

# Working Group 3 Report

## Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

1. **Overview of Working Group's Charge.** This group is responsible for fulfilling all aspects of the general Working Group charge with respect to **STANDARD III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience** and will do the following:
  - a. Determine to what extent CU meets Standard III and its Criteria, Requirements of Affiliation #8, #9, #10, and #15, and Accreditation-relevant federal regulations for Verification of Compliance.
  - b. Consider how Institutional Priorities #1, #2, #3, and #4, and Intended Outcomes #1, #2, #3, and #4 are addressed in Standard III.
  - c. Collect and examine relevant data, policies, processes, and procedures for Standard III.
  - d. Identify the University's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement for Standard III, recommend strategies for improvement, and implement strategies where feasible.
  - e. Develop draft reports and incorporate feedback into a final report for Standard III according to established timelines.
2. **Description of Lines of Inquiry.** The following lines of inquiry addressed by WG3 enabled the group to make progress toward fulfilling its charge and accomplishing the institution's Self-Study Intended Outcomes:
  - a. To what degree does the evidence support the premise that the University's academic programs are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and promote synthesis of learning?
  - b. To what degree are student learning experiences designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty and/or other appropriate professionals who demonstrate effectiveness of professional responsibilities, hold requisite qualifications, are sufficient in number, engage in professional growth, and are evaluated regularly?
  - c. What does the evidence show about how academic programs of study are clearly and accurately described in the institution's official publications and through the student information system in a way that students can understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion?
  - d. To what degree does the University provide sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress?
  - e. What does the general education program reveal about sufficiently offering new areas of intellectual experience, expand students' cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, prepare students to make well-reasoned judgments, and develop general skill areas?
  - f. To what extent do graduate programs offer opportunities for scholarly activity under the supervision of qualified faculty?
  - g. What are the assessment outcomes of any student learning opportunities provided by third-party providers, if applicable?
  - h. How does the University periodically assess the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities?

### 3. Collaboration with the Working Groups

The Working Group's collaborations with other groups included the following: Working Groups 4, 5, & 6, Admissions Office, Provost's Office, Institutional Effectiveness, CU Assessment Council, General Education Council, Human Resources Office, Office of Graduate Studies, Office of Research, Marketing and Communications, Registrar's Office, and University Curriculum Committee

### 4. Assessment Information Utilized to Evaluate the Lines of Inquiry

Evidence includes but is not limited to the APSCUF Collective Bargaining Agreement, General Education Program Description, General Education Assessments, Advertising and Recruiting Materials, Annual Reports, Accreditation Reports, Student Learning Outcomes Assessments, Degree Audits, Degree Maps, UCC and BOG's State System Policy and Procedures. The Evidence Inventory includes a comprehensive list of documents.

### 5. Analytical Report

## STANDARD III

***An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.***

## INTRODUCTION

Commonwealth University's (CU's) mission opens by stating that "...**students are at the heart of everything we do.**" The extensive research conducted to develop CU's strategic statements revealed that faculty and staff at BL, LH, and MA genuinely feel this way about their role in students' learning, development, and well-being. CU esteems its student-centered commitment and also proclaims its mission "to provide affordable, high-quality education emphasizing high-impact practices, personal and career connections, and inclusivity supporting all learners to succeed in our region and beyond." To achieve this mission, CU delivers undergraduate, graduate, professional and certificate programs, characterized by rigorous and coherent learning experiences for face-to-face (F2F), online, multi-modal, and blended course and program delivery. Learning experiences and outcomes follow educational policies and procedures that govern CU, best practices, and external benchmarks. Both faculty-led and administrative oversight ensures compliance, leading to consistency across all programs aligned with conventional higher education expectations.

## COHERENT STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES (CRITERION 1)

***Certificate, undergraduate, graduate and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning.***

Coherent student learning experiences across all locations, degree levels, and modalities result from adhering to the State System's Board of Governor's (BOG's) policies; the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) guidelines; accrediting standards and reporting requirements; and CU policies and procedures. Consistency, rigor, and synthesis of learning ensue from policies, procedures, guidelines, and/or initiatives for degree programs and general education (GE) including the first-year experience, high-impact practices, and assessment.

## Degree and Certificate Programs

The University offers 20 master's, 61 bachelor's, and five associate degree programs; 68 minors; and 13 non-degree certification programs. CU also features doctoral degrees in audiology and nursing. BOG Policy 1990-06-A: Academic Degrees, BOG Policy 1993-01-A: General Education, and PDE guidelines govern the number and distribution of credits for degree requirements and unify the undergraduate curriculum through GE learning goals and courses. Baccalaureate degrees must consist of 120 total credits, with a minimum of 40 credits in GE coursework and a minimum of 42 credits at an advanced level. Other parameters are established for particular degree types. For example, all Bachelor of Science degree programs require a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 60 credits of required coursework in the major (including cognates). The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) oversees the curricular process and ensures all proposals undergo a thorough review and comply with policies and guidelines. The degree requirements create cohesion and rigor across different degree awards as they require a range of credits devoted to GE, major and cognate, advanced coursework, and professional degree requirements. All higher education credentialing programs meet the PASSHE Guidelines for GE and academic programs and national program accreditation standards where applicable.

## General Education

As discussed in Criterion 5, the CU's GE program offers a common intellectual experience with sufficient scope and breadth across five core themes and 16 learning goals, including a first-year experience, for students at all locations. The GE handbook asserts that learning across disciplines fosters integration of knowledge and develops skills in diversity, civic and cultural awareness, communication, problem-solving, and critical analysis. Developing competencies across multiple disciplines fosters synthesis of knowledge, innovation, and adaptability for interdisciplinary problem solving and innovation. Both UCC and GEC oversight ensure compliance with BOG, university policies, and the GE handbook.

## High-Impact Practices

CU's mission and goals emphasize the integration of high-impact practices into the curriculum. While initiatives for first-year experience, learning communities, and global/diversity provide essential foundations for learners, other experiences such as capstone experiences, internships, practica, and undergraduate research provide ample opportunities for synthesis of learning. These kinds of experiences are embedded in the program curricula and afford opportunities for synthesis and applied learning. All locations have placed a significant emphasis on high-impact practices as reflected in the senior NSSE responses from students who either completed or plan to complete experiences listed in Table 3.1. The results compare favorably to peers especially for learning communities and internships, etc.; however, CU has commissioned a working group to streamline definitions and track experiences not currently recorded in the new student information system as foundational work to focus planning on high-impact practices and increase the array of opportunities.

<b>Table 3.1: Comparative 2022 NSSE Results for Select High-Impact Practices</b>							
<b>Which of the following do you plan to do before you graduate?</b>	<b>BL</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>CU</b>	<b>PASS HE</b>	<b>Carne gie</b>	<b>NSSE</b>
Study abroad program	5.9%	3.3%	0.0%	4.9%	4.5%	4.8%	7.8%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	18.5%	26.2%	29.1%	20.6%	19.7%	17.0%	20.7%
Learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	35.4%	26.2%	35.4%	34.0%	23.3%	17.9%	20.8%
Formal leadership role in a student organization or group	43.3%	40.4%	50.5%	43.5%	35.3%	24.1%	30.5%
Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam, etc.)	40.6%	57.5%	78.1%	46.5%	42.3%	41.3%	43.3%
Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	56.2%	59.9%	52.2%	56.4%	49.9%	39.0%	44.1%

### **Program and Course Development and Approval**

Rigorous processes for curricular development also occasion coherent, relevant learning experiences and include outlets for offering feedback that drive continuous improvement. Those processes include new program and course approval and ongoing curricular review and revision. New program proposals comply with the BOG policies for academic degrees and GE and follow State System processes and templates. The proposals must include a program description, needs analysis, demand data, collaborative initiatives, required resources, and program learning outcomes. Full proposals must clearly demonstrate student and market demand, resource sufficiency, plans to mitigate against financial risk, and a budget. Proposals undergo critical review by State System personnel and peer chief academic officers and integrate feedback before presented to the Council of Trustees and then State System for final approval. This layered review bolsters the proposal's strength, coherence, and relevancy. Procedures for new minors, concentrations, and certifications require notification to the State System and approval by CU. Once approved, faculty can develop and submit curricular proposals.

At the local level, UCC has established procedures, timelines, forms, and initially a SharePoint site for the curriculum management system. The procedures describe how to complete essential steps and forms which include a program tracking sheet, program course checklist and sequencing plan, program degree map, course form, course deletion form, and master course syllabus form. The procedures and forms integrate expectations of BOG policies and relevant guidelines. For example, the program tracking sheet requires total credits, in-major credits, and directed GE. Proposals include student learning objectives, program course checklists, and program degree mappings, which communicate what students know at program completion and an efficient pathway to achieve it.

Following a consultative, deliberative process, CU transitioned the curriculum management system from SharePoint to the Coursedog platform, which provides easy access for faculty and administrators to see curricular proposals, approvals, forms, and workflows. With extensive training and open office hours held by the UCC's Forms Subcommittee, Coursedog was implemented in Spring 2024 and now houses program and course proposal forms, tracks where proposals are in the process, and allows adequate opportunity to receive and incorporate feedback. Proposals include all 21 components of the curricular proposal form and a master syllabus.

## Program Assessment Review

Following the approval of the CU curricula at the end of 2022-23, program faculty completed a Program Assessment Review (PAR) in Transition document in May 2023 which requested fundamental components needed for systematic and useful assessment. The process required programs to submit program descriptions, student learning objectives, curriculum maps, an assessment plan, and program analysis with a basic action plan. The curriculum map showed how program student learning objectives are introduced, reinforced, and mastered in required courses and learning experiences and gives a clear view of program coherence, rigor, and synthesis of learning across the curriculum. Faculty were provided feedback on their PAR reports from the faculty assessment liaison and Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The PAR process was revised as described in Criterion 6, transitioned to the Nuventive Solutions Premier assessment platform, and continues as an annual academic program planning and assessment process. Moving forward, the PAR process requires faculty to review / update curriculum maps and assessment plans annually, report academic year-end results, and document data-informed actions, culminating in an annual report that can be downloaded or printed from Nuventive. This annual report format will be aligned with the revised BOG five-year program review policy and procedures so that each program's annual report can be aggregated and used for the basis of this comprehensive review process.

## FACULTY (CRITERION 2)

*Student learning experiences that are:*

- a. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies;*
- b. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do;*
- c. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are sufficient in number;*
- d. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation;*
- e. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures.*
- f. Student learning experiences are delivered by faculty and other professionals who hold requisite qualifications, demonstrate effectiveness and sufficiency in fulfilling primary responsibilities of faculty work, engage in professional growth and innovation, and undergo regular review through clear, transparent processes.*

CU hires qualified faculty and professionals with appropriate credentials to design, deliver, and assess student learning. Through a rigorous hiring process, complementary course assignments determined by deans and chairs, systematic evaluation, and professional development, faculty demonstrably fulfill their responsibilities to deliver a high-quality student learning experience. The APSCUF collective bargaining agreement (CBA) outlines a detailed process for recommending and approving new faculty appointments. After presidential approval, searches may commence. Faculty job postings originate in academic departments and specify the selection criteria and qualifications consistent with university, program, and specialized accreditation standards. Standardized search procedures are contained within CU's talent management software that includes steps to develop a diversified applicant pool and ensure only qualified candidates are advanced through the search process.

CU assures faculty are rigorous and effective in all aspects of faculty work through comprehensive probationary review, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion processes mandated by the APSCUF CBA, Articles 12, 14, 15, and 16. Probationary faculty are evaluated each semester through standardized end-of-semester student surveys, peer evaluations of teaching effectiveness, and departmental committee and chair evaluations of teaching, scholarship, and service. Each college dean also reviews probationary faculty folders each year. This tiered review process provides opportunities at each level to offer feedback and mentorship to junior faculty, suggest opportunities for improvement, and recommend faculty for renewal or nonrenewal. Aggregated data on student course evaluations coupled with summaries for faculty scholarly work and service show that CU faculty meet expectations for teaching excellence and actively contribute to a wide breadth of scholarly and service outlets. On a scale of 0-4, 0=lowest and 4=highest ratings, faculty evaluation scores for Fall 2023 reflect favorably on faculty with above average ratings on all categories, ranging from 3.19 on course rating to 3.55 for using grading procedures as specified and explaining student performance (see Table 3.2). Spring and Fall 2023 ratings also compare favorably to Fall 2022 in all categories.

<b>Session/Year</b>	<b>Instructor Rating</b>	<b>Course Rating</b>	<b>Progress on Objectives</b>	<b>Involving Students</b>	<b>Communicating</b>	<b>Evaluations</b>
<b>Fall 2022</b>	3.29	3.12	3.32	3.54	3.39	3.51
<b>Spring 2023</b>	3.42	3.19	3.41	3.62	3.47	3.58
<b>Fall 2023</b>	3.38	3.19	3.37	3.60	3.44	3.55

The data collected through probationary reviews provide foundational material used in the promotion and tenure review processes. Both departmental and University level committee recommendations as well as administrative evaluations are contributing factors in promotion and tenure decisions (Article 16 as well as University policies). Post-tenure reviews are similar to those for probationary faculty. They involve student survey-based evaluations and departmental faculty, chair, and dean reviews of teaching, scholarship, and service that serve as documentation used in promotion processes as well.

CU has attended prudently to ensure sufficient faculty and professionals exist to deliver the academic programs and services at each location. When CU integrated, significant deliberation occurred to establish home campuses and a presence of academic and academic support leaders at each campus. While a home campus was designated for the provost, five deans, and five associate deans across the locations, a regular weekly schedule exists for their physical presence at each campus. Faculty were assigned to academic departments that span across the campuses, and department chairs and assistant department chairs were elected across locations to provide leadership at that level.

Trends for student/faculty ratios provide measures of faculty sufficiency. In comparison to the State System average and peer institutions, the student/faculty and student/non-faculty ratios appear to indicate sufficiency. Table 3.3 shows longitudinal IPEDS data with trends for student FTE/instructional faculty FTE. Instructional faculty are primarily those who teach and exclude librarians, counselors, special program directors, and faculty in administrative positions. Ratios for CU (all locations combined), LH, and MA appear well below the peer and State System averages and slightly above for BL, suggesting sufficient faculty across the locations, with faculty balancing loads by staffing courses through distance learning or voluntarily traveling to another location for F2F delivery.

<b>Institution/Peer Group</b>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Est.
<b>Peer Average</b>	19.7	19.6	19.4	19.0	19.4	18.7	19.4*
<b>State System Average</b>	19.2	19.0	18.0	17.7	18.5	18.7	18.5*
<b>BL</b>	20.3	19.1	18.9	19.4	20.2	19.5	18.7
<b>LH</b>	18.5	16.8	15.6	14.6	14.8	15.5	15.7
<b>MA</b>	13.4	12.1	10.9	12.7	14.0	15.3	15.9
<b>CU</b>	18.6	17.2	16.6	17.0	17.7	15.8	17.5

Source: IPEDS fall enrollment and fall staff  
 \*IPEDS 2022 data are not yet available for the peer comparisons so the numbers were held constant as an estimate; CU and its campuses are estimated based on fall enrollment and preliminary fall staff files that will be completed and submitted in October  
 Notes: Student FTE is one FTE for a full-time student and .403543 for a part-time student (based on IPEDS research); faculty instructional FTE is one FTE for a full-time faculty and 1/3 for a part-time faculty

As with all institutions, our faculty are expected to excel in teaching, scholarship, and service. The new faculty orientation program provides opportunities to acclimate to the University and learn about expectations in these key areas. Initially, CU’s new faculty orientation was conducted by Human Resources and the faculty-led Center for Teaching and Learning to provide faculty growth in areas of responsibility through a wide range of training opportunities. However, as part of a strategic plan onboarding initiative, Blue Beyond Consulting led a small working group to refine the orientation process, which was rolled out in Fall 2024.

The Sabbatical Committee administers policy and procedures for evaluating and making recommendations to the President on sabbaticals. Faculty are granted alternative workload for scholarship or for program revision or development. Faculty support also is provided for pedagogy through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), led by a faculty director with 50% alternative workload and two faculty Associate Directors who each have 25% alternative workload. There is a representative from each campus on this leadership team. CTL regularly assesses faculty needs and interests and offers programming including webinars, workshops, book clubs, regular e-mail communication with teaching and advising tips, and a resource archive and calendar of events for faculty in our learning management system (LMS), Brightspace. The LMS houses content around advising, ADA compliance, student success, and software systems. CTL offerings also include a range of teaching and research content including improving DEI in our learning environments, effective advising, managing AI usage, and stress reduction. CU provides educational technology support through our Commonwealth Academic Technology Services (CATS) division. CATS includes our LMS support team and instructional designers which sponsor regular training and individualized consultations for all faculty around academic technology needs.

While financial support exists through internal grant opportunities and funds to support professional travel, CU also provides multiple forms of support for external grants. In general terms, those include: 1) the Office of Research led by the Dean of Graduate Education and the Director of Research Compliance and 2) pre-award and post-award services and ongoing training in grantsmanship provided through a contract with the Indiana University of PA Research Institute (IUP-RI). The IUP-RI assists faculty with identifying opportunities, constructing budgets, communicating with granting agencies, and submitting final proposals. The Office of Research assists with all research compliance needs as well as additional training and individualized consultations. During the 2022-23 academic year, CU received two National Science Foundation (NSF) awards. Both focused on improving student persistence and success in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), and both principal investigators applied for their first NSF grant.

In addition to external grant coordination, CU's Faculty Professional Development Committee solicits, reviews, and awards internal grants. Each fall, there is an RFP for projects with a budget up to \$3000. Each spring, there is an RFP for both smaller projects with a maximum budget of \$3000 and larger projects with a maximum of \$7000. The total amount of funding awarded per year differs depending on available funds but is roughly \$35,000. Faculty professional development travel committees in each college also award travel funds annually. Both the provost's and deans' offices provide funding for specific faculty projects, training, and innovation. For example, the provost and deans' offices fund faculty publication fees.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (CRITERION 3)**

***Academic Programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion.***

CU provides multiple points of public access to publications describing CU degree requirements that help students, parents, faculty, staff, and other interested parties understand legacy and CU degree and program requirements. The web-based academic catalog publishes information on academic program requirements (e.g., with links to degree maps, curriculum checklists, course descriptions, crosswalks, and Degree Works) and expected time to completion. Also linked from the catalog, the GE web page gives access to information about the CU GE themes, goals, objectives, and courses that meet GE requirements.

The "My CommonwealthU" web page includes several open-access links to and information about degree maps, crosswalks, master schedule and registration information, and contact information for key offices (e.g., admissions, registrar, and financial aid), all designed to help students understand degree requirements and seek assistance when needed. It also provides links to systems like Banner (our student information system), Degree Works (included in Banner), CU Succeed (our student success system), and Brightspace (our learning management system).

In compliance with FERPA regulations, Banner gives students, faculty, and relevant administrative staff access to the students' legacy and CU academic records, which includes such features as curriculum and courses; prior education and training; the unofficial transcript; class schedule; graduation application; and Degree Works, the academic advising and planning tool. The unofficial transcript includes a summary record of how transfer courses map to CU courses and shows coursework for each session taken here and transferred to the University. The Degree Works worksheet describes graduation requirements for the major (including tracks and concentrations), general education, minors, and free electives. The audit shows how completed courses meet degree requirements and explains when courses are not eligible or do not count toward the degree (e.g., withdrew, failed, repeated, remedial). The audit also lists courses in progress and helps students understand time-to-degree completion. Students and faculty use web-based resources and degree audits to track progress toward degree completion, especially during in-person registration and advising meetings which are required for students to receive registration clearance. These reporting tools allow students to easily monitor academic progress.

## **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT (CRITERION 4)**

***Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress.***

CU provides a basic organizational structure that delivers an array of academic and student support services that enhance the institution's programs of study and student success. Beginning with the recruitment and admissions processes, marketing materials and acceptance communications direct students to academic support programs and resources like disability services and TRIO SSS. In keeping with best practice, undergraduate students enroll in first-year experience (FYE) activities such as new student orientation, welcome week, and first-year seminar (FYS) alongside other high-impact practices. Opportunities and support through advising, student support, athletics, and co-/extra-curricular activities are discussed in Standard IV.

## Orientation and the First-Year Experience

Under the leadership of an executive director and campus-based support staff, in-person or virtual orientation for new and transfer students is offered at all campuses prior to beginning their first semester. Summer, pre-fall, and pre-spring orientation programs aim to provide students and their supporters with information about college transition, academic expectations, and campus and community resources.

CU's mission emphasizes a commitment to HIPs, which includes FYE, starting with orientation and other college transition programs and beyond. Previously, all campuses delivered an FYS, which is included in the new *GE Foundations* curricular theme. FYE teams work closely with campus-based programs such as BL's Jump Start, LH's Academic Success Program, and MA's Mounties PEAK, and with Learning Communities (LCs), FYS courses, and academic advisors to lay the foundation for success. First-year initiatives offer programs and mentoring that cover key topics such as study skills, time management, mindfulness, and cultural diversity.

Currently, the FYS development group designed a special-topic course that incorporates required academic content and transition-to-college skills and engagement opportunities. The course enrolls all first-time, incoming students each fall with sections available on all campuses. As a HIP and student success strategy designed to increase retention, sections are offered face-to-face on the student's home campus. Training is provided to faculty teaching FYS classes based on best practices and research from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina.

The National Resource Center, as well as other nationally recognized organizations such as the Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education, have also informed other FYE program initiatives at CU including LCs at BL and a new initiative known nationally as Freshman/First Year Interest Groups (FIGs/FYIGs). A director for these CU FYE programs was identified and has led multiple working groups across the CU campuses that included faculty, staff, and students, to develop these models. Their planning work to expand the LC model and launch the new FYIG initiative continues with rollout of the FYIG pilot beginning next academic year.

## High-Impact Practices

In addition to FYE, CU provides opportunities for engaging in HIPs across the university. Based on research, these practices are meaningful to deep learning and improve the outcomes for all students but most importantly students that are historically underrepresented in higher education. Recognizing the importance of these experiences, CU placed emphasis on ensuring consistent practices occur on the campuses. As mentioned above, FYE (including FYS and LCs) are implemented on the campuses, and working groups met and designed a consistent university-wide model for these initiatives. High-impact topics like diversity and global learning

are embedded in GE themes and learning goals, and all campuses support study abroad despite low enrollments due to COVID-19.

As described in Standard IV, the Alumni and Professional Engagement Office spearheads the Professional U initiative, through which a subset of high-impact practices are coordinated. Students, faculty, alumni, employers, and community partners may interact through internships, faculty-mentored research, and study abroad; industry-specific employer career fairs; career development specialists for each academic college; and robust centers of professional practice led by faculty directors.

Table 3.4 provides examples of CU enrollment in credit-bearing, experiential learning opportunities beyond the areas described. These statistics will provide a baseline upon which CU can grow.

Year	Clinical Experience	Field Experience	Internship/ Practicum	Independ. Study	Lecture/ Clinical	Student Teaching	Thesis
2016	898	466	1,291	408	2,336	673	27
2017	970	400	1,153	404	2,278	643	33
2018	948	341	1,203	378	2,385	588	31
2019	738	275	964	412	2,267	595	21
2020	920	273	756	276	2,592	634	17
2021	832	271	866	259	2,575	643	28
2022	711	169	806	247	2705	813	17
Grand Total	6,017	2,195	7,039	2,384	17,138	4,589	174

Source: PASSHE ADCP Course Files

Students explore enriching learning experiences through the university Honors College, study abroad, undergraduate research, and independent studies. The Honors College, with chapters at BL, LH, and MA and over 500 students enrolled, includes a rigorous curriculum focusing on academic excellence, civic and community service, leadership development, global awareness, and high-impact experiences. All Honors College students are encouraged to study abroad. Donor-funded grants and scholarships are in place to make international study, scientific field research, scholarly and fine arts residency programs, and professional internships affordable to all Honors students. Study abroad opportunities are also available to all CU students. Students can consider a study abroad course in any of nearly two-dozen countries through the Center for Global Engagement. Options include CU faculty-led study abroad courses (2024 options include courses in Italy, Belize, and Morocco), short- or long-semester programs through established exchange programs with universities abroad, and courses offered by third-party affiliates vetted by the Center for Global Engagement.

Research also serves as a key component of the Honors College, faculty-sponsored independent studies, and competitive proposals and grants. The annual Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities grants competition is open to any undergraduate student and provides up to \$4800 in wages and \$1000 in supplies for research or creative works. Student research is presented on campus at regular events such as the College of Science and Technology Research Day, the Honors College Fall and Spring Receptions, and the Lock Haven Celebration of Scholarship. Students in all five Colleges regularly present research findings at regional and national meetings, including annual meetings of the Northeast Regional Honors Council, Northeast Geological Society of American, Society for the Advancement of Management, American Academy of Audiology, American College of Sports Medicine, National Student Nurses Association, the DevLearn Conference and Expo, and many others. Along with Bucknell University, Susquehanna University, and Geisinger Health System,

CU sponsors the annual Susquehanna Valley Undergraduate Research Symposium and regularly sends 10 to 20 students there to present research each year.

Students can enhance their academic experience with co-curricular activities such as clubs, organizations, athletics, and leadership programs. The University has 57 varsity athletic teams (23 at BL, 21 at LH, and 13 at MA). Non-varsity athletes can choose from 28 club sports (17 at BL, 10 at LH, and one at MA) and 31 intramural sports (14 at BL, 11 at LH, and five at MA). More than 200 additional student clubs and organizations exist in a wide range of areas from gender and women's issues, government and policy, technology, community outreach, and fitness. The University has indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and fitness classes at all three campuses. Each campus has a modern student recreation center and additional fitness opportunities for students including swimming pools, tracks, gymnasiums, tennis courts, ball fields, and yoga and dance studios.

## Library

CU's libraries connect people with valuable information resources, teach students information literacy skills, and develop collections in support of the university-wide curricula, cultural, and leisure pursuits. With a director housed at MA and assistant directors at LH and BL, a full complement of faculty librarians and support staff across the campuses serve CU faculty, staff, and students with accessing materials via physical collections at home campuses, interlibrary loan, and online databases. Accessibility to most online resources is available despite students' geographic location, as is the ability to consult with Library faculty and staff. The libraries are fully integrated and have merged the searchable catalogs which include thousands of links to e-resources as well as bibliographic records of physical materials (e.g., printed books, etc.). Library instruction goes beyond basic orientation and focuses upon information fluency skills and mastery. The libraries also partner with the student success centers to hire, train, and assess student workers to serve as peer research consultants. Librarians are heavily involved in the FYS, instruction, and research process with a Library faculty member dedicated to each academic department for instruction, research, and collection development.

## Student Success Centers

Students can utilize the Student Success Center on each campus, which provides academic support for transitioning from high school to college, connecting students with campus and community resources, and assisting with time management and study skills. Student Success also identifies vulnerabilities of at-risk students and invites them to participate in programs such as Early Start Programs and Partnership in Achieving Student Success (PASS) to bolster their likelihood of succeeding. These programs provide students with peer mentors to assist in their academic pursuits and transitions. Along with the Student Success Center, other academic support services address special needs and at-risk students including the Office of Disability Services, TRIO-SSS, ACT101, and DEI.

## GENERAL EDUCATION (CRITERION 5)

***At institutions that offer undergraduate education: A general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:***

- a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field;***

- b. **offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.**

The previous legacy and now current GE programs all meet PASSHE content guidelines, which specifically mandate compliance with MSCHE Requirements and Standards. The current GE curriculum combines five curricular themes and 16 program goals aligned with the PASSHE and MSCHE requirements for GE (see Table 3.5) and the AAC&U essential learning outcomes, which illustrates how CU’s liberal education approach conforms to higher education expectations. The GE Handbook offers a detailed program description, which ensures students can pursue breadth of study and acquire fundamental skills.

<b>Table 3.5: Mapping of GE Program Curricular Themes and Goals, State System Requirements, and AAC&amp;U Essential Learning Outcomes</b>			
<b>GE Program Curricular Theme</b>	<b>GE Program Goals</b>	<b>State System Requirements (aligned with MSCHE)</b>	<b>AAC&amp;U Essential Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>Foundations (15 credits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-year Seminar</li> <li>• Written Communication</li> <li>• Oral Communication</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Quantitative Reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral and written communication</li> <li>• Critical analysis and reasoning</li> <li>• Information literacy</li> <li>• Expanding cultural and global awareness</li> <li>• Scientific and quantitative reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical World and Natural World</li> <li>• Intellectual and Practical Skills</li> </ul>
<b>Interconnections (9 credits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Global Perspectives</li> <li>• Foreign Languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives</li> <li>• Expanding cultural and global awareness</li> <li>• Preparing to make well-reasoned judgements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical World and Natural World</li> <li>• Personal and Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Intellectual and Practical Skills</li> <li>• Integrative and Applied Learning</li> </ul>
<b>Citizenship and Responsibility (6 credits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Ethical Reasoning</li> <li>• Critical Reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives</li> <li>• Critical analysis and reasoning</li> <li>• Preparing to make well-reasoned judgements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal and Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Intellectual and Practical Skills</li> <li>• Integrative and Applied Learning</li> </ul>
<b>Natural World and Technology (9 credits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural World</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientific and quantitative reasoning</li> <li>• Technological competency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical World and Natural World</li> <li>• Intellectual and Practical Skills</li> <li>• Personal and Social Responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Creativity and Expression (6 credits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical analysis and reasoning</li> <li>• Study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical World and Natural World</li> <li>• Intellectual and Practical Skills</li> </ul>

As shown in Table 3.5, the *Foundations* GE curricular theme includes five learning goals achieved through courses and learning experiences that support student success. Part of a larger FYE, the First-Year Seminar (FYS) complements intentional skill development in written communication, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis. Acquiring skill fundamentals prepares students for college and life success. Building on *Foundations*, the remaining four GE curricular themes continue requisite skill development and cover the breadth of knowledge characteristic of a model GE curriculum. *Interconnections* allows students to discover human behavior, social interactions, and global communities while *Citizenship and Responsibility* fosters the ability to make well-reasoned judgments, decide ethically, and act responsibly. *Natural World and Technology* prepares students to use scientific inquiry/principles and technology to explore issues, evaluate data, and solve problems. *Creativity and Expression*

affords students opportunities to gain an appreciation for the arts and literature. Combined, these GE themes and goals are designed for students to meaningfully connect ideas, develop intellectual skills, navigate complex problems, and become informed citizens.

Providing students with ample opportunities to develop competencies across multiple disciplines fosters knowledge integration, innovation, and adaptability necessary to solve complex interdisciplinary problems while at the same time creating awareness of the interdependence among people and ideas and creating openness to differences. These GE objectives are addressed in all undergraduate degrees with varying credit requirements for different degree awards. BS and BA degrees both require 42 credits of GE coursework while the AS, AAS, and AA require 24, 21, and 30 credits respectively.

The (GEC) consists of 12 faculty members from all colleges, campuses, and disciplines that mainly deliver GE courses, and two non-voting administrative representatives. GEC oversees the GE program by (1) initiating, reviewing, and recommending policy changes regarding GE; (2) reviewing and recommending GE curriculum; and (3) coordinating mentoring and assessment efforts. For curricular review and approval, the course form template requires the submitter to indicate if a course is seeking approval for inclusion in GE and provide essential information about which theme/goal, how the course fits the theme/goal, and how the course student learning objectives map to the GE student learning objectives, including how the methods and structure of the course allow students to achieve outcomes. The GEC recommends to the UCC an action on each GE course proposal. The UCC recommends to the Provost who renders the final decision on all curricular proposals. Each semester, the GEC implements the data collection plan for GE program assessment of all learning goals. A program review process follows the four-year cycle in Table 3.6 for which data submitted each semester and up through the designated semester is used to conduct a deeper review of the selected learning goals. Curricular approval, assessment, and program review processes ensure coherence and program authenticity.

<b>Table 3.6: GE Program Assessment Review Four-Year Cycle</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Program Learning Goal</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Fall 2023	First-year Seminar
		Writing
	Spring 2024	Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning
<b>Year 2</b>	Fall 2024	Historical Themes Diversity
		Global Perspectives Foreign Language
	Spring 2025	
<b>Year 3</b>	Fall 2025	Citizenship and Society Ethical Reasoning Critical Analysis and Reasoning
	Spring 2026	Natural World Technology
<b>Year 4</b>	Fall 2026	Literature Arts Creative
	Spring 2027	Seven-semester Assessment report

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (CRITERION 6)

***In institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula.***

CU offers 22 graduate and professional training programs, many with multiple possible tracks and certification options. Eighteen of the 22 graduate and professional programs are accredited.

To receive program approval, all graduate programs must comply with the BOG Policy 1990-06-A; programs are required to demonstrate that all students have a culminating experience which can be met through a thesis, research project, comprehensive examination, or an integrative experience that synthesizes theory and practice. All programs meet this requirement through capstone courses, action research, clinical, practicum, and/or field experience requiring various forms of research, scholarship, and independent thinking. CU further supports graduate student learning in these areas through internal grants to support materials and travel needs associated with graduate student research as well as travel funds to support research presentations.

Many of the programs require students to complete a clinical placement/practicum/field placement and others include these as options. These experiential learning environments place a high premium on independent thinking, challenging students to solve real-world problems in real time. For example, students in the Speech-Language Pathology Master's Program have opportunities to learn through experiences in both our on-campus Speech, Hearing, and Language Clinic and in our local schools. Students in our Master's in Biology program regularly participate in field and lab work with their faculty.

Numerous opportunities for graduate students to develop independent thinking occur through graduate assistantships in units related to their field of study, in student support services roles, and in research assistantships. The University offers graduate assistantships in numerous units across campus including Athletics, Marketing and Communication, and Student Services.

Graduate programs are delivered by faculty with appropriate credentials and professional activities for teaching at that level. The University applies the same faculty search procedures to graduate searches as they do undergraduate, requiring that candidates meet posted qualifications. Graduate faculty receive the same resources for instruction and research as undergraduate faculty.

## THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS (CRITERION 7)

***Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third party providers.***

Not applicable.

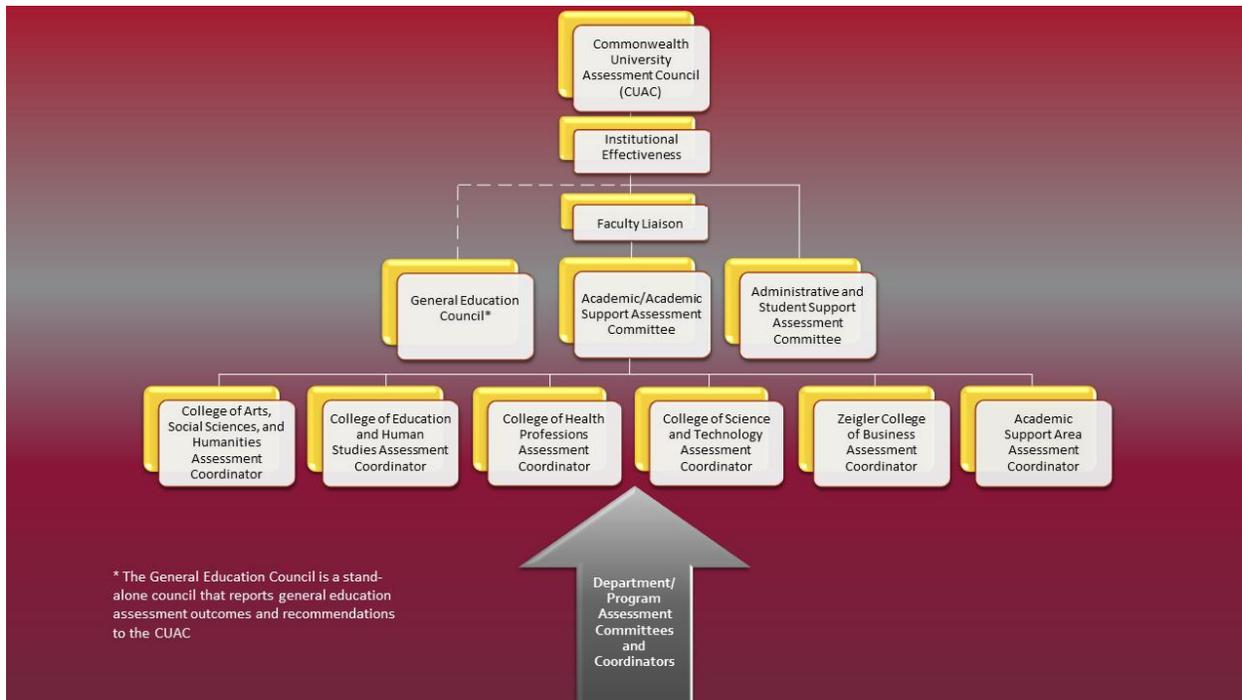
## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (CRITERION 8)

***Periodic assessment of the programs providing student learning opportunities.***

Periodic assessment of academic, educational, student support, and administrative programs takes place across the University to assure continuous review and improvement of the student learning experience and opportunities. As shown in Figure 3.1, OIE coordinates with the faculty

assessment liaison, the overarching CU Assessment Council and its subcommittees, and the GEC to oversee assessment, conduct analysis, and make recommendations toward continuous improvement. The CU Assessment Council receives reports from each of the subcommittees and provides its recommendations to the President’s Cabinet as appropriate.

**Figure 3.1: Assessment Council / Committee Organization Chart**



All academic programs, accredited and non-accredited, are assessed annually. During integration, all programs conducted a comprehensive review to develop the CU curriculum, which includes nearly 280 active programs including majors, minors, concentrations, and certificates. CU will conduct five-year program reviews according to the revised BOG Program Review Policy and cycle. Self-studies for specialized accreditation and accrediting agencies’ reports provide evidence of comprehensive review and analysis for those programs.

### Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Academic Program Assessment Committee, the Faculty Assessment Liaison, and OIE coordinate and oversee academic assessment processes to ensure disciplined self-assessment of institutional effectiveness in academic programs and utilize assessment data for decision making, resource allocation, and improvement. Following integration, faculty developed their new curriculum in 2022-23, and the Program Assessment Review (PAR) in Transition Report, User Guide, and Evaluation Rubric were created to guide faculty through a transitional annual report process. The PAR requested basic program descriptions, student learning objectives, curriculum maps, assessment plans, and program analysis for the CU program and any unreported assessment results from the legacy programs. The faculty assessment liaison and OIE staff provided individual mentorship and assessment training to aid faculty in developing the 2022-23 annual report and scored rubrics with ratings and comments that pointed to opportunities for improvement. A rubric summary for each program shared scores on the quality of each annual report and collegial advice about how to improve the program’s assessment process. Standard V includes additional information improve the PAR assessment process.

A high-level summary report of submissions and rubric scores were also provided to the Academic Program Assessment Committee, deans, and associate deans. During and after the fall 2023 assessment committee and Council of Deans meetings, members suggested changes to the annual report, web pages, data dashboards, training, and reporting as shown below:

- Incorporate faculty scholarly activity in the annual report
- Use M for Mastery on the curriculum map
- Include a review level for deans and associate deans, provide timely updates on submissions, and share reports on rubric ratings and comparative analyses
- Include links to the new Nuventive instance and user guide on the web
- Ensure data for minors and concentrations are available on dashboards
- Revise the scoring rubric against the new Nuventive Instance and include evaluation about the quality of assessment
- Show number and percent of programs that submitted PARs on summary report
- Acknowledge exemplar programs
- Offer Nuventive training after programs can view the new instance

The 2023-24 academic planning and assessment process was moved into the Nuventive Solutions Premier assessment platform to generate the annual report due each year by May 31. The platform aligns with the annual report, including tabs for general information, curriculum maps, assessment plan and results, and the annual summary (including strengths, weaknesses, and resource needs), and action plan based on program and student learning outcomes. [PROVIDE PROGRAM EXAMPLES FROM MAY 2024].

Following the annual report submission, OIE staff and the faculty assessment liaison used the revised rubric to evaluate the annual report and provide feedback to the program assessment coordinators, academic deans, and associate deans. [PROVIDE 2024 SUMMARY RESULTS] This process continues as a means of improving the quality of assessment.

## General Education Assessment

The GE Council (GEC) serves as the body responsible for assessing CU's institutional learning goals. The GE SharePoint site provides resources and includes those courses under review by the GEC. The GE web site provides information about the GE Program themes, goals, and learning objectives. The site links to GE Advisor and Student Handbook, curriculum maps, rubrics, data collection worksheets, and Qualtrics data submission form. For all 16 learning goals, GE data collection occurs from the GE courses offered every semester. The GEC provides a high-level data summary each semester/year. As shown in Table 3.X, assessment reviews with a deeper analysis occur on a four-year rotation. The GEC shares reports with the UCC and CU Assessment Council including all changes recommended as a result of assessment. [PROVIDE UPDATES WITH DATA AND ACTIONS].

## Administrative, Educational, and Student Support Assessment

The Administrative, Educational, and Student Support Assessment Committee oversees all aspects of divisional and unit assessment in coordination with OIE. Each summer, CU's six divisions and more than 60 units conduct operational planning, aligning their goals, initiatives, measures, and targets to the Strategic Plan. Plans are entered into Nuventive by September 15, and results provided as soon as available but by June 15 for all educational and student support areas. As part of the year-end assessment process, units articulate how outcomes inform change in action plans as well as what adjustments were made to next-year's goals, measures, and targets. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES FROM 2023-24 YEAR-END REPORTS].

Similar to the academic side, the OIE staff uses a rubric to evaluate each section of the annual report, providing a summary evaluation of the planning and assessment processes to the vice presidents and unit points of contact. A high-level summary report of submissions and rubric scores are also provided to the Administrative, Educational, and Student Support Assessment Committee and vice presidents for review. Following the first summary report and fall 2023 meeting, the committee met, reviewed the report, and recorded their suggestions in a brief survey.

## Other Administrative Evaluations

Changes as a result of assessment can arise in many ways, some of which are documented above (i.e., resulting from program and/or student learning outcomes assessment); however, assessments, reports, and initiatives from internal areas like task forces or ad hoc committees as well as external influences such as accrediting standards, BOG policy changes, and strategic University initiatives, among others, may factor into program, college, and university plans as part of annual or ad hoc reviews to improve student learning opportunities. An example is the three-year cycle for the LIBQual assessment tool used by the library not only to assess current services, but to address areas in need of improvement. Changes have taken place to provide direct responses to information provided by this tool.

### 6. Areas of Strength

- All curriculum has been reviewed and updated at the program, department, college, and institutional levels within the past two years.

### 7. Opportunities for Improvement and Innovation

- Look into issues of taking synchronous in-person courses vs. online courses (synchronous or asynchronous)
- Varying levels of support for faculty on the campuses – need to assess and address moving forward to ensure equity
- Development of clear assessment related to advising on the CU campuses
- Better support for non-traditional transfer students and early college students
- Credits for prior learning (e.g., military experience, heritage speakers for foreign languages, professional experience credentials)
- Assess if there's equitable access to general education courses across the campuses

### 8. Initial Strategies on Continuous Quality Improvement

- Develop assessment strategy to determine if students are getting the same content at each campus for their programs (e.g., in hybrid courses or multimodal courses)
- Assess and address varying levels of support for faculty on the campuses to ensure equity
- Consider how/if a more consistent advising assessment on the CU campuses can be implemented more consistently
- Develop assessment strategy to determine if students are getting the same content at each campus for their programs (e.g., in hybrid courses or multimodal courses)
- Provide resources and training to faculty on course-embedded assessment of direct student learning
- Assess faculty obstacles to taking advantage of professional development focused on their teaching practice