



April 29, 2022

Ms. Joyce McConnell  
President  
Colorado State University  
102 Administration Bldg.  
0100 Campus Delivery  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

Dear President McConnell:

Attached is a copy of the Multi-Location Visit Report completed following the visit to Colorado State University. As detailed in the report, the pattern of operations at the locations appears to be adequate and no further review or monitoring is necessary.

Within the Multi-Location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on the instructional oversight, academic services, student services, facilities, marketing and recruitment information and adequacy of assessment of student performance. Please consider these comments as advice for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Per HLC policy, completion of these visits and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-Location Visit or the attached report, please contact Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)).

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Commission



## Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report

**Institution:** Colorado State University

**Additional Locations Visited:**

| Location Name              | Location Address <i>(street, city, state and ZIP code)</i> | Date Reviewed |
|----------------------------|--|---------------|
| Thrive                     | 1415 Park Avenue West, Denver, CO 80205                    | 04/16/2022    |
| Sturm Collaboration Campus | 4500 Limelight Ave. Castle Rock, CO 80109                  | 04/18/2022    |
|                            |  |               |

**Peer Reviewer**

Name: Peter Bemski

Institution: Northcentral University Title: Dean, The School of Business and Technology Management

*Instructions*

In order to document effective administrative systems for managing multiple additional locations, please complete the following. For each item, check **adequate** or **attention needed**, and indicate in Comments the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off-campus. If comments pertain to a specific location, they should be included along with the identity of that location.

Submit the completed report as a PDF file at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The report is due within 30 days after the last additional location is visited.

### Overview Statement

Provide information about current additional locations and the institution's general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

### Comments:

Colorado State University (CSU), per statements from administrators during the visits, recently put in place policies and procedures consistent with a systematic approach to off-campus instruction. Until recently additional sites were said to have been opened and closed somewhat haphazardly. Staff turnover in the CSU Extended Campus, which is a part of the Office of Engagement and Extension (OEE), led to some confusion as to which sites were active. These issues have been addressed, through changes in oversight as well as new procedures, and growth in the number of sites is anticipated, consistent with the new strategic plan, in place since March 2022 with Board Approval expected May 3<sup>rd</sup>. An Academic Master Plan, due this spring, is expected to further reinforce the desire for meaningful growth in serving students through additional locations.

Some new locations will be developed, as has been the case with the Sturm Collaboration Campus, in collaboration with other entities, primarily community colleges in the Colorado community college system. These and others will be developed after identifying community needs and ensuring the adequacy of university resources. Colorado State University, as a Land Grant University, intends to provide access and service to communities and the approach to off campus instruction will reflect that.

The locations visited are overseen jointly by the appropriate School in cooperation with the Office of Engagement and Extension (Education in the case of the Thrive location, and Business in the case of the Sturm location). The Thrive location houses a Ph.D. in Education and Human Resource Studies with a specialization in Organizational Learning, Performance, and Change. Students in this cohort driven program meet for class all day Saturday every two weeks. There are approximately forty students enrolled in the program program. At the Sturm Campus the CSU Business School offers a Business Administration BS with an Accounting concentration. There are currently five students enrolled in the program.

### Institutional Planning

What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

### Comments:

Infrastructure is in place, which includes a Director of Collaboration Campuses, within the Office of OEE, and officed at the Sturm Campus. As potential sites and programs are discussed the appropriate academic programs will work with the OEE and others to determine whether to open an additional location. The new Strategic Plan and the soon to be released Master Academic Plan are expected to drive changes in planning and budgeting. System, state, and grant funding may be used to defray startup costs for additional locations which are meant to be self-funded once up and running. Currently the program at the Thrive location is self-funded. The Sturm location has not yet enrolled sufficient students

to become self-funded, and continues to be system funded. There are initiatives underway intended to increase the number of students there.

The Thrive program consists of approximately 40 students. Modest growth is anticipated effective fall 2022. The current location can accommodate this growth and should the program move to the new CSU Spur campus fall 2022 there will be ample space. The primary source of information for students in the Ph.D. program is through current faculty and word of mouth.

Students in the Business Administration program completed their AA in accounting degrees while at Arapaho Community College also at the Sturm campus. They were recruited into the BA degree through visits made to their classrooms while in the AA program. There are initiatives underway to market the program to area high schools as well as to offer the program as a dual degree, whereby entering students can gain admission both to the AA and the BA. Growth is anticipated, and there is ample room and resources to accommodate it.

## Facilities

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What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

## Comments:

The Sturm campus is a modern facility which primarily houses Arapaho Community College. Consistent with the requirements of the Colorado Department of Higher Education the space is designed to meet the needs of students, faculty, and curriculum. The building provides ample, well-equipped space. There is a large parking lot, easy access, a well-equipped coffee shop, and a variety of lounge areas. Meeting spaces, office space, and classrooms are readily available. CSU takes advantage of some space on an as needed basis while two classrooms are dedicated to CSU.

The Thrive location is a “flex office workspace.” As befits the population of the program housed there, the space is professional in appearance, and is close to hotels, restaurants, and downtown Denver. Many of the students in this program fly into Denver for the class meetings and the site is reasonably accessible from the airport. There is ample paid parking nearby. This program may move to the CSU Spur Campus in the fall of 2022. The Thrive site makes available a variety of spaces on an as needed basis, ranging from private meeting rooms to classrooms. There is a coffee shop and several lounge areas on site.

## Instructional Oversight

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of

courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

**Comments:**

Faculty hiring practices and qualifications at these sites are consistent with those on the main (Fort Collins) campus. Periodic peer review takes place consistent with the practice at the main campus. The tenured professors in the doctoral program also teach in the master's program at the main campus.

The Thrive location houses a Ph.D. program delivered in a face to face model. This program is not offered at the main campus. It was originally housed there but moved to Denver so as to better serve students. Curriculum goes through the same approval processes as do all credit bearing courses at CSU.

The Sturm campus houses an accounting concentration. The students have access to an onsite instructor. Those courses not taught at the Sturm site are available to students through either asynchronous or synchronous online learning. Learning outcomes for those courses taught at the Sturm site are consistent with those of the same courses taught at the CSU main campus. The Program Director at this site has taught in the Accounting Department at the main campus and meets regularly with the Chair of that department.

## **Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support**

What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

**Comments:**

Faculty and the Program Chair serve as advisors for the Ph.D. students. Additionally, the School of Education Graduate Programs Coordinator, a staff member housed at the main campus, provides administrative support for the Thrive students and faculty by phone, email or text. In meetings concern was expressed that this a single point of contact and that going forward the School may want to consider cross training or back-up for that staff member. No staff are housed at the Thrive location.

At this time there is only one instructor at the Sturm site. This faculty member works closely with the faculty in Fort Collins, takes part in meetings, and holds appropriate credentials. Students have ready access to this instructor and have ready access through phone, email, and chat to staff in the School of

Business at the main campus. The Assistant Director of Undergraduate Programs meets with the students online when they begin the program. The OEE Director of Collaboration Campuses is housed at the Sturm campus. The purpose of that position is in large part to ensure the availability of services at anticipated additional locations similar in nature to the Sturm location.

## Student Support

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

### Comments:

Student support is available online and students at these sites access them much as would any CSU student. The CSU library offers extensive online resources to students at both these sites.

The School of Business maintains a Career Services Office available to students and alumni. Interaction with the office is made a part of one of the courses students are required to take. The students at Sturm can complete internships which lead to jobs upon graduation. Advising and tutorial services are provided in part by faculty teaching courses, as well as by the onsite Instructor who also serves as Lead Program Faculty. Given the small number of students the program is something of a cohort model wherein students support one another.

The Ph.D. students at Thrive are in a cohort model and build ongoing academic and sometimes professional relationships with one another and with faculty. The students are working professionals and as such informal career discussions often take place among them, including notifications to one another of professional vacancies. The Professor who serves as Lead Program Faculty takes on much of the advising and other academic services for these students.

## Evaluation and Assessment

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

### Comments:

At the Sturm Campus course objectives are consistent with those offered at the main campus as well. Departmental syllabus approval, and graded assignments ensure that academic quality is consistent with that at the main campus. Data from assignments is reviewed and student performance is analyzed. Assessment of student learning includes all students.

The same Ph.D. research courses are taught both at the main campus and the Thrive location. Syllabi are equivalent. A requirement of the Thrive program is that students submit an article to a refereed journal. The feedback from such submissions forms a data point as does performance in courses and on the preliminary examination and the dissertation defense itself. Learning outcomes are discussed with students and changes have been made to the program to address concerns raised as part of a site visit in 2016 having to do with program scaffolding. The program does much in the way of indirect assessment of student learning and is encouraged to consider ways in which to do additional direct assessment as well.

## Continuous Improvement

What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

### Comments:

Both programs are included in their school's cyclical Academic Program Reviews. A "bridge" program developed by the Instructor at the Sturm site exemplifies ongoing improvement. Gaps were noted in the preparation students received prior to entering the program. The "bridge" program was developed in order to help students to fill those gaps. The program has been successful and has been adopted at the main campus as well.

Student surveys and outcomes data are reviewed regularly, and changes are made based on the information gathered. Community input going forward will come from a variety of sources, including advisory boards and employers. Student demand for the Accounting Program is monitored at the high schools, although the pandemic has made it difficult to do so accurately. The mission, as stated in the overview, strongly supports the locations and the students served at them.

The Ph.D. program curriculum is reviewed frequently by on-site faculty, using student feedback and performance as a data point. Moving the program from the Fort Collins (main) campus to Denver came about as a result of student feedback.

## Marketing and Recruiting Information



What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

☒ Adequate

☐ Attention Needed

**Comments:**

Going forward CSU plans to do more place-based marketing. Advertising does take place online, but for the most part students learn about the programs through word of mouth or faculty presentations. Students in the Ph.D. program spoke to some minor confusion as to whether or not the program was online. This may in part be due to the fact that it was indeed online for much of the pandemic. Students in the program at the Sturm location entered the program expecting more face to face classes. The fact that there are few may in part also be due to the pandemic. It is also due in part to the small size of the program, something which CSU hopes to change. Those comments aside students at both sites vouched for the accuracy of the information that they received prior to enrollment. Online advertising reviewed was accurate.

Concern was expressed that the marketing done for the doctoral program was insufficient, although adequate numbers of students have been recruited on an ongoing basis. Marketing for the program may improve as staff positions are filled within the OEE.

## Summary Recommendation

Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, a summary of findings.

- ☒ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.
- ☐ Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations needs some attention as defined in this report. The institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission. The next scheduled comprehensive review can serve to document that the matters identified have been addressed. **[Identify specific areas needing organizational attention.]**
- ☐ The overall pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations is inadequate and requires attention from the Higher Learning Commission. **[Identify the specific concerns and provide a recommendation for HLC follow-up monitoring.]**

Summary of Findings:

Meetings with leadership, students, staff, and faculty confirm that all are aware of the importance of serving this part of CSU well. It was also apparent that CSU works to make changes in order to continue to do so. As a result of the new Strategic Plan, the anticipated new Academic Master Plan, and changes



in a number of leadership and administrative positions, the approach to additional locations is in transition. The institution is working to make identifying and supporting additional locations an intentional and strategic process consistent with the CSU Mission.

## Notification Program for Additional Locations Approval Form

Complete this form **only** if an institution has been granted access to the Notification Program for Additional Locations. The Institutional Status and Requirements Report for the institution will indicate whether the institution has access to the Program under "Location Stipulation."

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The institution has been accredited by HLC for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction or show-cause.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| HLC has not required monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses in the past 10 years.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing at least three locations.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The institution has no other HLC or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The institution has appropriate systems to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |