CU Boulder is collaborating on a five-year Strategic Enrollment Management Plan with consultants Kennedy & Company, who will deliver in December. This plan will allow CU Boulder to better plan its enrollment to meet mission-related goals and improve the experience of applicants, CU students, and the schools and colleges. The goals of the plan include:

- Clearly define enrollment targets
- Reimagine transfer student recruitment
- Identify locus of expertise for admission decisions
- Provide timely data access to decision-makers
- Optimize scholarships
- Improve post-deposit communications
- Improve underrepresented recruitment
- Ensure underrepresented student success
- Enhance student connection to CU Boulder
- Identify appropriate ACO & PES structures
- Position academic programs for market and job demand

Formal implementation will begin in January 2024. Some areas are already in motion.

CU Boulder remains committed to increasing student diversity. While race/ethnicity is not used in admissions decisions, we are focused on yielding admitted diverse students through intentional outreach and scholarship offerings. CU Boulder is committed to providing earlier decisions to Colorado residents. Fall 2025 Colorado resident applicants who apply by the Early Action deadline will receive a decision by December 15, 2024. A pilot of earlier decision release is being conducted for 4,000 Fall 2023 Colorado residents, who will receive a decision by December 15, 2023, if they meet certain criteria.

CU Boulder has seen significant application growth for Fall 2024. As of November 1, 2023, we are up 38% in first-year applications (22% increase for Colorado residents, 51% for domestic non-residents, 71% for international non-residents). Growth is not equal across academic programs. For example, the Leeds School of Business is up 49% overall, whereas the College of Music is up 25%. Growth differs by demographic group. Underrepresented students are up 40%, whereas white students are up 35%. Male students are up 43%, whereas female students are up 33%. CU Boulder’s capacity, especially for first-year students, is constrained by housing capacity, course capacities, and our commitment to incremental and strategic growth. Likely little impact on Colorado residents in terms of who receives an offer of admission. Given the much larger growth of applications by domestic non-residents, there will be more selectivity for some programs.
Retention Updates

- Second-fall retention, which measures undergraduate students retained from their first fall semester to their second, hit 89.1% in 2023. The previous record was 87.8% set in 2021.
- Third-fall retention peaked at 81.7%. The previous record was 81.3% set by the fall 2017 and 2020 cohorts.
- The six-year graduation rate for the fall 2017 cohort is 74.9%, surpassing 74.7% achieved by the fall 2016 cohort.
- Retention among first-generation and historically marginalized and underrepresented student populations does not uniformly show the same improvements.
  - First-generation students closed the retention rate gap by 5 percentage points between the fall 2021 and 2022 cohorts.
  - While higher across a number of demographics—for example, Asian Americans are 1 percentage point and women are 0.4 percentage points higher than the university’s average second-fall retention rate of 89%—and among the highest for all Colorado institutions of higher education, retention for these groups continues to lag the overall rate of retention.

BUS (Buff Undergraduate Success)

- For more than two years, the BUS Leadership Implementation Team has been focused on increasing undergraduate retention and graduation rates. (www.colorado.edu/bus-lit)
- BUS is tasked with inventorying and analyzing student success programs on campus, recommending priorities for implementation, and managing those efforts to completion.
- To continue CU Boulder’s strong momentum in increasing retention rates and enhancing student success, and to step up efforts to close gaps in student success for first-generation and historically marginalized and underrepresented student populations, the BUS team in 2023-2024 is aligning its work this academic year with Provost Russell Moore’s priorities:
  - Strategic enrollment management alignment
  - First-year residential academic experiences
  - Technology and communications projects
- The BUS team is also focusing on completing these 12 projects for fall 2023:
  - Begin implementation of the common curriculum.
  - Implement a common framework for undergraduate advising across the campus.
  - Implement a plan to reduce tuition and fees for lower-income students.
  - Expand the transfer credit evaluation efficiency pilot to more departments.
  - Create a campus network for call center staff.
  - Create guidelines and training for using the new first-year student success dashboard.
  - Align and unify support of key campus traditions for all students and affinity-based communities.
  - Create a proposal for improving tutoring across campus.
  - Improve the predicted GPA model for allocating merit scholarships and create consistent scholarship renewal criteria.
  - Refocus CU Lead Alliance programs to provide consistent service to targeted populations.
  - Create a faculty framework for Canvas grading enhancements and best practices.
  - Review campuswide degree audit rules, encoding and exception practices.