Institutional Description Template

**General Instructions (remove these instructions and any material you do not need)**

When preparing an institutional description for your proposal, first look for requirements by the funding agency—what information do they want; what format they want; etc. Include that information in the funding agency’s requested format or using a specific form identified in the program announcement or instructions for proposal development. For example, this type of information may be needed in the *NSF Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources* document; however, NSF requires you to only list project specific resources that will be available for the proposed project.

The following general information was prepared by the Office of Research, the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity (OSPRI) and in collaboration with the units discussed here. This is general information and you may need to add additional information or modify to meet the goals of your proposal. This information may be used without any additional approvals.

Highlighted material is information that needs to be changed yearly. Remove highlights prior to submission and ensure your data are accurate.

Information in italics within <> is information that you may want to consider adding. Please remove as needed. If you are needing additional support by units, contact those units to determine if they can provide the support you need.

**Institutional Description**

Founded in 1965, the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) is one of four campuses in the University of Colorado system. UCCS is designated as an eligible institution under Title III and Title V programs of the Higher Education Act and is an emerging Minority Serving Institution. UCCS is also situated among 3 Airforce and 1 Army military instillations within the El Paso County region, employing nearly 30,000 military personnel. UCCS is #3 of the top-ten large public institutions designated as Military Friendly in 2021-2022 by Victory Media.

As a traditional teacher-scholar centered university, UCCS added research and knowledge production to its central mission in 2011 and has grown its research agenda ever since. In 2019, UCCS was categorized for the first time as an R2 “high research activity” university. UCCS also offers a broad range of degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences and professional programs in business, engineering, nursing, education and public affairs, and has earned the reputation as a leader in developing an educated workforce for a community specializing in high tech industries. The University has experienced a 5% growth in enrollment over the past five years. UCCS conferred 2,132 bachelor’s degrees, 569 master’s degrees, and 39 doctorate degrees during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Our success is the result of a number of strategic initiatives, including targeted recruitment and marketing highlighting competitive tuition rates, small class sizes, high levels of student interaction with faculty, and impressive facilities.

Our innovative approach to educating a diverse student body is embedded throughout the 53 baccalaureate, 24 master’s and 8 doctoral degree programs across a broad range of disciplines. UCCS faculty composition includes 288 tenured or tenure-track faculty and 209 non-tenure track instructors, with an additional 25 research faculty, 21 clinical faculty, and 304 lecturers, adjunct, adjoint, or visiting faculty during the 2020-2021 academic year. In Fall 2020, UCCS welcomed 11,747 students on campus, which included 19% active-duty military personnel, veterans, and family members. Approximately 32% of currently enrolled students are first-generation college students and 35% identify as ethnic minority.

*<If you are writing an institutional grant, then the above may need additional information about students and offices to fit with your proposal goals. Consider what information helps reviewers know the institution in order to understand the context for your project>*

*<Add in specific departments involved in your project. Below are examples>*

**Department of Biology:** The Department of Biology faculty includes 7 tenure track professors, whose research interests are broad, including molecular and cellular biology, neurobiology, plant molecular biology, ecology, evolutionary genetics, and epidemiology. Biology is one of the most popular undergraduate majors at UCCS with ~ 800 declared majors. Students in the Biology major are diverse, with nearly 37% belonging to ethnic minorities, and ~30% (campus wide) being first-generation college students. The department also has a growing master’s degree program, with approximately 15 students currently pursuing graduate studies. Importantly, the graduate degree program requires that all students complete a research-based thesis project, ensuring that graduates have had high quality training in the scientific method and have gained technical expertise in their field, making them competitive in their future career and academic endeavors. The campus has made an investment in the success of this graduate training program by offering 8 teaching assistantships for graduate students in Biology each year. Additionally, a significant number of undergraduate students conduct research with Biology tenure-track faculty, highlighting the importance and dedication of the Biology faculty to enhancing research experiences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Indeed, Biology faculty have an impressive record of publishing with both undergraduate and Master of Science graduate research students as co-authors in peer-reviewed journals such as *Developmental Biology, Developmental Dynamics, Molecular Ecology, RNA Biology,* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

**Human Physiology and Nutrition Program:** The newly formed Human Physiology and Nutrition Program includes 18 tenure track faculty from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The research interests of the faculty within the department include,but are not limited to: the biomechanical analysis of human movement during sport and free-living situations;  cardiovascular control across different environmental (e.g. high altitude or hot conditions) and homeostatic perturbations; metabolic plasticity across healthy and diseased states, with particular focus on mitochondrial function; nutritional strategies to optimize either sport performance or quality/quantity of life; and examination of the efficacy of tactical training for police officers, firefighters and military personal. Although the program has only existed for a year, 240 students have already declared their major in this degree program, with 33% belonging to ethnic minorities. The planned degree programs are expected to attract many new students and additional tenure track faculty are being recruited to help bolster the undergraduate and graduate programs and diversify the research programs.

*<Add in specific colleges or major offices that support your project. Below are examples>*

**Graduate School.** The UCCS Graduate School has oversight of all graduate programs at UCCS and provides professional development activities and financial support for graduate students including fellowships, tuition grants and travel awards. Recruitment staff offer workshops to undergraduate students, alumni, and community members on the graduate school application processing, financing graduate education, and GRE preparation and practices tests. The Graduate School has a yearly campus wide event to showcase regional graduate programs, including biomedical programs. The Graduate School coordinates and offers workshops for graduate students on a variety of relevant topics including writing an NSF GRFP proposal, writing a thesis, presenting research, maintaining wellness, and mentoring. The Graduate School collaborates with the Office of Research and OSPRI to provide responsible conduct of research workshops. The Graduate School coordinates yearly events for graduate students to present their research including the UCCS Mountain Lion Grad Slam (3-minute research talks) and the Graduate Research Showcase (poster presentations).

*<If you need specific grad school services or materials for your project, please contact the Dean of the Grad School to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**UCCS Library:** The Kraemer Family Library fosters the intellectual growth of UCCS students, faculty, staff, and our community by developing innovative services, technologies, collections, and spaces that facilitate their emerging information needs. Most library services are available over 100 hours per week during the regular semesters. Individual study carrels, quiet study areas, open computer labs, group study rooms, an assistive technology center, and scanners and copy machines are available. Library users have access to the Library’s collection of over 665,000 books/eBooks, 446,000+ microform volumes, more than 400,000 government documents and maps, and over 9,500 audio-visual items as well as over 145,000 streaming media titles. The library has over 1,300 serial titles, 235 databases to choose from and access to over 165,000 full-text online journal titles through various databases. In addition, students and faculty have access to the collections of many of Colorado’s other academic libraries through personal visits, shared electronic catalogs or interlibrary loan. The Library's interlibrary loan agreements also provide students and faculty with access to the collections of most of the libraries in the U.S. and other countries. Services include a comprehensive library instruction program and virtual and in-person research assistance during most hours that the library is open, and many library services are also available to the local community. Access to a wide variety of electronic resources and the Library's online catalog is available through the library web page.

**Additional Kraemer Family Library Services for Students:**

* The “Just Talk” series is designed to promote open and honest dialogue about equity, diversity, and inclusion on the UCCS campus and beyond.
* The Kraemer Family Library hosts the open access journal [Undergraduate Research Journal](http://ojs.uccs.edu/) which features undergraduate student research from all departments on the UCCS campus.
* Peer Review Workshops in conjunction with the Undergraduate Research Journal, highlighting the purpose and etiquette of peer-review
* A subscription to RefWorks for all students and workshops to introduce students to citations and RefWorks.
* PubMed Online Workshop to learn the basics of using the PubMed database.
* Poster Presentation Workshop: How to make a poster for a research conference
* Data Visualization Workshop: How to present data effectively.

*<If you need specific library services or materials for your project, please contact the library staff to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**Office of Information Technology:** provides highly centralized computing and communications infrastructure and services to support the campus community in instructional, research, and administrative programs.  OIT provides an innovative, collaborative and sustainable approach to computing to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community at large.  The Office of Information Technology provides the following services to all students, faculty, and staff:

* 24x7 Help Desk Support
* Redundant, research network connected, high speed internet connections
* State of the art data centers which have new cooling, battery backup, generators and Sapphire clean-agent fire suppression
* Data backup
* Collaborative research computing facilities
* Multiple on-campus labs including Centers of Excellence and the Assistive Technology Lab

Applications supported and licensed by OIT:

* Office 365 with 1 TB personal storage
* Collaborative departmental storage with SharePoint
* Qualtrics
* Website deployment through Drupal
* Canvas
* Conferencing services through WebEx

UCCS is also a leader in cybersecurity and the Office of Information Technology supports many security initiatives and technology such as:

* Multi-factor Authentication
* Robust defense against computer and network based attacks both on and off campus
* Support for research and industry-based compliance areas such as PCI, HIPAA, and DFARS
* Security awareness for all campus community members.

OIT is concerned with Accessibility to the entire UCCS community and offers Assistive Technology Services.

*<If you need specific technology services or materials for your project, please contact the IT staff to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

*<The below are sample descriptions of other offices and centers on campus that may be relevant for your proposal. Select those that showcase the important resources specific to the needs of your proposal>*

**The Office of Research.** The campus has institutionalized the capacity to provide specific project support through the Office of Research, which is led by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. The Office of Research oversees the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity (OSPRI) and is closely affiliated with the Sponsored Projects Accounting office. The Office of Research provides professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students on sponsored programs, publication and creative outputs, as well as offers seed grants to support research, reviews limited submission proposals, and coordinates tech transfers. The Office of Research takes the lead on strategic planning efforts related to research, oversees research policies, and implements programs and forums to celebrate the culture of research on campus. The Office of Research also oversees the Center for Student Research and coordinates Mountain Lion Research Week. Moreover, the Office of Research partners with the Graduate School to implement responsible conduct of research training. The Office of Research also provides oversight to the OSPRI which handles contract review, post-award management support, IRB review and training for researchers to meet the Common Rule and any relevant requirements for research with human participants, oversight of technology control plans for any projects needing to meet requirements surrounding export controls, as well as other research compliance issues. The Sponsored Projects Accounting office provides financial reporting for projects. The Office of Research disseminates an annual publication on research achievements and research impacts that includes both OSPRI and Office of Research metrics.

**Research Specific Resources:** The campus has institutionalized the capacity to provide specific project support through the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity (OSPRI), Sponsored Projects Accounting office, and the *<Academic Unit(s) name(s)>*. The OSPRI provides contract review, post-award management support, IRB review and training for researchers to meet the Common Rule and any relevant requirements for research with human participants, oversight of technology control plans for any projects needing to meet requirements surrounding export controls, as well as other research compliance. The Sponsored Projects Accounting office provides financial reporting for projects. The <academic unit> has expertise in associated administration of grant activities such as hiring, purchasing, and finance, and is able to allocate research space as needed for project staff and data collection. <Add any other relevant information about support, equipment, etc. that your department/center/college/school provides for your project>

**Office of Institutional Research** provides institutional and academic support to guide administrative decision-making at UCCS. The IR office collects and analyzes data related to student success, institutional effectiveness, faculty productivity, student learning, and other performance indicators. Responsibilities include reporting to federal and state entities, managing surveys, administering course evaluations, supporting faculty reviews, leading campus data governance, and responding to ad-hoc data requests in addition to analyzing trends in higher education occurring throughout the United States. The IR office has access to Digital Measures, Human Resource Data, Financial and Admissions Data, and subscribes for access to a number of national data bases.  The IR office employs two full time staff and uses an accessible and transparent approach while maintaining data integrity and upholding the privacy and confidentiality of individual unit records. Data reports and aggregated data are available on the IR website and communicated regularly to campus stakeholders via TEAMS. The Office of Institutional Research, formerly a part of the Administration & Finance unit at UCCS, moved to Academic Affairs as of July 1, 2020.

**Office of Communications.** The office staff serve as the university’s primary liaison with the news media, the principal communicators for internal audiences that include up to 25,000 faculty, staff, students and parents, and works closely with other communications professions within the campus and the University of Colorado system. For external relations with the news media, the university serves as the only research-level institution and largest four-year university in southern Colorado and within the Colorado Springs/Pueblo Nielsen DMA, and works with the second-largest daily in the state, the Colorado Springs Gazette, often serving as the first resource for local-level expert opinion on a wide array of subjects. The office manages the internal newsletter, Communique, that is distributed weekly to internal audiences, and works closely with the CU system’s equivalent publication, CU Connections. Office staff also work closely with the Office of Alumni Relations, which sends out weekly communications to more than 45,000 alumni, and with unit-level professionals across campus to coordinate messaging across colleges and divisions. The social media specialist within the Office of Communications manages the primary institutional social media accounts and works closely with more than 200 account users to align brand, tone and content. Office staff also work closely with members of the University Marketing team and the Media Services team to coordinate photography and video services.

*<Below are sample Center descriptions. Be sure to reach out to that particular center for updated information and ensure they will be part of your project >*

**Biofrontiers Institute:** The UCCS BioFrontiers research center is an interdisciplinary research effort spanning the University of Colorado-Boulder and Colorado Springs campuses. At UCCS, BioFrontiers is focused primarily on interdisciplinary biophysics and currently involves students and faculty from physics, engineering, mathematics, and biology who seek to produce significant new approaches for addressing fundamental molecular biological questions and related health issues. UCCS BioFrontiers is critical because it supports the two main functions of UCCS – teaching and research. UCCS BioFrontiers encourages research by providing seed grants, high-tech equipment, and multidisciplinary seminars to the campus. Research at UCCS BioFrontiers includes super-resolution microscopy research, plasma membrane dynamics, development of magnetic resonance imaging techniques, and synthesis and characterization of nanoparticle probes for imaging and drug delivery. UCCS BioFrontiers encourages teaching by providing research training for students (from high school to PhD) in multidisciplinary research.

**Center for Religious Diversity and Public Life.** The primary aim of the Center for Religious Diversity and Public Life is to foster a healthy and fruitful relationship between the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and the surrounding community as it concerns religious issues and public life. The Center hosts speaker events and partners with the Colorado Diversity Forum, the Citizens Project (a local non-profit promoting equality and respect for diversity with an emphasis on civic engagement), and the Interfaith Youth Core.

**The Center for Student Research:** The Center for Student Research (CSR) started in summer 2019. The Center is operated within Academic Affairs and falls under the Office of Research. The Center is located in Main Hall which is central location for student services. For example, Main Hall is also home to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the First-Year Student Experience Office, Office of the Registrar, and Academic Advising. The Center for Student Research is devoted to preparing undergraduate and graduate student investigators across disciplines. The CSR inventories, coordinates, develops, and facilitates research best practices and professional development opportunities for student and their faculty mentors. Among the programs facilitated by the CSR is the **Undergraduate Research Academy**, which started in 2008, that encourages students to expand their education beyond the classroom through participation in research and creative projects mentored by UCCS faculty. The Academy objective is to support collaborative efforts between the student and faculty member, where both members benefit from the experience. Academy students act as research assistants on meaningful projects identified by their faculty mentor. Through this opportunity, the student gains valuable experience, while being paid, and the faculty member's research program goals are furthered.

*<<<Consider Joining the Center for Student Research as a Faculty Affiliate >>>*

**UCCS Health Clinics:** The Lane Center for Academic Health Sciences houses the UCCS HealthCircle Clinics which opened in the spring of 2014 in a highly visible location within the UCCS campus and Colorado Springs community. The Lane Center houses five clinics operated by UCCS as the HealthCircle Clinics, a family medicine primary care clinic operated by Peak Vista Community Health System (Federally Qualified Health Center), and the Colorado Springs Branch of the CU School of Medicine. The clinics are co-located for the purpose of integrating services, educational experiences, and research on enhancing health and wellness. Students and faculty provide services in the clinics that serve primarily academic purposes. A research volunteer database has been collected from patients at these clinics and is available for use by the researchers of the PCORI project upon approval by the IRB. Additionally, there are research rooms available for testing participants in these clinics which are easily accessible with appropriate parking.

*<If you need to use the UCCS Health clinics for your project, please contact the staff in each individual clinic confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**UCCS Excel Centers:** UCCS has established a hub of five centers that are dedicated to supporting students academically: A Writing Center, Science Center, Math Center, Communication Center and Language Center. All students have access to all centers to ensure that they excel in their coursework and develop lifelong skills in writing and communication. These centers offer one-on-one tutoring in person and online, as well as peer-assisted study groups for courses such as General Biology, Chemistry, Statistics and Calculus. The centers also offer study space and access to computers. The Centers offer various workshops including, but not limited to, study skills, problem solving, oral communication, citations, different writing processes and effective interviewing.

*<If you need to use the Excel Centers for your project, please contact the staff in each individual center to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**UCCS Career Center:** The UCCS Career Center strives to help current students and alumni explore their options, prepare for their future and achieve their career goals. The center organizes career fairs, including STEM specific job fairs, resume/CV and cover letter workshops, job search guidance and interview preparation (mock interview) services.

*<If you need to use the Career Centers for your project, please contact the staff to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**Mountain Lion Research Day (MLRD)**

MLRD provides an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students from UCCS to showcase their research and creative works in poster or oral presentation formats. Researchers submit an abstract as individuals or as group presenters before acceptance into the conference. The conference began in 2009 and has continued every year since. This half day event culminates with a keynote speaker and is attended by up to a hundred faculty, students, staff, and community members each year. Anywhere from 45 to 100 presentations are accepted each year. A competitive “Top Scholar Award” is made to one undergraduate and one graduate student presenter, selected by a diverse faculty research committee. In 2020, the conference was help virtually over a one-week period.

**Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum (CSURF)**

**CSURF** is a collaborative venture designed to highlight the research and creative works of undergraduates from Colorado College, the United States Air Force Academy, and the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS).  The forum started in 2004, and every year the conference rotates between these three institutions. The conference showcases the research by 300-400 students each year, from a wide range of disciplines (with natural sciences and engineering typically the largest fields represented).

**Diversity Support at UCCS**

*<Below are some examples of support offices on campus. There are many more! If you need to use the any of the below for your project, please contact the appropriate staff to confirm ability to meet your needs>*

**The Multicultural Office for Student Access Inclusiveness and Community (MOSAIC) and LGBTQ+ Resource Center**.

Established in 2003, the MOSAIC emphasizes the importance of community, intellectual enrichment, allyship development, and cultural exploration through collaborations between multicultural student organizations and faculty, staff, campus programs and student support services. In 2009, the MOSAIC was reorganized to include the newly established LGBTQ+ Resource Center. The MOSAIC and LGBTQ+ Resource Center provide a critical shared space and entry point for both historically underserved students and diversity-minded students. The MOSAIC and LGBTQ+ Resource Center impact, however, goes far beyond programs that originate and are housed in that office. They generate relationships across campus that build dialogue, instill pride, and help campus programs benefit historically underserved students. The MOSAIC and LGBTQ+ Resource Center provide:

* Advocacy, leadership development, mentorship, and social support for students from underserved communities with a special emphasis on serving ethnic minority, international, LGBTQ+, and first-generation students.
* Cultural and identity-based education, workshops, trainings, programs, and events.
* Community meeting, study, meditation, and reflection spaces for students.
* Opportunities for involvement in cultural and identity-based student organizations and support groups.
* Advising and mentorship for cultural and identity-based student organizations (co-support provided by the Student Life and Leadership office)

With a newly renovated space (in 2021), the M.O.S.A.I.C. and LGBTQ+ Resource Center are now home to an expanded community lounge, two private meditation/reflection rooms, and the support of three full-time staff members. They encourage students to drop-in to relax, engage in enriching conversations, learn about campus resources, culturally explore, and to connect with the Mountain Lion community.

**The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** (DEI) stated mission is to: strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion as integral components of academic excellence and establish the University as a regional and national leader in preparing students for success in a culturally, ethnically and racially diverse global society and workforce students. Housed in the Chancellor’s Office, the DEI office is primarily responsible for advancing equity, diversity and inclusion programming, training, awards, and initiatives on campus, and supporting historically underserved or marginalized campus and community stakeholders, including undergraduate and graduate students.

**President's Fund for Student Diversity** supports student programs, events, and travel that contribute to the advancement of campus diversity efforts at the University of Colorado in accord with the UCCS Diversity Strategic Plan. Funds awarded to qualifying student groups or their members are intended to encourage participation in cultural themed conferences and/or professional development opportunities, especially for those underrepresented in their field of study.  
  
**Pre-Collegiate Program.** The Pre-Collegiate Development Program at UCCS is designed to facilitate college readiness among secondary school students and eliminate the need for academic and social remediation in college among first-generation and minority students. Starting in the student’s rising 10th grade summer and concluding the summer before 12th grade, the smooth transition from high school to college is accomplished using career exploration workshops, a summer institute that prepares students to focus on a career pathway, a career-focused concurrent enrollment program offered during the school year and summers, as well as ongoing support to monitor and advise students as they transition through high school into the college major of their choice. When successfully completed, students will have earned up to 30 CU college credits; applied for scholarships and financial aid; been accepted to UCCS; and developed academic and social success skills linked to success in a college environment. PCDP recruits first-generation and low-income students from school districts with a high population of students of color.

**Diversity Champions.** In order to ensure that the faculty and staff reflect the diversity of our student body and larger community, UCCS provides training for and appoints a Diversity Champion to every job search. The Diversity Champion helps the search committee identify biases that could influence their decisions and facilitates the use of tools the Affirmative Action Office can offer.

**Faculty Minority Affairs Committee (FMAC).** FMAC is a standing committee of the UCCS Faculty Assembly. In addition to the regular responsibilities of the committee, each fiscal year the FMAC allocates funds for research and campus activities that promote diversity and inclusiveness, with emphasis on racial/ethnic issues in research, community engagement, and teaching. Funding is open to all UCCS faculty and staff. FMAC offers Diversity Grants in the following two areas: professional development and academic programming. Professional development includes, but is not limited to, travel for research, conference presentations, access to archives, research assistance or transcription, or minor equipment purchases. Applications in this category should demonstrate how the event or activity impacts the applicant’s career trajectory. Grants award for academic programming and curriculum includes, but is not limited to, creating or supporting on-going programs, bringing speakers to campus, organizing one-time activities or workshops, or developing new or enhancing existing courses. Applications in this category should demonstrate how the event or activity impacts the campus in diversity and inclusion.

**Office of Veteran Student Affairs.** UCCS has earnedrecognition from multiple sources as a military friendly school. In 2021 for example, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs ranked 3rd in the Top 10 Gold Level Military Friendly Rankings of Large Public Institutions by Victory Media. Over 1400 students received military tuition assistance in fall of 2020 and over 2200 military-affiliated students are currently pursuing their studies on campus. UCCS strives to provide transition assistance in the form of financial, social, and academic support for all veteran and military service members and their families. One of the keys to veteran success at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs is providing transition support to our students, including through the **Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) Program.** PAVE is a peer support program that connects incoming student veterans with student veterans already on campus in order to help them navigate college life, identify challenges they are facing, refer them to the appropriate resource on or off campus, and provide ongoing support to their academic and personal ventures.