

**COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES  
AND THREATS**



**August 2015**



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2015 STRATEGIC PLANNING  
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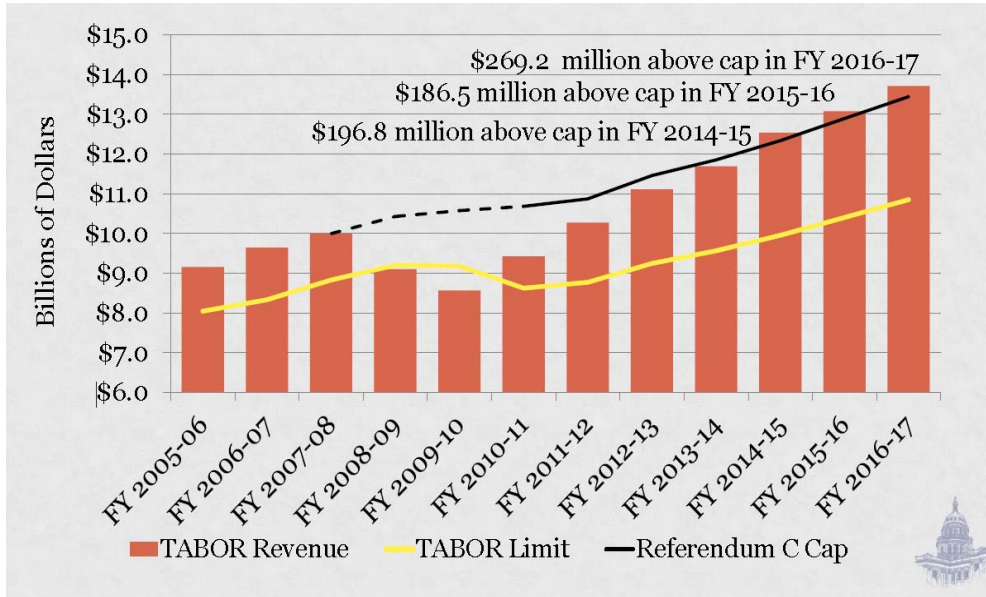
When one looks ahead to Colorado Mesa University's near future, what are the trends on the horizon that will have either a positive or negative affect on higher education? What are the change drivers that will shape CMU, and how does the University strategize to both meet the challenges and design its responses? A key consideration of CMU's strategic planning effort is an analysis of the institution's internal strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), in addition to the opportunities (O) and threats (T) at work in the University's external environment (i.e., SWOT analysis). The *2015 Progress Report on the Colorado Mesa University's 2010 Strategic Planning Goals* addresses the key elements associated with the internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses. This document complements that report by focusing on the broad external trends that offer opportunities and pose threats to the University. These influences are presented below and grouped into six broad categories.

**I. Economic/Financial**

One of the most influential trends that will shape CMU's future is the continuing shift in institutional funding from state support. Looking ahead, the trifecta of the State's revenue and spending limits resulting from the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR), growth in Medicaid spending, and constitutionally-mandated increases in K-12 spending will accelerate the decline in state appropriations to higher education. Even though Corrections funding has slowed, Medicaid and K-12 spending are growing at faster rates. The following elaborates on each of the three major elements affecting state budgeting.

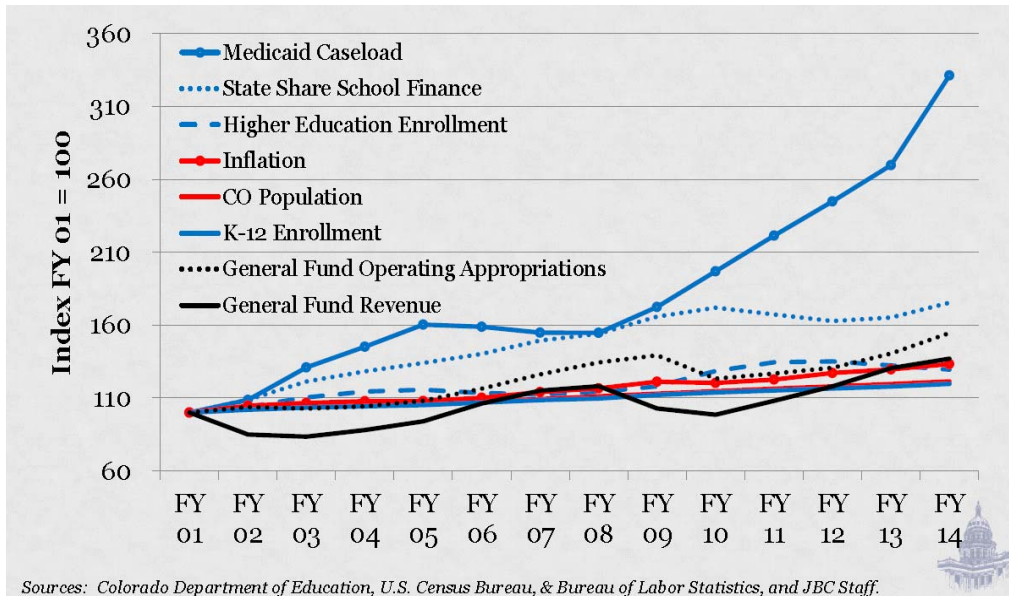
- A. TABOR, as modified by Referendum C in 2005, allowed the State to keep and spend more revenues than originally anticipated. However, as Figure 1 documents, Colorado hit the overall revenue and expenditure limit in fiscal year 2014-15, such that the State will be forced to refund state tax collections to the citizens. Going forward, future revenue and spending growth will be limited to the combination of inflation and population growth. TABOR revenue is projected to exceed the Referendum C cap by \$190.4 million in FY 2014-15, \$76.2 million in FY 2015-16, and \$385.2 million in FY 2016-17, meaning that a refund to taxpayers will occur for each of those years under this forecast unless voters allow the State to retain the revenue.
  
- B. Recent changes to Medicaid have expanded the number of Coloradoans eligible to enroll, such that the average Coloradoan (based on income) now qualifies for Medicaid. Colorado General Fund Medicaid spending increased by \$197 million, or 10%, from FY 2013-14 to FY 2014-15, even with federal offset for Medicaid expansion, and at a time that the State's economy was strong. Colorado has an existing 50%/50% match with the federal government for Medicaid participants. The federal government is also currently paying for 100% of Medicaid expansion for states per the Affordable Care Act, but this proportion will be reduced to 95% in FY 2016-17 and to 90% by FY 2019-20. Thus it is projected that Medicaid costs will increase by an additional \$56 million by FY 2016-17, and then another \$57 million by FY 2019-20 if it is assumed there will be no additional enrollees. Review of the projected trends for the General and State Education Fund revenues, in contrast with those associated with K-12 Education and Health Care Policy and Financing, shows how bad an assumption that is (Figures 2 and 3).

**Figure 1. TABOR AND REFERENDUM C: DECEMBER 2014 FORECAST BY OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING AND BUDGETING**



Source: OSPB, February 12, 2015

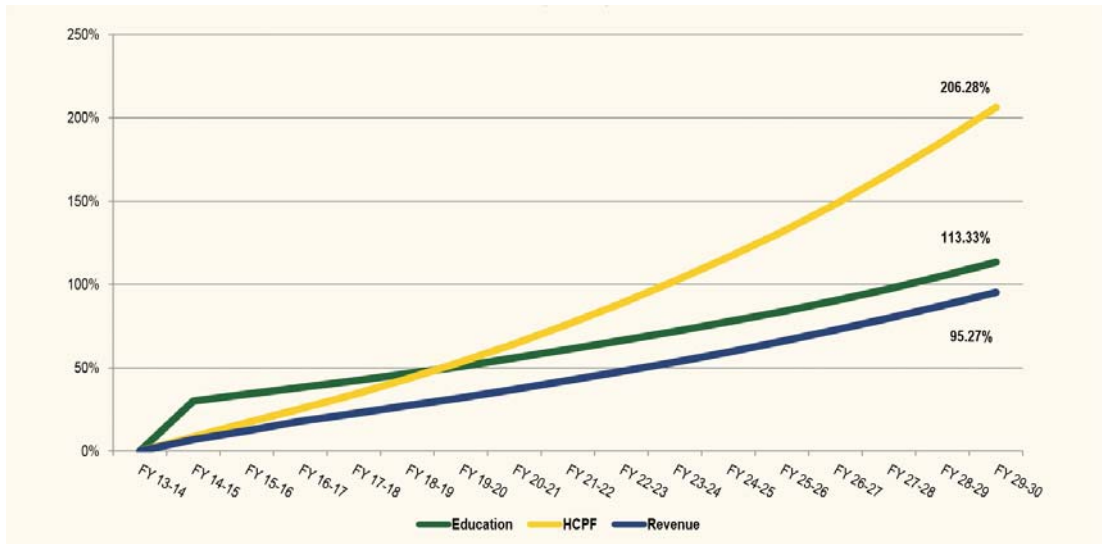
**Figure 2. COLORADO STATE BUDGET: CASELOAD GROWTH AND THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET**



Sources: Colorado Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau, & Bureau of Labor Statistics, and JBC Staff.

Source: OSPB, February 12, 2015

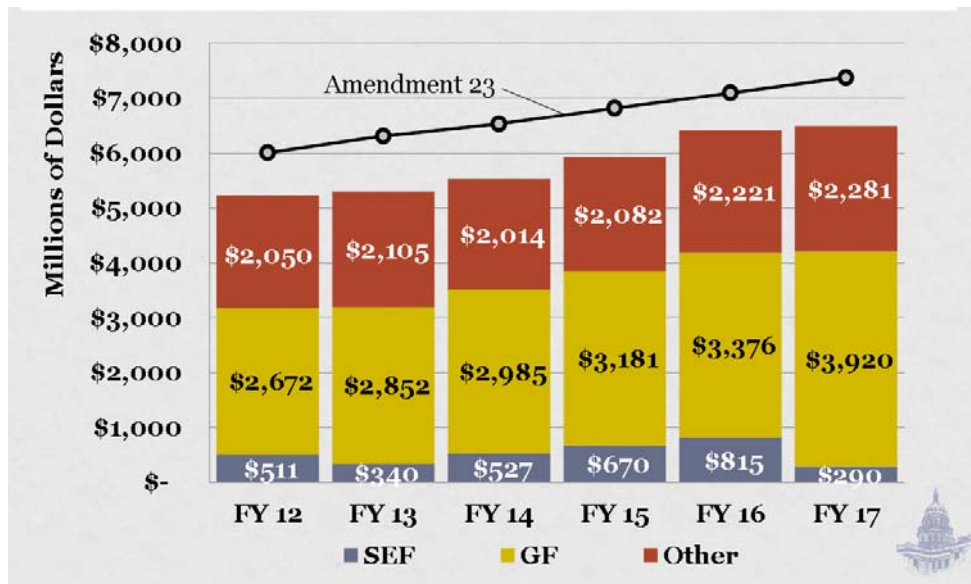
**Figure 3. CUMULATIVE GROWTH RATES FROM FY 2013-14 THROUGH FY 2029-30 FOR GF AND SEF REVENUES, CDE, AND HCPF**



Source: Colorado Futures Center, Colorado State University, *Financing Colorado's Future – A Fresh Look at the Funding of State Government*, 2013.

C. Amendment 23 requires that K-12 funding increase by inflation plus student growth. For fiscal year 2016-17, the increase is estimated to be about \$157 million. See Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4. PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE: FY 12 TO FY 17 AMENDMENT 23 TARGET VS FUNDED AMOUNTS BY SOURCE**



Source: OSPB, February 12, 2015

The resulting intersection of these three mandates of the State's budget portends an accelerating decrease in state support, and the need for colleges and universities to find ways to be more self-sufficient. All of this is occurring as budget writers are cutting spending while they collect record revenues. The \$24 million question is where to find enough resources and efficiencies to replace the State's operating support while maintaining quality and access for students, a continuing threat for Colorado Mesa University.

The good news for CMU is that it has time on its side, albeit limited, to adjust to this fiscal scenario. Over the past few years, the University has taken steps to offset the State's reductions and begin development of alternative revenue streams that include gaining institutional investment authority, building a contingency fund, pursuing strategic growth initiatives, and budgeting conservatively each year.

An additional funding option in need of further consideration is the ability to increase tuition and fees, but even this capacity raises questions about CMU's ability to 1) be competitively priced, and 2) remain financially accessible, particularly to residents on the Western Slope. While the University has made significant increases in its commitments to institutional aid to supplement that available from state and federal sources, students are graduating with a growing loan burden. Given the systematic disinvestment of higher education at the state level, focusing financial aid on students from middle- and low-income families will continue to be a priority for the University.

## **II. Political**

From leveraging matching dollars for capital construction projects to influencing outcomes with new complex regulatory and funding schemes, Colorado Mesa's strength is in successfully navigating Colorado's political landscape. The University has successfully pressed its interests at the State Capitol, as well as closer to home with local government partners. This progress has developed as policymakers have recognized CMU's pragmatic leadership on a range of issues.

At the federal level, CMU has not established a large lobbying presence in Washington, D.C. like many research-oriented institutions have. That said, the University monitors and responds to the rules, regulations, and reporting requirements initiated by the United States Department of Education and the United States Congress. When the President of the United States suggests that community college should be free for all Americans, CMU should take notice. When elected and appointed officials push policy prescriptions to address sexual assault allegations and incidents on college campuses, CMU needs to analyze their impact.

To stay engaged on these issues, CMU has built good relationships with members of the Colorado congressional delegation and proactively makes proposals as opportunities arise. That said, CMU is a small fish in a very large pond, such that policies directed at other higher education institutions have the potential to have serious, and potentially negative, effects on the University more generally, and its students more specifically. Of particular note are issues surrounding college costs, student borrowing, completion rates – and the overall value of a college degree – all of which directly tie into Colorado's workforce and economic development capacity. Additionally, fueled by the desire to see completion rates improve, Colorado legislators have followed the lead of their peers in other states by adopting a performance-based funding model. It remains to be seen

whether or not this funding model can document an improvement in institutional performance over enrollment-based funding.

Political dynamics outside the control of the University have the potential to negatively impact it. With historic turnover taking place at the Colorado General Assembly in recent years, the University must continue developing relationships with new legislators in order to keep its interests “top of mind” during policy debates. Further, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education is giving signs that it might well be moving away from its historic role as a coordinating board to a more regulatory “quasi-super board.”

At both the state and federal levels, higher education feels the growth in government intrusion and politicization each year. While Colorado’s funding of higher education continues its 40+ year slide, that decline has been accompanied by the desire for increased oversight by legislators, illustrated by setting caps on tuition. Nationally, the ballooning investment in student financial aid by the U.S. Department of Education has become the justification for placing significantly more burdensome reporting requirements on institutions. The growing scrutiny from both levels of government poses an ongoing threat to colleges and universities in general, and Colorado Mesa University in particular.

### III. Demographic

The population of Colorado is projected to increase from 5.4 million in 2015 to 5.9 million in 2020, an increase of 8.2%. The largest growth is expected among adults 65 and older, with a 21% increase projected for that age group. Growth in the traditional-aged college population (18 to 24) is projected to match the state average at 8.2%, with similar growth of 8.6% expected for the high-school-aged group (14 to 17).

The 14 Western Colorado counties in CMU's service region are expected grow somewhat faster between 2015 and 2020, with an overall projected increase of 10% (Table 1). Again, the greatest increase is expected for adults 65 and older. Among 18 to 24 year-olds, the increase is expected to be 13%, with a projected increase of 12% in the 14-17 age group. The projected increase for 25- to 34-year-olds is less than 2%. The projected increase among the traditional college-age group suggests that CMU could see an increase in applications and enrollment over the next five years.

**Table 1. SUMMARY OF COLORADO POPULATION GROWTH BY REGION, 2015 - 2020**

Region	Age Group							
	0 to 4	5 to 13	14 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 64	65 to 90	Total
Mesa County	3.2%	4.0%	12.2%	6.1%	3.2%	7.2%	20.4%	8.9%
14 County Region	11.5%	6.8%	12.0%	12.8%	1.7%	6.9%	21.2%	9.8%
Front Range	8.2%	1.6%	8.5%	8.3%	5.3%	6.2%	21.4%	8.2%
Other Western Counties	16.7%	8.3%	10.9%	9.7%	15.1%	1.9%	19.0%	9.6%
Eastern Counties	2.9%	0.4%	2.7%	-0.5%	8.3%	0.9%	13.1%	4.3%
<b>State Total</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

The highest growth rates for the 18- to 24-year old age group are projected for the 14-county service region, and the next highest growth rates projected for the other western counties (Table 2). The Front Range counties are expected to match the state average for this group, while in the

eastern counties, the population of 18 to 24 year-olds is expected to decrease somewhat. These regional differences should inform CMU's recruitment efforts over the next 5 years.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, changes in the race and ethnicity of Colorado's population from 2015 to 2020 will be quite profound (Table 3). Those from underrepresented groups are projected to increase by 15.9% whereas Caucasians are expected to increase only by 4.6%. The Hispanic population will likely grow by nearly 19%, while the increase by other underrepresented groups will likely experience a growth of over 10% over the next five years. These changes suggest that the University should build on its current efforts to accommodate diversity beyond what it currently does.

Examining data compiled by the Colorado Department of Education, growth in high school enrollments is anticipated to continue. Specifically, the number of Mesa County students in grade 9, when compared with those in grade 12, show a +19% increase and looks to exceed the same comparison at the state level (+3%). CMU should be mindful of these changing demographics as it looks to how the institution can best serve the educational needs of its future students.

The 14-county service region of Colorado Mesa includes the state's richest county as well as some of its poorest when measured by per capita personal income (Table 4). As is well-documented, students from counties having higher average incomes are more likely to attend college than residents living in poorer communities. According to the Colorado Department of Higher Education, only 51.9% of 2013 high school graduates in the CMU service region went on to pursue higher education after high school. In Pitkin County, 76.7% of its 2013 high school graduates enrolled in college, the rate for Delta County was only 39.4%, with the rate for the remaining 12 counties falling somewhere in between. In order for CMU to make higher education more accessible to students across its service region and encourage more students to enroll in college, the University must continue development and delivery of selected coursework and programs in a mix of locations and formats, in addition to working with representatives of school districts to encourage students to continue their education beyond high school.

#### **IV. Competition**

Some of the most disruptive elements in the higher education environment come from experiments in accelerated models of learning, often delivered online. The relatively recent introduction of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) led to speculation by many that the future of traditional higher education was in jeopardy. This free or low-cost technology, however, has not served the niche of expanding access that was originally designed to fill. Rather, students already holding a degree have been one of the more common student demographics accessing to these courses.

Models delivering curriculum in a more flexible manner, thereby benefitting a student by both saving money and enabling progress more quickly through a program, are increasingly popular. This approach is often accompanied by the possibility of self-paced learning, along with competency-based assessments and/or credit for prior learning, and is illustrated by Northern Arizona University, Capella University, and Western Governor's University. While more convenient, these streamlined or accelerated approaches tend to be significantly more expensive and have yet to demonstrate their success in student preparation, engagement, and graduation in



addition to the long-term benefits that accrue to graduates of a more traditional higher education experience.

**Table 2. COLORADO POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP AND COUNTY**

Area	County	Year	Age Group							Total
			0 to 4	5 to 13	14 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 64	65 to 90	
14-County	Delta	2010	1,731	3,382	1,693	2,105	3,120	12,643	6,223	30,897
		2015	1,745	3,245	1,541	2,410	2,947	11,658	7,390	30,937
		2020	2,111	3,572	1,657	2,582	3,683	11,628	8,431	33,664
		2025	2,648	4,404	1,812	2,905	4,873	12,334	9,329	38,304
	Eagle	2010	3,876	6,429	2,457	4,356	9,734	22,207	3,005	52,064
		2015	3,524	7,068	2,561	3,291	7,843	24,480	4,887	53,655
		2020	3,951	7,450	3,128	3,998	6,264	27,555	6,938	59,284
		2025	4,678	8,419	3,436	5,005	7,223	29,806	9,253	67,821
	Garfield	2010	4,457	7,581	3,085	4,744	8,598	22,966	4,724	56,155
		2015	4,165	8,056	3,415	4,639	7,585	24,502	6,599	58,961
		2020	4,728	8,716	3,877	5,604	7,655	26,688	9,289	66,558
		2025	5,675	9,648	4,450	6,572	9,350	28,863	12,129	76,687
	Grand	2010	821	1,530	644	1,046	2,041	7,173	1,536	14,791
		2015	645	1,495	718	945	1,716	7,046	2,365	14,929
		2020	870	1,590	767	1,185	1,818	7,278	3,342	16,848
		2025	1,033	1,893	847	1,362	2,261	7,496	4,314	19,206
	Jackson	2010	65	139	61	94	138	656	264	1,417
		2015	55	137	66	94	138	610	288	1,387
		2020	77	135	67	117	169	590	318	1,473
		2025	89	150	66	120	191	575	339	1,531
	Mesa	2010	9,911	16,859	7,642	14,658	19,287	56,389	21,843	146,589
		2015	9,200	17,710	7,511	13,626	20,334	56,539	26,067	150,987
		2020	9,507	18,457	8,551	14,513	21,014	60,910	32,743	165,695
		2025	10,243	18,576	9,429	16,539	21,659	65,676	39,885	182,007
	Moffat	2010	1,072	1,904	752	1,184	1,877	5,567	1,455	13,811
		2015	878	1,838	855	1,039	1,519	5,407	1,739	13,275
		2020	957	1,807	863	1,260	1,523	5,403	2,167	13,981
		2025	1,070	1,851	867	1,375	1,738	5,367	2,522	14,791
	Montrose	2010	2,609	5,165	2,350	2,733	4,481	16,508	7,336	41,182
		2015	2,319	5,003	2,392	3,414	4,304	15,996	8,668	42,096
		2020	2,914	5,429	2,568	4,202	5,669	17,375	10,118	48,274
		2025	3,545	6,252	2,872	4,570	7,561	19,140	11,570	55,510
	Ouray	2010	183	416	203	170	333	2,365	802	4,472
		2015	208	431	223	355	375	2,162	1,075	4,830
		2020	304	508	240	414	600	2,112	1,234	5,411
		2025	324	597	246	393	712	2,032	1,292	5,596
	Pitkin	2010	751	1,530	703	1,028	2,631	8,491	2,015	17,149
		2015	784	1,540	737	1,067	2,392	8,371	2,767	17,658
		2020	911	1,777	827	1,326	2,105	8,908	3,337	19,190
		2025	1,016	2,112	974	1,523	2,639	9,220	3,803	21,286
Rio Blanco	2010	484	780	347	652	867	2,677	827	6,634	
	2015	441	863	353	574	923	2,693	980	6,826	
	2020	475	945	400	602	956	2,904	1,118	7,400	
	2025	521	967	486	678	1,030	3,056	1,338	8,078	
Routt	2010	1,291	2,460	1,116	1,866	3,586	11,176	1,956	23,451	
	2015	1,256	2,575	1,183	1,867	3,395	11,320	2,888	24,485	
	2020	1,551	2,873	1,340	2,177	3,451	11,910	3,900	27,201	
	2025	1,780	3,372	1,520	2,478	4,044	12,544	4,730	30,467	

**Table 2. COLORADO POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP AND COUNTY (cont.)**

Area	County	Year	Age Group						Total	
			0 to 4	5 to 13	14 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 64		65 to 90
14-County (cont.)	San Miguel	2010	455	712	285	435	1,264	3,707	536	7,394
		2015	424	897	350	463	1,181	3,953	877	8,145
		2020	528	1,043	443	660	1,059	4,444	1,208	9,385
		2025	626	1,159	546	812	1,239	4,757	1,485	10,625
	Summit	2010	1,540	2,367	990	2,732	5,689	12,546	2,215	28,079
		2015	1,523	2,702	1,054	2,566	4,638	13,443	3,429	29,355
		2020	1,799	3,138	1,371	3,036	4,374	14,507	4,714	32,940
		2025	2,103	3,716	1,653	3,686	5,081	15,355	5,946	37,540
Front Range	Adams	2010	37,607	64,089	24,868	41,377	71,798	166,769	37,202	443,710
		2015	36,667	69,973	28,869	45,615	70,709	186,502	49,243	487,576
		2020	40,150	71,837	32,794	53,547	72,415	208,090	63,413	542,245
		2025	45,591	75,039	33,996	60,870	81,542	222,777	79,904	599,718
	Arapahoe	2010	40,662	73,609	33,222	48,894	84,728	235,488	58,207	574,810
		2015	40,123	77,598	33,559	53,760	90,624	253,702	77,690	627,055
		2020	42,351	77,636	36,233	56,275	91,265	273,224	100,063	677,047
		2025	44,715	79,408	36,101	60,129	95,622	285,414	124,450	725,839
	Boulder	2010	16,407	32,379	13,953	41,777	39,665	121,584	29,847	295,612
		2015	15,314	33,893	15,751	44,502	39,069	128,644	40,168	317,341
		2020	15,693	32,197	17,012	47,452	39,211	131,317	52,195	335,076
		2025	17,188	32,304	16,441	50,141	43,356	132,215	65,067	356,711
	Broomfield	2010	3,913	7,648	3,101	4,338	7,765	23,780	5,554	56,099
		2015	3,633	8,084	3,608	5,737	8,027	26,363	7,305	62,758
		2020	4,242	7,973	4,171	7,140	9,722	29,320	9,446	72,013
		2025	5,080	8,561	4,050	8,208	12,066	31,953	12,080	81,998
	Denver	2010	44,060	62,985	23,272	61,154	123,947	226,563	62,894	604,875
		2015	47,993	74,459	27,749	58,141	134,777	254,504	78,659	676,282
		2020	50,730	80,701	31,783	62,298	126,761	285,640	94,170	732,085
		2025	50,936	83,017	34,662	66,863	120,868	303,451	108,211	768,007
	Douglas	2010	21,631	46,928	18,511	16,113	32,900	130,296	20,742	287,121
		2015	18,418	45,615	22,031	29,253	28,699	141,784	31,453	317,253
		2020	21,778	39,811	23,410	37,331	37,167	149,540	43,639	352,675
		2025	26,214	41,312	19,662	39,880	53,050	151,325	58,753	390,196
	El Paso	2010	45,338	81,675	36,451	68,666	88,750	243,522	62,836	627,238
		2015	47,054	86,617	37,765	76,249	95,976	250,410	81,438	675,509
		2020	50,759	90,827	40,361	80,460	105,834	258,286	102,083	728,610
		2025	56,217	96,544	42,285	85,249	116,171	264,017	125,801	786,284
Elbert	2010	1,128	3,039	1,637	1,398	1,648	12,042	2,249	23,141	
	2015	1,136	2,780	1,464	2,402	2,139	12,068	3,497	25,487	
	2020	2,083	3,514	1,626	2,981	4,918	13,610	5,111	33,842	
	2025	2,530	4,779	1,788	3,088	6,535	15,533	6,841	41,094	
Jefferson	2010	30,261	59,933	28,583	45,187	66,004	237,654	68,024	535,646	
	2015	29,462	59,182	27,944	51,870	69,449	239,608	88,021	565,535	
	2020	31,904	57,490	28,132	51,954	75,449	238,848	111,259	595,037	
	2025	33,155	58,947	26,554	51,626	80,145	232,220	135,285	617,933	
Larimer	2010	17,493	32,035	14,544	41,550	42,572	116,490	35,859	300,543	
	2015	17,781	35,133	15,250	42,996	44,423	124,940	46,280	326,803	
	2020	18,848	37,208	17,193	44,936	48,590	131,819	58,307	356,900	
	2025	20,691	39,174	18,245	48,526	52,367	139,030	70,832	388,866	
Weld	2010	19,935	36,140	14,537	27,954	35,020	96,131	24,525	254,242	
	2015	20,174	38,999	16,659	32,006	37,896	105,621	32,412	283,767	
	2020	23,919	41,746	19,406	38,201	45,563	118,570	42,354	329,759	
	2025	29,030	48,019	20,537	44,099	56,318	135,313	53,336	386,651	

**Table 2. COLORADO POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP AND COUNTY (cont.)**

Area	County	Year	Age Group							Total
			0 to 4	5 to 13	14 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 64	65 to 90	
<b>14 Western Counties Subtotal</b>		2010	29,246	51,254	22,328	37,803	63,646	185,071	54,737	444,085
		2015	27,167	53,560	22,959	36,350	59,290	188,180	70,019	457,526
		2020	30,683	57,440	26,099	41,676	60,340	202,212	88,857	507,304
		2025	35,351	63,116	29,204	48,018	69,601	216,221	107,935	569,449
<b>Front Range Subtotal</b>		2010	278,435	500,460	212,679	398,408	594,797	1,610,319	407,939	4,003,037
		2015	277,755	532,333	230,649	442,531	621,788	1,724,146	536,166	4,365,366
		2020	302,457	540,940	252,121	482,575	656,895	1,838,264	682,040	4,755,289
		2025	331,347	567,104	254,321	518,679	718,040	1,913,248	840,560	5,143,297
<b>Other Western Counties Subtotal</b>		2010	15,507	28,766	13,644	24,291	33,229	127,645	41,500	284,582
		2015	14,690	30,156	13,455	26,339	34,208	123,455	54,238	296,539
		2020	17,635	32,895	15,107	29,164	40,276	125,898	66,934	327,909
		2025	20,526	36,902	16,805	31,880	47,017	132,115	77,326	362,571
<b>Eastern Counties Subtotal</b>		2010	20,288	37,604	17,455	28,839	38,649	124,638	50,806	318,279
		2015	18,587	37,400	16,514	29,449	36,805	122,606	58,505	319,859
		2020	19,135	37,559	16,975	29,288	40,156	123,752	67,322	334,190
		2025	20,490	38,171	17,759	31,026	43,924	125,961	76,885	354,211
<b>Grand Total</b>		2010	343,476	618,084	266,106	489,341	730,321	2,047,673	554,982	5,049,983
		2015	338,199	653,449	283,577	534,669	752,091	2,158,387	718,928	5,439,290
		2020	369,910	668,834	310,302	582,703	797,667	2,290,126	905,153	5,924,692
		2025	407,714	705,293	318,089	629,603	878,582	2,387,545	1,102,706	6,429,528

Green shading indicates an increase of 20% or more in the 5-year interval  
 Yellow shading indicates a decrease of 5% or more

Source: Colorado Demography Office. Downloaded 8/12/2010 from [http://dola.colorado.gov/demog\\_webapps/population\\_age\\_gender](http://dola.colorado.gov/demog_webapps/population_age_gender)

While still largely a discussion item in most states, the “Tennessee Promise” defines a model for free community college education whereby the state will cover tuition costs not already met by other state or federal financial aid programs. CMU must either come up with a strategy for participation by Western Colorado Community College – should the model be adopted in Colorado – or be prepared to respond with a tuition model that is competitive in the two- as well as the four-year arena. Like MOOCs, one of the motivations of this movement is to generate more interest in attending college and attaining a degree, but who qualifies to participate is a major question in need of an answer. Further, the approach is so new that its economic feasibility and academic success have yet to be determined. CMU clearly can make claims of quality and value, but the fact remains that tuition rates at most community colleges already are lower than CMU’s, so moving to a “free” model would only exacerbate the issue.

In a related matter, the expansion of community colleges’ authority to confer baccalaureate degrees should be monitored by Colorado Mesa. With the recent approval to award a four-year degree in selected fields by institutions in the Colorado Community College System as well as Colorado Mountain College, CMU’s career ladder model can be easily replicated by these institutions so as to address local, regional and statewide workforce needs. This could translate into increasing competition for students, particularly in Western Colorado.

**Table 3. POPULATION OF COLORADO'S  
RACE AND ETHNIC GROUPS, 2000 – 2040  
(Numbers in thousands)**

Group	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
White, non-hispanic	3,271.6	3,416.2	3,592.1	3,749.0	3,921.2	4,071.6	4,185.6	4,253.6	4,277.6
Hispanic Origin	741.6	880.4	1,042.0	1,213.1	1,442.9	1,704.9	1,981.6	2,255.9	2,536.4
Black, non-hispanic	171.3	186.5	205.3	226.8	253.6	280.8	307.4	332.4	356.2
Asian/PI, non-hispanic	112.2	134.3	161.4	196.8	248.1	307.8	371.2	436.2	504.4
Am. Indian, non-hispanic	42.1	45.1	49.1	53.5	58.9	64.4	69.6	74.2	78.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,338.8</b>	<b>4,662.5</b>	<b>5,050.0</b>	<b>5,439.3</b>	<b>5,924.7</b>	<b>6,429.5</b>	<b>6,915.4</b>	<b>7,352.3</b>	<b>7,752.9</b>
Minority	1,067.2	1,246.3	1,457.9	1,690.3	2,003.5	2,358.0	2,729.8	3,098.7	3,475.3

Share of Total Population									
Group	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
White, non-hispanic	75.4	73.3	71.1	68.9	66.2	63.3	60.5	57.9	55.2
Hispanic Origin	17.1	18.9	20.6	22.3	24.4	26.5	28.7	30.7	32.7
Black, non-hispanic	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.6
Asian/PI, non-hispanic	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.6	4.2	4.8	5.4	5.9	6.5
Am. Indian, non-hispanic	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Minority	24.6	26.7	28.9	31.1	33.8	36.7	39.5	42.1	44.8

Average Annual Growth (Number in thousands)									
Group	2000-05	2005-10	2010-15	2015-20	2020-25	2025-30	2030-35	2035-40	
White, non-hispanic		28.9	35.2	31.4	34.4	30.1	22.8	13.6	4.8
Hispanic Origin		27.8	32.3	34.2	46.0	52.4	55.3	54.9	56.1
Black, non-hispanic		3.1	3.7	4.3	5.3	5.5	5.3	5.0	4.8
Asian/PI, non-hispanic		4.4	5.4	7.1	10.3	11.9	12.7	13.0	13.6
Am. Indian, non-hispanic		0.6	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>64.7</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>101.0</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>80.1</b>
Minority		35.8	42.3	46.5	62.6	70.9	74.4	73.8	75.3

Average Annual Percent Change									
Group	2000-05	2005-10	2010-15	2015-20	2020-25	2025-30	2030-35	2035-40	
White, non-hispanic		0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.1
Hispanic Origin		3.5	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.1	2.6	2.4
Black, non-hispanic		1.7	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.4
Asian/PI, non-hispanic		3.7	3.8	4.0	4.7	4.4	3.8	3.3	2.9
Am. Indian, non-hispanic		1.4	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Minority		3.2	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.3

Table prepared by the State Demography Office, Colorado Division of Local Government, November 2014.

**Table 4. PER CAPITAL PERSON INCOME  
FOR SELECTED COUNTIES IN COLORADO, 2011-13**

County	Per capita personal income <sup>1</sup>			
	Dollars			Rank in State
	2011	2012	2013	2013
Colorado	44,183	46,315	46,897	--
Pitkin	77,254	82,496	83,425	1
Routt	51,551	57,333	59,384	5
Eagle	46,884	49,233	50,416	13
Summit	44,992	48,123	49,369	14
San Miguel	44,830	47,862	49,006	16
Jackson	45,325	46,747	48,540	19
Ouray	42,140	44,669	46,496	23
Moffat	44,076	43,691	44,956	24
Rio Blanco	41,486	41,904	42,931	28
Grand	39,104	41,122	42,858	30
Garfield	38,587	40,517	41,171	32
Mesa	35,028	36,779	37,222	40
Delta	32,509	34,140	34,681	50
Montrose	30,678	31,871	32,750	56

Note: Per capita personal income was computed using Census Bureau midyear population estimates. Estimates reflect county population estimates available as of March 2014.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; downloaded 8/12/15 from:  
<http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/lapi/2014/lapi1114.htm>

## V. Teaching and Learning

According to Johnson and others,<sup>1</sup> there are two long-term trends on which a panel of experts from the New Media Consortium agree: “advancing learning environments that are flexible and drive innovation, as well as increasing the collaboration that takes place between higher education institutions.” Both of these expectations have implications for Colorado Mesa University.

A. Advancing Learning Environments. Many higher education leaders are coalescing around the belief that institutions must become more adaptable and innovative in response to growing expectations related to regional economic development. For these behaviors to become realities, educators are identifying ways to encourage approaches “that allow for flexibility, and spur creativity and entrepreneurial thinking.”<sup>2</sup> Projects, such as the Maverick Innovation Center, illustrate the growing popularity of this movement on campuses across the nation.

B. Increasing Collaboration. As resources become increasingly scarce, higher education institutions are creating partnerships more and more that work toward common goals. Whether the relationships are being built across the state, country, or the globe, institutions are developing cost-effective arrangements and pooling resources to deliver instruction as well as services.

<sup>1</sup>L. Johnson, S. Adams Becker, C. Estrada, and A. Freeman, *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Higher Education Edition*, Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, pp. 28-29.

CMU's partnership with the University of Colorado Boulder is illustrative of this creative type of arrangements in the academic division of the University. The institution also is part of several business collaborations. CMU should continue to pursue these types of relationships that increase efficiencies and/or expand opportunities for new programs and services that might not be available otherwise.

A final noteworthy trend is the growing emphasis placed on the development of higher order thinking in college students as part of integrated learning curricular models. Numerous surveys of business leaders document the need for higher education to better its learners to tackle what the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) refers to as “an education for a world of unscripted problems.” The understanding of, and the ability to solve, complex problems found in the real world – locally, regionally, and globally – are crucial to individual success and our global future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A recently released report by Hart Research Associates on behalf of AAC&U found that “The majority of employers continue to say that possessing both field-specific knowledge and a broad range of knowledge and skills is important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success” (Table 4).<sup>3</sup>

**Table 4.**

<b>Learning Outcomes Four in Five Employers Rate as Very Important</b> <i>(Proportion of employers who rate each outcome an 8, 9, or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale)</i>	
	<u>Employers</u>
	%
The ability to effectively communicate orally	85
The ability to work effectively with others in teams	83
The ability to effectively communicate in writing	82
Ethical judgment and decision-making	81
Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills	81
The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings	80

Colorado Mesa University faculty’s development of student learning outcomes that mirror most of those listed above is only the first step in a multi-year effort to equip students with the essential problem-solving skills. This is a particularly challenging undertaking, in part because only a limited number of multi-disciplinary models currently exist, but also because most students have not been exposed to this type of complex thinking prior to arriving on a college campus. That said, the University must continue to move in this curricular direction to prepare its graduates at all

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<sup>3</sup>Hart Research Associates, “Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success: Selected Findings from Online Surveys of Employers and College Students,” Washington, D.C., p. 1. The survey was administered in November 2014 to: "400 employers whose organizations have at least 25 employees and report that 25% or more of their new hires hold either an associate degree from a two-year college or a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college. Respondents are executives at private sector and nonprofit organizations, including owners, CEOs, presidents, C-suite level executives, and vice presidents. The objective of the survey is to understand which learning outcomes employers believe are most important to acquire to be able to succeed in today’s economy, how prepared they believe recent college graduates are in these areas, and employers’ feelings about the importance of applied and project-based learning in college."

degree levels. CMU's implementation of the Maverick Milestone and Essential Speech courses in Fall 2015, complemented by activities planned for the Maverick Innovation Center, are positive steps to support this movement. In so doing, CMU students, as well as the region, benefit as the University plays a stronger role in supporting the economic development of Western Colorado.

## **VI. Technology**

Over the past decade, the trend of "Consumerization of IT" has driven technology in education and corporate America alike. Currently, the pace and volume of information technology adoption is occurring more quickly by the individual consumer than by business and government, making it challenging for organizations, such as CMU, to keep up with the customer expectations. At the center of this trend are mobile and cloud technologies. The popularity of smartphones and tablets with their processing power, storage capabilities, and wireless connectivity, coupled with cloud-based services, has put large amounts of information at the fingertips of users. "Anytime" access to information and online services has moved from being appreciated to an expectation. While the pace at which new mobile and cloud technologies are being introduced to market has slowed, advancements in these areas will continue for the foreseeable future.

Colorado Mesa University is in steep competition for students on the regional, and more recently the national, stage at a time when students can access more educational opportunities than ever before. Most colleges and universities now offer online academic programs, open educational resources such as MOOCs, and digital education materials. Students and their families expect more from the University as they scrutinize their education options and the return on their investment (ROI).

Near-term, the University will need to continue its investment in mobile technologies and support structure in order to accommodate what appears to be an endless continuum of consumer devices. Technology investments will extend from developing mobile apps and bolstering campus wireless infrastructures to the creation of more interactive and collaborative work spaces, both online and on campus. Thus these devices offer the potential for increasingly innovative learning environments where students can use familiar technology to be creative and innovative.

CMU must continue to position itself to readily support not only the now commonplace smartphone and tablet, but look toward incorporating newer technologies, such as wearable devices. These changes will continue to modify curriculum delivery, and policies will need to be adapted to keep up with the pace of technology advancements. Further, the institution will need to expand its external support structure by capitalizing on cloud-based services, thereby improving CMU's agility moving forward.

The competition for students, and their increased focus on educational value, will require the University to focus on more student- and data-centered technologies. Investments in Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Business Intelligence, and Digital Assessment, as well as continued advancement in learning technologies, will be an important consideration in attracting both future students and faculty. New investments in CRM technologies will streamline processes, break down data silos stored across offices and departments, and assist the University with its various processes such as identifying and engaging at-risk students and monitoring their progress through alerts and success plans.

Longer term, the institution's heavy reliance on data for making key business decisions will continue, and future investments in enhanced data warehouse and business intelligence tools to simplify and accelerate daily reporting would greatly benefit the campus. The University, however, cannot lose sight of its primary mission of educating students. Investments in learning spaces and the development of additional technology resources in the area of Digital Assessment will be required to support online programs and blended courses alike.

Responding to these trends is not without challenges and inherent risks for the University. The ever-increasing number and types of mobile devices bring challenges to meet growing demands for around-the-clock support and availability of services, along with the need to advance information security controls. Mobile and cloud technologies have increased the University's information security risks, and chances of a data breach are growing exponentially thereby placing much greater responsibility on end-users, technology professionals, and the institution. Further, mobile and cloud computing will continue to drive costs of technology due to shorter equipment life-cycles and the need for more support staff.

Because of the rapid pace of change in consumer-based technology, there is a growing disconnect across the institution of supporting the campus as a whole versus meeting each customer's personal expectations. The University must pursue strategies that meet reasonable consumer expectations while sustaining reliable, innovative technologies.