**Criterion One Conclusion**
The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

**Assurance Evidence**
In sum, the evidence demonstrates that CSU has clearly stated purposes that provide Colorado residents and students access to an excellent, comprehensive graduate research university that is student-centered and committed to excellence in undergraduate and graduate education. True to our land-grant heritage and our values of civic responsibility and public access, CSU applies intellectual and academic resources to social, economic, and community development in Colorado, the nation, and the world. Our faculty and staff engage in applied research and teaching and share their knowledge with others in keeping with our aim of setting the standard as a 21st century land-grant institution. CSU also engages citizens through its athletic programs and through its marketing, fundraising, and alumni outreach efforts.

**Strengths**
The Strategic Plan outlines the institution's major priorities and the university-level outcomes against which the SPARCs measure our performance in alignment with the mission. The six January 2013 SPARCs reports provide detailed assessments of the institution's performance in response to the 37 goals. In nearly all cases, as indicated by the performance metrics, we are making continuous improvements. Major accomplishments that have been achieved in recent years to fulfill our mission are summarized as follows (many of these are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the self-study):

- Curricular and co-curricular enhancements through the Student Success Initiatives (SSI) that have improved the quality of education and students' success in achieving an education.
- Continued growth of excellent research programs with outstanding levels of funding.
- Expanded outreach and engagement programs that provide excellent service to the public, enhancing quality of life for all.
- Institutional resilience through economically challenging years to sustain and improve programs, including significantly increased private support.
- Improved access to higher education as a broad public service and a core part of the land-grant mission, with steadily increased diversity awareness and accomplishments.

**Challenges**
The major challenge for continued fulfillment of the institution's mission and improvement of programs can simply be summarized as sustaining and growing the resource base in the face of declining-to-disappearing state appropriations. Major ramifications of this challenge include:

- Controlling the students' cost of education to facilitate access and enhance diversity.
- Evolving enrollment management operations to facilitate recruitment, enrollment, retention, progression, and graduation of a diverse student population.
- Procuring adequate resources for continuous improvement of academic programs and operational infrastructure, including hiring additional faculty and support staff, controlled maintenance, and capital development.

**Plans for enhancement**
The University’s three-year strategic planning cycle is designed to assure wide-based campus input into annual institutional budgets and priorities. It includes a regular schedule for triennial updates of the Strategic Plan to reflect new priorities, new environments, new opportunities, and new ideas that contribute to fulfillment of the mission. Currently, we are building and evaluating the feasibility of a planning framework commonly referred to as CSU 2020, which models various budget scenarios and the corresponding need to build infrastructure capacity and grow enrollment to provide a balanced resource basis to sustain the institution in the face of forecast declines in state appropriations. The Diversity SPARC recommended that the position of VP for Diversity be funded as a full-time position rather than half-time to enhance the capacity of the office to advance diversity initiatives and increase the awareness of the institution's commitment to diversity efforts (implemented in the FY14 budget). The 2012 Employee Climate Survey is intended to be a baseline assessment for evaluating diversity.

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progress as measured in future surveys.