.

Team
plan

Fiscal Resources

The University's fiscal resources are minimally adequate. The NCA evaluation team in 1986 noted that the University was under funded. There have been several helpful infusions of "one-time" money from the central administration of the University of Colorado, but UCCS's base budget remains inadequate. Per student funding at UCCS has been and remains the lowest of the four campuses. A recent decision by the Board of Regents to fund "additional" students (defined as student FTEs above the average of the last three years) nearly equally on the four campuses will, in time, benefit UCCS *if the growth in student numbers occurs there rather than on the other campuses*. But that decision will not affect the funding base for UCCS's current level of student enrollments. Faculty and staff salaries are low, and the University depends more than it should on part-time teachers. These two negative consequences of the general under funding were noted by the evaluating team in 1986, and the situation has not improved since then. Moreover, UCCS's budget was reduced significantly, resulting in loss of staff and faculty positions, in the early nineties when student FTE count dipped and the funding formula produced a withdrawal of funds from UCCS's budget. Noting the tax limitation initiative passed by Colorado voters in 1992, UCCS has determined that it must 1) recruit and retain more out-of-state students who pay higher tuition, 2) increase contract and grant activity, and 3) enhance and expand continuing education where fees are charged and retained to cover expenses. Efforts are also being made to raise private money in the Colorado Springs area and elsewhere to increase both operating funds and endowment funds. These efforts are commendable, but the team remains concerned about the relative under funding of UCCS

in the CU system and its consequences for UCCS faculty, staff, and students. We are also conscious of the disparity between UCCS's base of state funds and the aspirations of its faculty and staff and the people of Colorado Springs for the future development of UCCS.

Human Resources

UCCS prides itself on having a highly qualified faculty who take their teaching seriously and are available to students and concerned about their well-being. The team found this to be the case. The team was also favorably impressed by the high level of ability and institutional support it found in meeting with members of the professional and classified staffs and with students. The main problem we found in the area of human resources was the very large percentage of class hours handled by part-time, temporary teachers who are not members of the faculty. This problem was identified by the 1986 NCA evaluating team. It was identified again by the University in its Self Study for the current visit.

Some clarification of this point may be necessary. One great advantage of an urban university is its ability to hire professionals in the community to provide specialized courses. The population of the Colorado Springs area is highly educated. The University should continue to take advantage of the impressive human resources in its area to enrich its instructional programs. One student with whom we spoke had great praise for a class taught in the evening by a highly qualified, full-time faculty member at a neighboring college. Our concern is that the University is depending too heavily on individuals who are not members of the regular faculty to teach its basic courses. This problem is more serious in some colleges than others, and departments within colleges differ greatly. The University should develop a plan to increase gradually the percentage of instruction covered by probationary and tenured faculty.

Another human resources problem of the past decade has been the rapid turnover in campus level administrators, especially in academic affairs. Having been in place for three years, the University's current Chancellor has identified herself with the growth and qualitative development of UCCS. An experienced administrator is serving for one year as interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Everyone we spoke with recognizes the importance of appointing to this position an individual who has the professional background and the personal skills necessary to provide forceful and imaginative leadership. There should be a mutual understanding that the person selected for this position will 1) bring a greater sense of order and a wider vision to the University's academic planning efforts and 2) stay long enough to develop and implement new initiatives and to oversee qualitative improvements in existing programs.

The Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance has recently decided to retire, and the Chancellor will soon initiate another search to fill this important position. In the student affairs area, the Chancellor has brought student-related units together under the leadership of a Dean for Student Success who is in place. This structure is achieving communication and cooperation among units that formerly had different reporting routes. With student services stabilized and with academic affairs about to be stabilized, the search to fill the business and finance position takes on special importance. A stable and effective internal administration will enable the University to proceed in a measured manner to achieve its goals while freeing the Chancellor's time for the external work that will provide the resources necessary for those goals.

Another problem in the area of human resources is the absence of a carefully structured and effective role for faculty in the governance of the institution. Faculty with whom the team met were articulate and well informed about the institution. Faculty leaders want to play a positive role

and work cooperatively with the administration on refining and carrying out the institutional plan. The campus lacks, however, a faculty governance structure that is recognized by faculty and administrators as representing the opinions and interests of the faculty. This problem is not unique to UCCS within the UC System. When the University of Colorado became more than one campus, the governance structure at Boulder was lifted to the system level and broadened to include representatives of the new campuses. Faculty at UCCS now see little benefit from participating in faculty governance at the System level. What is needed, we believe, at UCCS is a clearly-defined, streamlined faculty governance structure in which the leadership is chosen by and accountable to the faculty. Such a structure would enable faculty leaders to speak confidently on behalf of the faculty. It would also enable campus administrators to consult with faculty leaders sure in the knowledge they represent the views of a majority of the faculty. Building such a structure and gaining acceptance for it takes a good deal of time and effort, but the result could be very beneficial for the entire University. An effective faculty governance structure is, among other things, an effective means of building loyalty and creating a sense of community.

Equal opportunity programs have been in existence at UCCS since the nineteen-seventies. A major impetus for the current diversity plans at the University came from a mandate by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) in 1970 that required all state institutions to set affirmative action goals for ethnic minority student graduation rates. A ten-year plan was set for each institution based on the projected number of high school students during that period. The goals require that each institution have a graduating class that is 18.4% minority by the year 2000. Currently, UCCS is ahead of the CCHE goal for the 1996 academic year with 13.7% of its graduates being minority students. Another CCHE initiative that has helped the university meet its diversity

goals is an admission policy that enables the University to admit up to 20% of its entering class as "window admits," who do not need to meet regular requirements. In 1996, 47.3% of the students admitted through the window were minority students.

Responding to the need to diversify the campus, the institution developed a plan called "Education for Development in a Global Environment" (EDGE). This plan was published in 1994 and is currently being revised. As part of this plan, every department was asked to devise its own plan for diversification, and an EDGE committee was formed to direct and monitor the University's diversity initiatives. The Director of Affirmative Action reports that department plans continue to show improvement as they undergo revision.

Two years ago the position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Multi-cultural Affairs was established, and a faculty member was hired as Coordinator of a recently approved minor in Ethnic Minority Studies. These appointments, along with other initiatives, have produced increased ethnic programming, growth in minority enrollments, and closer ties with the city's African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities. The institution's initiatives for increasing diversity have yielded positive results.

Criterion Three: The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs is "accomplishing its educational and other purposes."

After reading the Self Study and visiting with personnel in all academic and most non-academic units of the University, the evaluation team concluded that UCCS is accomplishing its purposes. This section, which supports that conclusion, will focus on the University's academic units and programs.

The **College of Letters, Arts and Sciences** provides a broad range of programs in the liberal arts and sciences, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The College also offers several pre-professional programs (e.g., dental hygiene, law). The College is in transition having had three deans in the last three years. The College houses the typical departments (e.g., English, History, Chemistry) but, interestingly, the mathematics department is in the College of Engineering and Applied Science. The College is accomplishing its purposes and contributing significantly to the mission of the university. In addition to offering degrees in several fields, it also offers several courses used as general education requirements by the other colleges. The College was intimately involved in a Title III grant that led to the development of five "Centers" (e.g., Math, Writing, Oral Communication) to help students with basic skills. Most of these centers still exist. The College also houses the department with the most majors (Psychology). Several faculty members are involved in developing the University's assessment plan, and the assessment committee is chaired by a faculty member of the Psychology Department.

The College's **Center for the Study of Sport and Leisure** is unique, but appropriate given the proximity of the Olympic training facilities. The **Center on Aging** builds on the strength of the Psychology Department in the psychology of aging. Some of the most interesting course offerings within the College are the interdisciplinary humanities courses. Each department contributes a faculty member to these courses every semester. A typical humanities course might focus on a particular year and cover the events of that year from the perspectives of several disciplines. These courses provide a valuable educational experience for UCCS undergraduates.

The major concern within the College is lack of resources: no capital equipment budgets, small supplies and expense budgets, overuse of temporary (i.e., "honoraria") teachers, and extremely

limited funds for travel. Although many faculty members persist with a "can do" attitude, they could do much more with adequate resources. The College's administration and faculty believe the College has not received its fair share of resources within the institution. One helpful step in dealing with that belief might be to give College faculty a clearer picture of how money is generated by and distributed within the institution.

The **College of Business** provides selected professional programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). This team agrees with the most recent AACSB accreditation team that the College is accomplishing its purposes. The College has dedicated faculty members, many of whom have been at the University for many years. A unique feature of the College is the joint Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration program being offered via distance education in collaboration with the Jones Education Company. The first of two phases of this project have produced six courses designed by College faculty members for airing on the Jones Cable Network. These courses combine video and internet communication.

A recent administrative appointment within the School has been divisive, and the campus administration should continue its efforts to achieve reconciliation. Increased emphasis on quality issues in the curriculum, student performance, and student assessment would help focus the energy of the faculty on educational matters. Salaries in the College are not competitive, and some excellent faculty members, the team was told, have left for higher-paying positions. Like other units, the College of Business perceives itself to be suffering from under funding by the State.

The **School of Education** is a post-baccalaureate degree-offering unit that offers masters degrees in Curriculum & Instruction, Counseling, and Special Education. The School also offers

initial teacher licensure and principal and administrator licensure to individuals who have completed an undergraduate degree. Consideration is being given to offering an undergraduate degree in special education. The School is accomplishing its purposes and contributing significantly to the mission of the University. The community looks to the School for a large portion of its public school personnel. The superintendent of the local public school teaches part-time for the program, enhancing communication between the two institutions. The recently instituted Alternative Licensure Program reaches out to individuals, many of them minorities, who would not enroll in regular programs.

The School has a highly dedicated faculty who make do with limited resources. In spite of heavy teaching/work loads, they continue looking for innovative ways to serve their students. The best example is the Alternative Licensure Program. Two concerns noted by the team are under funding (which seems to prevail throughout the university) and heavy reliance on honoraria faculty. The dean reported that about 44 percent of the credit hours in the school are produced by part-time faculty. The School should move cautiously into new program areas. For example, sufficient resources should be provided before the School undertakes an undergraduate program in special education.

The **College of Engineering and Applied Science** offers undergraduate and masters degrees in mathematics, computer science, and electrical engineering. The College also offers the only doctoral degree at UCCS, the Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering. Faculty in all three departments are involved in externally funded research. Two faculty members in the College occupy El Pomer endowed professorships. The undergraduate electrical engineering program is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the computer science program

is accredited by the Computer Science Accreditation Board (CSAB). Both programs are recognized as meeting the criteria for satisfactory undergraduate programs.

The College plays an important role in the University's efforts to meet the needs of the Colorado Springs business community. Local industry reports retention of B.S. graduates from UCCS is better than those recruited from other parts of the country. Graduate courses are offered in the evenings so full-time employees can enroll.

Leadership at the College level is energetic, and departmental leadership is effective. Faculty are enthusiastic and competent. The Dean has formed a large Advisory Board and a smaller Executive Committee to provide regular ideas from private business. Physical facilities are good, and special research facilities in microelectronics and in electromagnetic are excellent. The College recently received a major donation of computer equipment and an ion-implant apparatus from local industry that will benefit student computing laboratories and research programs.

The College has sufficient faculty resources to offer the proposed Ph.D. in Computer Science. The Ph.D. in E.E. program offered in coordination with faculty at CU Boulder is operating effectively. New degree programs in mechanical engineering and computer engineering are under consideration. It is not certain that resources (faculty, space, equipment) can be made available to offer these programs, and the College should not proceed without that assurance. Faculty salaries, particularly for senior ranks, lag behind national levels. Lack of a stable source of funds for equipment (instructional and research) prevents faculty from making long-term plans for replacement and improvements. UCCS Library holdings are inadequate to support the current Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and the proposed Ph.D. in Computer Science that means that students and faculty must depend on quick and easy access to books and articles from other libraries and on-

line.

The College might consider a special student equipment fee for the engineering and computer science programs. The faculty should continue to develop assessment plans that can be used to provide responses leading to program improvements. These assessment plans are needed for both NCA accreditation and programmatic accreditation (ABET and CSAB)

Information Resources and Services is contributing effectively to the mission and purposes of the institution through its support for faculty and student learning. This support ranges from the traditional delivery of library services to the less traditional involvement with Jones Intercable to produce and deliver classes in the MBA/MPA Program. This unit was created in 1994-95 when the management of Computing Services, Telecommunications Services, and Media Center/CU-Net were brought together under the leadership of the Dean for the Library. The purpose of this merger was to enable the University take advantage of emerging information technologies and maximize the use of scarce resources. The service ethic for which the library is noted has been used to engage more faculty input into the design of the New Classroom/Office Building. A substantial budget cut was imposed at the time the new organization was created. Because of the growing technology needs of the campus and the movement to mediated instruction, the resources of the unit are stretched very thin.

The library has a dedicated staff with a commitment to serving their varied clients, but its materials budget is insufficient. The inability of the Library to keep up with basic materials impacts the viability of current and future graduate programs and faculty research in all disciplines. The Library has also outgrown its space. Plans for a new Library/Technology building address this problem.

The **Colorado Institute for Technology Transfer and Implementation (CITTI)**, an economic development program of UCCS established in 1991 with a grant from El Pomar Foundation, is now supported by the university which pays the director's salary and operating funds. The Center has call on one-fourth of the time of each of the three El Pomar Distinguished Professors for use in helping clients with economic development projects. This Center is responsible for technology transfer of research results coming from university faculty. The Advisory Board has a few representatives from the community and several from the university. Since few research products are coming from university faculty, the Center attempts to act as a contact point for the University with new ventures in the community. The Director is experienced and understands the importance of interactions between the University and the entrepreneurial community. The goal of the center is to become self supporting, but its resources base (ideas, patentable products, etc.) may not allow that. The University should evaluate the long-term viability of this center.

The **Center for Community Development and Design** is a partnership between UCCS and Colorado communities. Using faculty and students to help communities in planning, design, research and development projects, the Center has successfully helped many communities across the State of Colorado and, in that process, developed useful relationships. As community problems have been solved, the University has received notice and recognition, faculty have gained practical experience in applying their expertise, and students have benefited from the exposure to real problems. The Center has been in operation for 17 years, and its future funding base is uncertain. Formerly, the University paid the director's salary in addition to providing space and utilities. Since the Center may be unable to continue funding its operation, the University should decide whether its activities justify providing more support for it.

General education requirements at UCCS are established on a college-by-college basis. CLAS has a college-wide requirement, but each major program can specify that certain courses must be taken within it. Since the College of Business offers only one undergraduate degree program (with options), it has one general education credit hour distribution. The College of Engineering and Applied Science has a different general education requirement for each of its undergraduate degree programs. Students transferring from one major to another within the College may find that general education credits taken in one major do not count toward the requirement for the new major.

Discussions are beginning at UCCS about the possibility of an institution-wide general education requirement. A uniform set of requirements would make it easier for students to transfer between majors without loss of credits. Beyond that, the process of thinking through the content of general education required for all UCCS undergraduates may serve to bring the faculties of the colleges together and, as a result, create a greater sense of mutuality and a clearer identity for the University. **The successful Freshman Seminar program which brings faculty together to engage in team teaching of seminars that are interdisciplinary in content could serve as a sound foundation for developing an innovative general education program at UCCS.**

UCCS's plan for the **Assessment of Student Academic Achievement** was found unacceptable by NCA reviewers when it was submitted for review in 1995. This Evaluating Team was asked to pay special attention to the progress UCCS has made in improving and carrying out its plan. UCCS has made some progress in developing its plan. Its latest version, dated March 1997, has generated support for assessment within some undergraduate majors. Implementation varies considerably from department to department. Psychology and Economics, for example, have begun to use assessment data for program improvement. Others are at an earlier stage. Assessment

of general education is not occurring. The faculty is still in the process of formulating goals, and a proposed set has been sent for consideration by the Faculty Assembly. If they are approved, the goals will form the basis of a plan to assess general education.

The Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC), which is comprised primarily of faculty, is responsible for developing and implementing UCCS's Assessment Plan. Some members of SAAC also serve on the General Education Assessment Committee. Members of SAAC are concerned because there is no funding available for assessment activities. Since departments must absorb costs associated with assessment activities, SAAC is limited in its ability to persuade them to engage in such activities. The faculty member who chairs SAAC has some "released time" from teaching.

UCCS is behind most NCA institutions in assessing student learning beyond the level of the individual course and thus the effectiveness of its academic programs. The Administration needs to improve the performance of UCCS in this area. Some additional financial incentives may be necessary.

Reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, **Continuing Education** is responsible for coordinating off-campus programming and non-credit programming on campus. It is organized into three departments: Registration, Finance, and Programing and Marketing. All its endeavors are administered on a self-supporting, cash-funded basis. Its role in serving students enrolled in the MBA/MPA program and the CUNet courses is that of advertising courses, registering students, sending out materials, and coordinating with other entities (Jones Intercable for the MBA/MPA program, and the campus CUNet office for the CUNet courses). It also exercises a quality control function for graduate programs in that CE staff block students who have not been

admitted to programs from enrolling in courses past the number of courses they can take as a non-degree student. Annually, the unit enrolls 6,000 students in more than 350 courses held on-campus, over television, and at sites throughout the Pikes Peak Region. Its operations directly support that portion of the UCCS vision statement that speaks to the value of lifelong learning. The Office has moved quickly to take advantage of the University's new residence halls. In Summer 1997, the Middle Level Summer Institute will bring middle school teachers and their families from across the country to the campus for a week in June. As "Enterprise Units," Continuing Education offices in the CU system are free from the growth restrictions that apply elsewhere in the University. CE's location on the periphery of campus adds to its sense of non-inclusion in the University community. The unit's morale and operational efficiency would be considerably enhanced by linkage to the campus computer network and software changes that enable participation in that network. As additional space becomes available, consideration should be given to placing the CE office close to other student service functions.

The Director of the **Affirmative Action Office** has been in place since 1993, and the office is performing appropriate functions. The Director approves the wording and placement of all recruitment advertisements. She is an *ex-officio* member of all search committees to make certain they employ correct procedures. The Director must approve all final hiring decisions. The major problem faced by the Affirmative Action Office is the lack of incentive funds. Top rated minority candidates have been lost due to the lack of additional salary dollars to compete against other offers. Funds to pay for travel for minority candidates would also be helpful.

The **Office of Institutional Research** collects, analyzes and reports institutional data for use in planning, decision making, and marketing. It prepares routine reports for external agencies.

The unit has been meeting deadlines for filing external reports and supplying necessary decision making data to campus entities. With its new Director in place, the unit is positioned to provide support for other offices and initiatives, for example, assessment of student academic achievement.

Student Services was recently reorganized to increase its contribution to student learning and success. The purpose of the new organization was to provide a sense of cohesiveness and an overall vision with shared values, services and functions. It is a significant improvement over the previous model which was fragmented across functional lines. The new Student Success Center contains an Academic Advising unit and The Women's Center and Re-Entry Program. The Computer Assisted Degree Audit Program is a valuable tool in the academic advising process. The Office of Student Life provides essential services and co-curricular activities for students. The staff promotes and enhances student growth and development. It involves students in the governance of the institution and in many learning opportunities such as student advocacy, new student orientation, student health services, off-campus housing, student conduct, student ambassadors, student government, student publications, student organizations, and recreation.

The Writing Center, Oral Communication Center, Mathematics Learning Center, Science Learning Center and Language Technology Center are five academic learning communities under the general rubric Project Excel which are designed to help students achieve academic excellence. Started with a federal grant, the Project is now supported by institutional funds. Project Excel has contributed significantly to increasing student retention rates.

Criterion Four: The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs can “continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.”

The team believes UCCS can continue to accomplish its purposes. The faculty and administrative staff of the institution are highly-qualified and dedicated to the institution and its purposes. There is strong support for the institution by a wide range of individuals and institutions in the Colorado Springs area. Members of the Board of Regents and the President of the University of Colorado recognize the importance of building and maintaining a high quality public university in the Pike’s Peak area.

The evaluating team was pleased to observe that UCCS has a strategic planning process in place and that solid results have begun to emerge from it. In the Fall of 1995, the Chancellor formed a University Planning Committee with broad-based representation. Using focus groups to identify campus issues, the committee developed a draft plan, shared it with the campus and the community, and modified it based on response. The final document, called the University Plan, was released shortly before the team’s visit. Building on a previously developed vision statement, it identifies four goals for the campus and eight supporting activities which should help the campus achieve the goals. The focus will now shift to implementation. The process that produced the University Plan has been a healthy one that bodes well for the UCCS’s ability in future years to set goals and objectives and implement them.

One theme of the Plan of special interest to the team is its emphasis on strengthening ties between the University and not only the Colorado Springs area but all of Southern Colorado. It also suggests that with the arrival of the dormitories UCCS place a greater emphasis on recruiting out-of-state and international students. This theme is echoed in the final section of the Plan called “A

Concluding Challenge.” That section states that UCCS should aim to become one of *Money Magazine’s* “Ten Best College Values by the year 2007. This objective reflects some of the discussion the team heard on campus about UCCS striving to become a “private ivy.” There is much to be said for the University moving in this direction. It has a beautiful location in a city that is very attractive to college-aged students in many parts of the country. Larger numbers of out-of-state students would bring increased revenues and make it easier to achieve some of the other objectives identified in the Plan. We heard during our visit that the number of Colorado high school graduates eligible for entry to the University of Colorado is expected to increase substantially in the next ten years and that UCCS will be expected by the Regents to handle most of the additional students.

Without advocating one developmental direction or the other, the evaluating team wants simply to note that both exist and that they are not mutually exclusive. Yet they exist in a condition of under funding that has persisted since the last NCA comprehensive evaluation in 1987. UCCS’s future could be very bright, but the brightness is not assured. The title of the University’s Self Study is “A Campus in Transition.” That theme was confirmed for the team throughout our visit. While some aspects of the University’s future development are clear, others are not. With respect to UCCS’s ability to accomplish its purposes and especially its ability to strengthen its educational effectiveness, our two major concerns are 1) its inadequate financial base and 2) turnover in the position of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Within academic affairs, the team is concerned especially that UCCS’s administration of graduate programs at the campus level is weak. We believe the University must move decisively to create a structure for administering its graduate programs, including those offered by the professional schools. This need assume special importance since the system-wide University of Colorado Graduate School is about to disappear.

Criterion Five: The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

In examining the publications of the University and in reading the Self Study, the team observed before our visit that the University attempts to paint for potential students and employees an accurate portrait of the institution. Student and faculty documents reviewed by the team (1996-97 Catalog, Student Survival Guide, and Faculty Handbook of the University of Colorado) reflect a commitment to integrity and are consistent with UCCS's mission. The University is in compliance with system-wide policies and practices. During campus interviews, team members found an atmosphere of concern for the rights of individuals and a determination to deal with employees and students in a forthright and objective manner. Appropriate grievance and appeal procedures are in place and are functioning effectively. The Intercollegiate Athletic Program is effectively administered and appropriately monitored. The University recognizes it must continue its efforts to increase diversity among all categories of employees and within its student population. In our judgment, UCCS satisfies the Commission's fifth criterion

III. SUMMARY EVALUATION

Strengths:

1. The campus of The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs is nicely placed with ample space for expansion, and the buildings constructed in recent years are attractive and functional. The University has given a great deal of attention to planning for new buildings and to a long range plan for the physical development of the campus.
2. Under the leadership of its Chancellor, the University has developed a close working relationship

with businesses and other institutions in the Colorado Springs area, and it enjoys strong support from the citizens of the city and its surrounding area.

3. Members of the Board of Regents, local legislators, and other representatives of the community are strongly supportive of the University and appreciative of the role it is playing in the economic, social, and cultural development of the Colorado Springs area.

4. The University is performing an essential service to the Colorado Springs area by providing high quality instructional programs for people who need those programs to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for productive employment in the area's vibrant and developing economy. The University's academic programs are appropriate for its clientele base and responsive to the needs of its service area.

5. The University is cooperating effectively with other academic institutions in the area to deliver programs for students.

6. The University benefits from an optimistic attitude and an openness to new ideas and methods among many administrators, faculty, students, and staff who, despite problems of chronic under funding, are determined to build a high quality, forward-looking University that will serve the needs of the people of El Paso County and the State of Colorado in the twenty-first century.

7. The University's faculty is highly qualified, accessible to students, and concerned with their academic progress and personal development.

8. The process that resulted recently in the University Plan bodes well for the development of a broad based strategic plan that sets the course for the future development of the University.

9. The reorganization and consolidation of student services and such initiatives as the Freshman Seminar Program and Project Excel hold promise for the University's capacity to improve its

retention rates and provide higher education opportunities for the increasingly diverse population of the Colorado Springs area.

10. The recent completion of a high quality campus residential facility to house 600 students will enable the campus to attract a more diverse student population from within the State and beyond the State and to improve the attractiveness of campus life for residential and non-residential students.

11. The reorganization and consolidation of Information Services sets the stage the campus to realize its plans to keep abreast of rapid advances in the use of technology to enhance the quality of its instructional and research programs.

Concerns:

1. Many academic departments and administrative units are severely limited by the effects of chronic underfunding by the State of Colorado. This concern was noted by the NCA evaluating team that visited the campus in 1987, and the situation has not improved during the past decade.

2. Frequent turnover in the position of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has deprived the University of strong, sustained academic leadership.

3. Despite progress during the past year in reformulating a plan to assess student academic achievement and in carrying out that plan, assessment is spotty at the undergraduate and graduate levels. A plan to assess general education is still in the development stage.

4. The University is giving minimal attention to the administration of its graduate programs. There is insufficient monitoring above the program level to assure high quality in the admission of graduate students, in the conduct of graduate programs, and in procedures and standards for awarding graduate degrees. These problems assume special importance given 1) plans to diminish the University of Colorado System's role in monitoring quality in the administration of graduate

programs and 2) the growing ambitions of UCCS at the doctoral level and in distance education.

5. The University's instructional programs continue to be too dependent upon part-time teachers who work on a per course basis without benefits and without a voice in the operations of the University. This concern was also noted in the 1987 NCA report, and the percentage of instruction delivered by full time faculty has not risen appreciably in the past decade.

6. Many essential administrative and support functions are very thinly staffed.

7. Faculty governance within the institution is poorly organized and insufficiently recognized and supported.

8. Following the opening of a new classroom and office building in the fall of 1997, many academic and support units on the campus will remain crowded in inadequate office and classroom spaces.

9. The materials budget of the Library is seriously deficient and inadequate to support faculty research, the current array of graduate programs, and proposed new graduate programs.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The following observations and suggestions are offered by members of the evaluation team in their role as consultants.

1. The University should develop a plan to fund and build the infrastructures that will be needed for its projected enrollment growth, and that plan should pay special attention to the maintenance of an enlarged physical plant, increased demands for information technologies, and increased staff.

2. The University should continue to press for more funds for controlled maintenance in order to avoid larger costs for building repair and major equipment replacement in future years.

3. The University should develop a long range plan for distance education that insures for that

delivery system the same high quality that characterizes its on-campus courses and programs.

4. The University should find an ongoing means of providing recognition for the special contributions of its unclassified and classified employees to the general well-being of the University and its students.
5. The commitment to fostering and valuing diversity of backgrounds among the University's employees and students should be maintained and nurtured by the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors and other high-level administrators.
6. The University should devote more attention to the special needs of its foreign students.
7. In its continuing efforts to demonstrate integrity in its policies and practices, the University might consider 1) asking that the annual audit include a closer inspection of one operating unit within the University; 2) developing and promulgating an institutional ethics statement; and 3) developing and carrying out a training program for staff who are charged with the business operations of the University.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team's recommendations for action, including its recommendation to continue the accreditation of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, are shown on the attached Worksheet for the Statement of Affiliation Status. The team is satisfied that the University meets the General Institutional Requirements and the Criteria for Accreditation of the Commission on Higher Education of the North Central Association. Although the University is engaged in a wide-ranging reexamination of its long term plans that may result in some shifts of focus, its purposes are clear, publicly stated, consistent with its statement of mission, and appropriate to an institution of higher education. While underfunding persists and while there have been many personnel changes in the University's major administrative positions during the past decade, the University's human, financial, and physical resources are minimally sufficient and organized to accomplish its purposes. Evidence to support the team's conclusion that the University is accomplishing its educational and other purposes is presented in the discussion of Criterion Three in Section II of this report. The Team is also confident, following its interviews with a wide range of individuals and its review of documents, that the University will continue to accomplish its basic purposes. The Team is satisfied that the University is demonstrating integrity in its practices and relationships.

In the body of this report, the team has expressed concerns about the funding base of the University (a concern that was also highlighted in the report of the 1987 NCA evaluating team), the status of the plan and program to assess student academic achievement, and the administration of graduate programs. Our concerns about these three matters are such that we are recommending that the North Central Commission on Higher Education conduct a visit of the University in five

years (2001-2002) which will focus on sources and levels of revenue, assessment of student academic achievement, and graduate education. We would expect the visiting team to find five years from now 1) a significant improvement in the University's financial resource base, 2) a functioning assessment program that has produced demonstrable improvements in instructional programs, and 3) an effective mechanism for monitoring the operation of graduate programs to assure comparability of requirements, compliance with University-wide regulations, and high exit expectations in masters and doctoral programs. The team is also recommending a stipulation that "accreditation at the doctoral level is limited to the program in Electrical Engineering and the program in Computer Science" and a stipulation that "programs offered by distance delivery are limited to the MBA and MPA." Finally, the team is recommending that the University file a report with the NCA staff if the merger with the Beth El School of Nursing occurs. Filed prior to the merger, this "contingency report" report should provide the details of the financial aspects of the merger and demonstrate that the merger will not negatively affect the financial base of the University. If this merger occurs, the University will be required, in accord with the NCA Commission's policies (I.C.3), to schedule an on-site review within one year of the effective date of the merger.

The team is recommending, finally, that the next comprehensive evaluation of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs by the North Central Association's Commission on Higher Education occur in the academic year 2006-07.

WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT COLORADO SPRINGS
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway, PO Box 7150
Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7150

TYPE OF REVIEW: Continued Accreditation

DATE OF THIS REVIEW: March 10 - 12, 1997

COMMISSION ACTION:

STATUS: *Accredited (1970- J)*

Institution Recommended Wording: No Change

Team Recommended Wording:

HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED: Doctor's.

Institution Recommended Wording: No Change

Team Recommended Wording:

MOST RECENT ACTION: *April 13, 1987.*

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: *Accreditation at the doctoral level is limited to the Doctor's degree in Electrical Engineering. Other course offerings at the Doctor's level are offered in cooperation with the University-wide Graduate School..*

Institution Recommended Wording: Accreditation at the doctoral level in selected fields and disciplines in accordance with

Team Recommended Wording: the mission of the campus. Accreditation at the doctoral level is limited to the programs in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science; and programs offered by distance delivery are limited to the MBA and MPA.

NEW DEGREE SITES:

Prior Commission approval required.

Institution

Recommended Wording: No Change

Team

Recommended Wording: No Change

PROGRESS REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team

Recommended Wording: None

MONITORING REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team

Recommended Wording: None

CONTINGENCY REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team

Recommended Wording: A report prior to merger with the Beth El School of Nursing

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED:

None.

Team

Recommended Wording: Visit in 2001-02 focused on 1) sources and levels of revenue, 2) assessment of student academic achievement, and 3) graduate education

LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION:

1986-87.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION:

1996-97.

Team

Recommended Wording: 2006-07