Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Assurance Evidence

Area 1: Teaching and Learning of the Strategic Plan aligns the institution very closely with the aspirations of Criterion Three. CSU's objective is to provide a high-quality education to undergraduate and graduate students within a dynamic intellectual environment that involves innovative curricular and extracurricular offerings, promotes retention and graduation, and prepares students for lifelong learning and achievement in a complex, global, and technologically sophisticated world. Undergraduate and graduate education are considered the cornerstones of university life; and faculty and co-curricular activities are critical foundational elements. We recognize that students seek a high-quality education, and today's graduates must have advanced skills and a diverse and global perspective to be successful in life and work. Excellence in higher education today requires a renewed emphasis on providing a distinctive educational experience founded upon strong support for hiring and retention of outstanding faculty and staff, and delivery in a safe, constructive environment for learning. The Teaching and Learning Strategic Planning Area Review Committee (SPARC) is charged with assessing institutional performance, reviewing and suggesting revisions of the Strategic Plan, and identifying priorities for improvement of teaching and learning activities.

Although earning a university degree is a distinctive achievement, we believe that much of what students gain from the experience comes from the culture of the institution and the values that characterize it. CSU is a campus of character committed to instilling in students core values that include accountability, civic responsibility, freedom of expression, inclusiveness, diversity, innovation, sustainability, integrity, mutual respect, opportunity, and community. Because we are committed to educating the whole person, the knowledge provided through the classroom experience is extended and enhanced through day-to-day living and learning. Student government, other student organizations, athletics, and the arts all play a vital role in creating a dynamic intellectual and social campus community.

Since 2006, CSU has committed to the Student Success Initiatives (introduced in Component 1.A.3) that permeate the Strategic Plan initiatives and budget priorities. This initiative has been successful because it has drawn the Academic and Student Affairs divisions into a singularly focused partnership for the purpose of providing an excellent experience for students in a residential university. The unifying result of this focus was illustrated by the theme "Everyone as an Educator," which was chosen for the Fall 2012 Leadership Retreat.
Under this Criterion, we provide evidence that CSU has policies and procedures in place that ensure the high quality of courses, programs, and student services wherever, however, and by whomever the offerings are delivered. As a large, mature research university, CSU delivers most courses through resident face-to-face instruction with some courses or sections of courses also delivered by distance modalities or at off-campus sites, including study abroad. Some large enrollment courses are delivered in multiple sections, requiring attention to quality equivalence that can be influenced by many variables in the learning environment, e.g., instructor differences, classroom resources, scheduling, and class size. In response to this criterion, the emphasis focuses on initial approval and establishment of high-quality programs. In Criterion Four, emphasis will focus on the assessment of quality within ongoing programs to ensure maintenance of high quality.

Sources

- Plan for Excellence 2006
- Strategic Plan 2012 (Page 5)
- Teaching and Learning SPARC 2012

Colorado State University