

VISION AND FUTURE DIRECTION | JULY 2017

MOUNTAIN CAMPUS



HOUSING & DINING SERVICES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

WARNER COLLEGE OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Colorado State University's Mountain Campus is a unique and special place that serves critical educational and research purposes. For more than 100-years, students have forged deep connections to the campus while immersing themselves in the environments they study. Today, the Mountain Campus serves a broad swath of ages, imparting environmental science to new generations of scientists, conservationists, and citizens. This document serves as a compass to guide planning and the future direction of the Mountain Campus so that it may continue and build on this legacy.

This vision for the future is grounded in recognition that maintaining the character of the campus that has touched so many is critical, and the University is committed to a path that maintains the core experience that students have benefited from in the past.

A fundamental goal of this vision is to maintain and build on the foundation of work currently at the campus, while fostering new opportunities for research, teaching, and learning by establishing a strategic vision for the future.



VISION

The Colorado State University Mountain Campus will play a key role in advancing CSU's land grant mission of education, research, and outreach, especially in environmental and natural resource disciplines. Programs and activities at the Mountain Campus will shape and inspire current and future leaders' lives through learning and immersion experiences in the Rocky Mountains and will facilitate research and discovery across the social, biological, and physical sciences addressing critical issues in ecology, environmental science, and natural resource conservation and management.



GOAL 1

SERVE AS THE REGION'S PREMIERE HIGH ELEVATION EDUCATIONAL FACILITY.

The Mountain Campus has served a unique educational role for more than 100 years. From the first forestry course in 1914, the campus has grown to serve as a cornerstone of undergraduate education programs in CSU's Warner College of Natural Resources, the site for environmental education of thousands of elementary school students, and a base for extended education and conferences held throughout the spring, summer, and fall. The stunning natural setting of the campus, overnight accommodations, food service, classrooms, meeting sites, and conference facilities combine to allow an educational experience that is rivaled by few spots in the world.

Although students and conference participants continue to engage in transformative learning experiences at the Mountain Campus, aging infrastructure is a limiting factor impacting educational opportunities and experiences. Decades-old teaching and living facilities, and limited

bandwidth and technological connectivity restrict the campus's educational potential.

Moreover, because very little of the campus is winterized, the site is almost entirely unused for half of the year. Challenges imposed by these limitations are especially acute given increasing enrollments in the College and University.

Achieving the Mountain Campus's educational potential will require:

- Renovation or repurposing of existing classroom space
- Creating new cutting-edge classrooms, teaching labs, and instructional office space
- Providing high-speed Internet to the campus



GOAL 2

PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR CUTTING EDGE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ENDEAVORS.

The Mountain Campus's potential to serve as a platform for research is largely untapped. Its high elevation location embedded in a rich diversity of ecological communities and geophysical setting in the mountains at the headwaters of the Cache la Poudre River sets the stage for the Mountain Campus to serve as one of the nation's outstanding research sites and field stations.

Historic restrictions in research activities permitted on site, minimal research infrastructure, and lack of long-term environmental data have resulted in limited research productivity in the area.

Achieving the Mountain Campus's research potential will require:

- Renovation of existing facilities and construction of one or more new research labs
- Construction of housing for researchers and field crews
- Providing reliable high-speed Internet
- Installation and deployment of instrumentation to capture foundational environmental data
- Monitoring infrastructure and activities to begin building long-term environmental datasets



GOAL 3

PROVIDE A SAFE, SUSTAINABLE, AND FULFILLING CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT.

The success of the Mountain Campus is inextricably intertwined with the human experience of the students, instructors, guests, visitors, and staff who spend time there. The magic that happens at the Mountain Campus builds from the strong linkages between the campus's infrastructure, a staff dedicated to providing the best possible guest experience, and the immersion of the campus in a stunning natural setting.

Achieving the Mountain Campus's potential for a safe, sustainable, and fulfilling environment will require:

- Expansion and upgrades of the campus's dining facilities
- Replacement of existing student cabins with new, energy efficient, winterized cabins
- Upgrade of the campus's water treatment facilities to accommodate greater use and winterization of part of the system
- Installation of sustainable energy infrastructure
- Construction of offices for administration and campus leadership
- Providing competitive salaries and the necessary accommodations and resources to attract and maintain a high-quality workforce





GOAL 4

GENERATE FUNDING AND STEWARD A SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK TO ENABLE THE HIGHEST QUALITY PROGRAMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Until relatively recently, most major universities with strong natural resource programs maintained field stations or camps to support field-based research and experiential education programs. Over the past few decades, many universities have withdrawn support, abandoned, or sold these facilities because of the expense and financial challenges associated with running such sites.

In 1974, faced with these pressures, CSU found an innovative solution to the Mountain Campus's financial challenges by building a conference center and transferring campus management responsibility for the campus to the CSU Division of Student Affairs. This creative solution both helped ensure the continued success of academic programming at the campus and enabled value-added outreach and continuing education experiences. CSU's retention of programs at the Mountain Campus positions it among an elite group of programs that continue to enable high-impact experiential education activities at dedicated field sites.

Collaborations among Housing & Dining Services, Facilities Management, central administration, academic units, and external partners are necessary to build new funding streams.

Achieving the Mountain Campus's need for a sustainable funding stream to fulfill its potential will require new and more diverse sources of revenue including increased funding from:

- Educational and outreach initiatives
- Extramural research and infrastructural grants from competitive sources (e.g., NSF)
- Charitable foundations and philanthropy
- Internal institutional investment
- Individual and corporate donors



GOAL 5

CREATE A FORMAL UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE FOR COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP TO SUSTAIN LONG-TERM FULFILLMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN CAMPUS'S POTENTIAL.

The Mountain Campus serves a diverse suite of campus needs spanning the mission areas of a Land Grant institution. Strong communication and collaboration across programs is critical to effectively pursue the spectrum of mission areas in a fiscally sound manner with attention to infrastructure and management.

To advance the strongest possible vision for the Mountain Campus, a formal cross-unit leadership and advisory team will help ensure programmatic coordination and pursuit of the strongest possible strategic direction. This team will be comprised of representatives from CSU Housing & Dining Services, Warner College of Natural Resources, and Facilities Management.



ADVANCING THESE GOALS

CSU's Mountain Campus provides unique, critical opportunities for learning and research. The study of natural resources and environmental sciences, at any age, is incomplete without immersive, hands-on, experiences in the field. All students, from K-12 students to adults, benefit significantly from these high-impact practices. There's no better venue in the region to realize those benefits than CSU's Mountain Campus.

Realizing these opportunities still faces significant challenges and hurdles. Through the shared vision articulated here these challenges can be met through intentional, consistent, strategic action.

The five goals laid out in this plan create a framework to ensure that the Mountain Campus not only lives up to its century-long legacy, but also can meet its full potential in the coming decades. Action now means sustaining a resource that enables high-quality immersive experiences and underscores CSU's commitments to students, science, and creating new knowledge for future generations.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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