

2025 University of Colorado Colorado Springs Naming and Perception Study

Full Report
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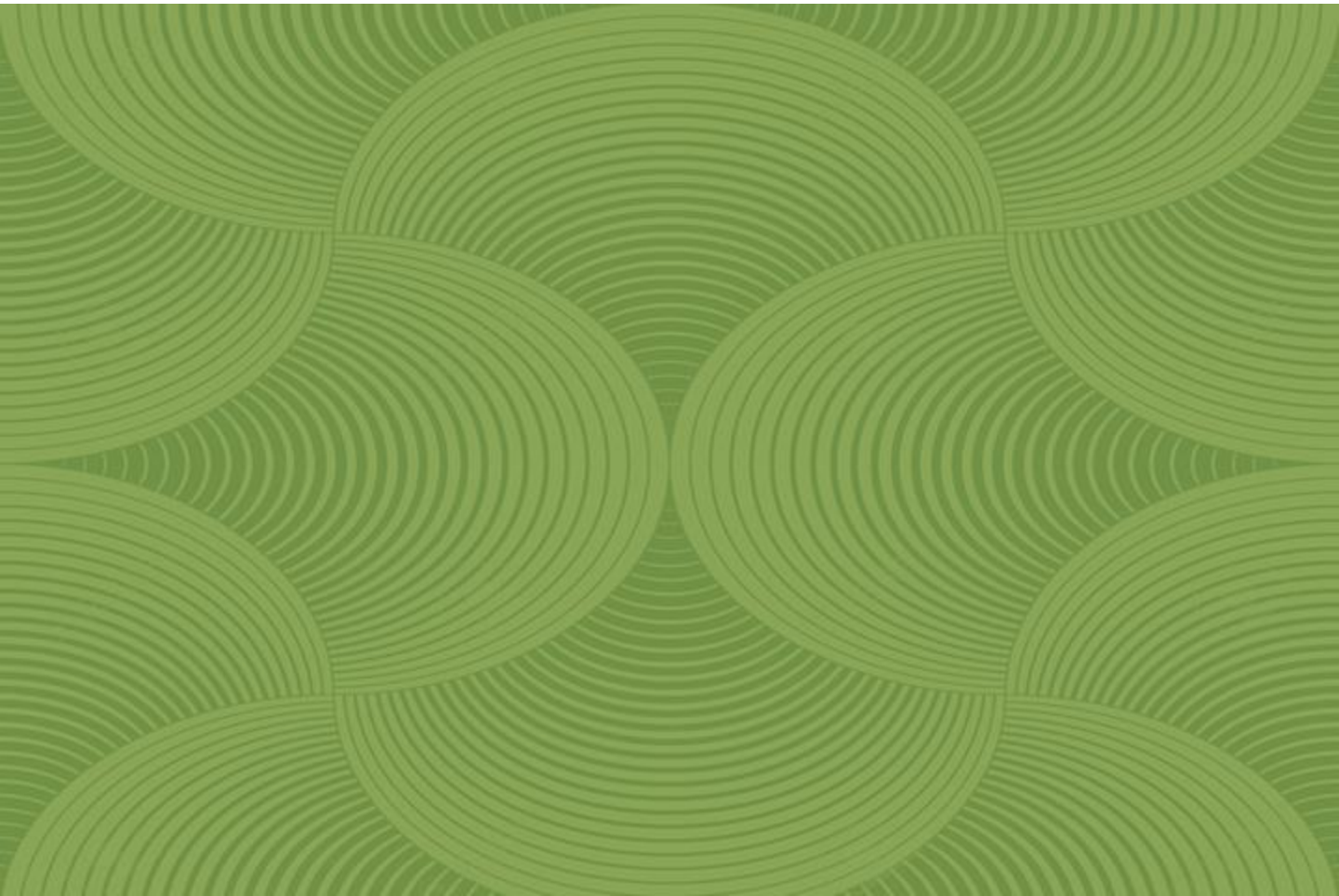
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NAMING & PERCEPTION PULSE 2025

Experimental testing reveals immediate, measurable benefits from 'CU Colorado Springs' with meaningful market support despite current awareness challenges.

PREFERENCE FOR CU COLORADO SPRINGS

OVERALL

43%

Prefer "CU Colorado Springs" name

FRONT RANGE

50%

Highest support among all regions

EL PASO COUNTY

35%

57% prefer UCCS

AWARENESS CHALLENGES

RECOGNITION

5%

Top-of-mind awareness of UCCS

FAMILIARITY GAP

-27%

UCCS vs CU Boulder very/extremely familiar

REGIONAL DROP

-52%

Awareness decline from El Paso to other regions

PERCEPTION IMPACT

PRESTIGE

+25%

Improvement with "CU Colorado Springs"

CONSIDERATION

+13%

Increase in likelihood to consider

ACADEMIC QUALITY

+16%

Improvement in appeal to other Colorado regions

SEGMENT VARIATIONS (NAME CHANGE)

MOST RECEPTIVE

47% Front range residents

24% STEM students

25% Nationally-mobile students

MOST RESISTANT (PREFER UCCS)

57% El Paso County

24% Education majors

26% Highly engaged stakeholders

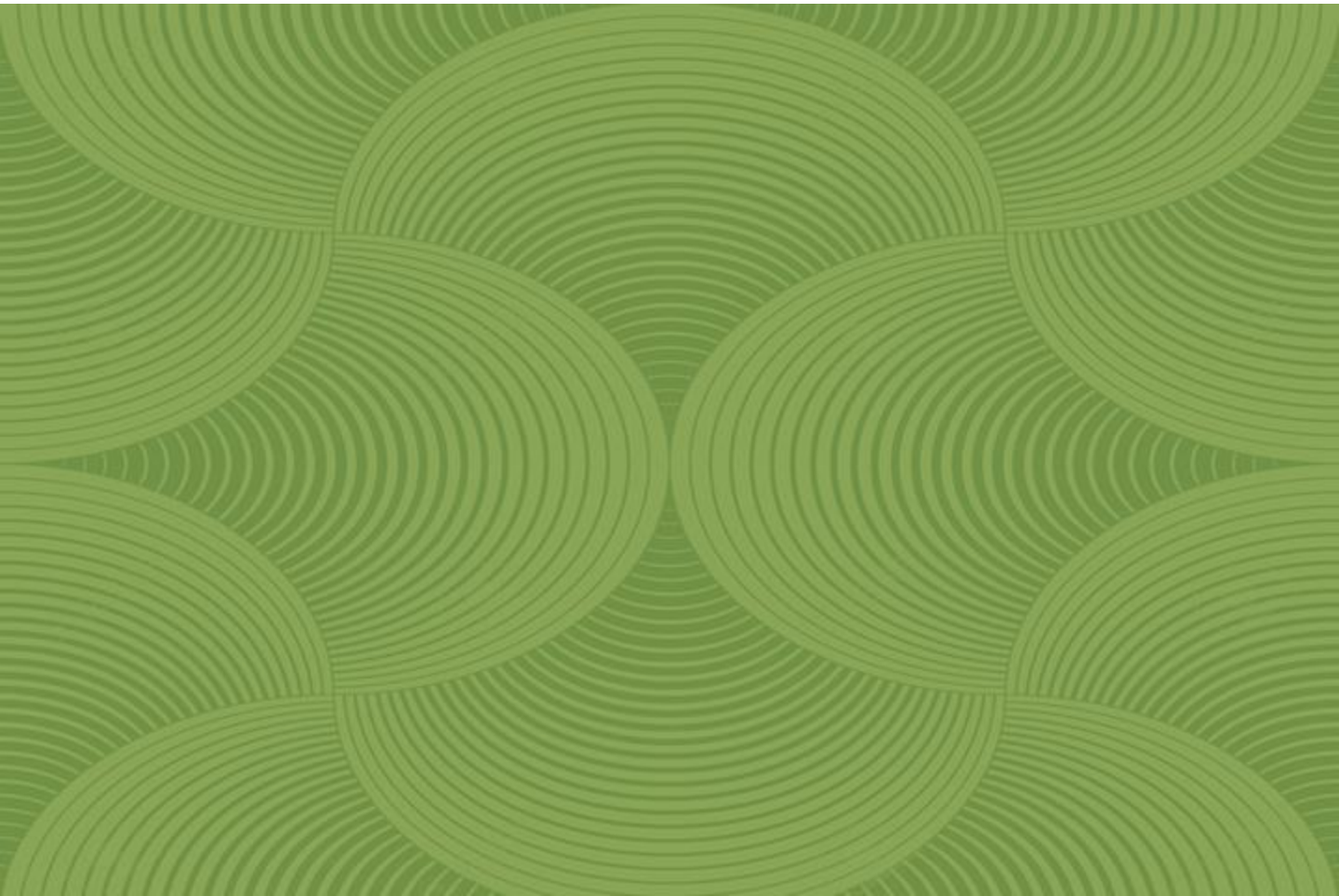
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research reveals a critical inflection point for University of Colorado Colorado Springs' institutional identity. While the UCCS name maintains strong recognition within the local market, the data suggests that adopting "CU Colorado Springs" could significantly enhance the university's appeal and recognition beyond El Paso County.

The findings indicate that this naming decision represents more than a cosmetic change—it's a strategic choice between maintaining strong local identity and expanding regional influence. Overall, 43% of respondents prefer "CU Colorado Springs," but this masks dramatic geographic variations: Front Range residents strongly favor the change (49.7%), while El Paso County residents show attachment to UCCS (56.7%). Across all segments, respondents believe the change would enhance institutional prestige.

Qualitative Insight: In-depth interviews with stakeholders reinforced these quantitative findings while adding nuance. Many interviewees confirmed they experience firsthand the recognition challenges that UCCS faces outside El Paso County, with several noting they strategically use "CU Colorado Springs" when speaking with people outside the region to leverage immediate recognition of the CU brand.

**METHODOLOGY AND
RESPONSE PROFILE**



METHODOLOGY & RESPONSE PROFILE

Survey Specifics

- **Field Date:** April 17 to May 8, 2025
- **Sample:** 537 Colorado residents
- **Response Rate:** 22%
- **Method:** Online survey

Respondent Profile

Gender:



Profile:

Students	Families
52%	48%

Age:

16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
21%	25%	30%	15%	9%

Ethnicity:

White	Black	Asian	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Other
72%	14%	4%	3%	1%	6%

Colorado County:

	El Paso	Front Range	Other
Respondents	39%	32%	29%

Academic Area of Study:

STEM	Business & Management	Health Sciences	Other
25%	22%	18%	11%

Familiarity with UCCS:

Very/Extremely	Somewhat	Not Very/Not at All
43%	21%	34%

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine perceptions of UCCS naming conventions and potential alternatives. The research design incorporated both quantitative survey methodology and qualitative interviews to provide comprehensive insights.

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Survey Design and Administration

- Online survey distributed to Colorado residents ages 16+ (current college students, family of current college students, high school students, family of high school students, other influencers)
- Data collection period: April 17, 2025 to May 8, 2025
- Total respondents: 2,380 with 537 qualified respondents (Colorado residents interested in college)
- Distribution method: online survey via anonymous link
- Average duration: 16.7 minutes

Experimental Design Component The survey incorporated an experimental design element where respondents were randomly assigned to evaluate either the current "University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS)" naming or the alternative "CU Colorado Springs" naming. This experimental approach allowed for direct comparison of reactions to both naming conventions.

Analysis Approach

- Descriptive statistics to establish baseline awareness and perception
- Comparative analysis between naming options
- Segmentation analysis to identify patterns across geographic and demographic variables

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

In-depth Stakeholder Interviews

- 13 in-depth interviews conducted
 - 8 in-person interviews
 - 5 virtual interviews
- Interview structure: Semi-structured format with consistent question framework
- Interviews recorded and analyzed for key themes and insights

Stakeholder Composition

- 2 community members
- 2 faculty members
- 2 students
- 6 staff members
- Diverse representation across campus constituencies

Qualitative Analysis Approach

- Thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights
- Integration with quantitative findings for comprehensive understanding
- Identification of explanatory factors for quantitative results

Research Limitations

While comprehensive in scope, this research has several limitations to acknowledge:

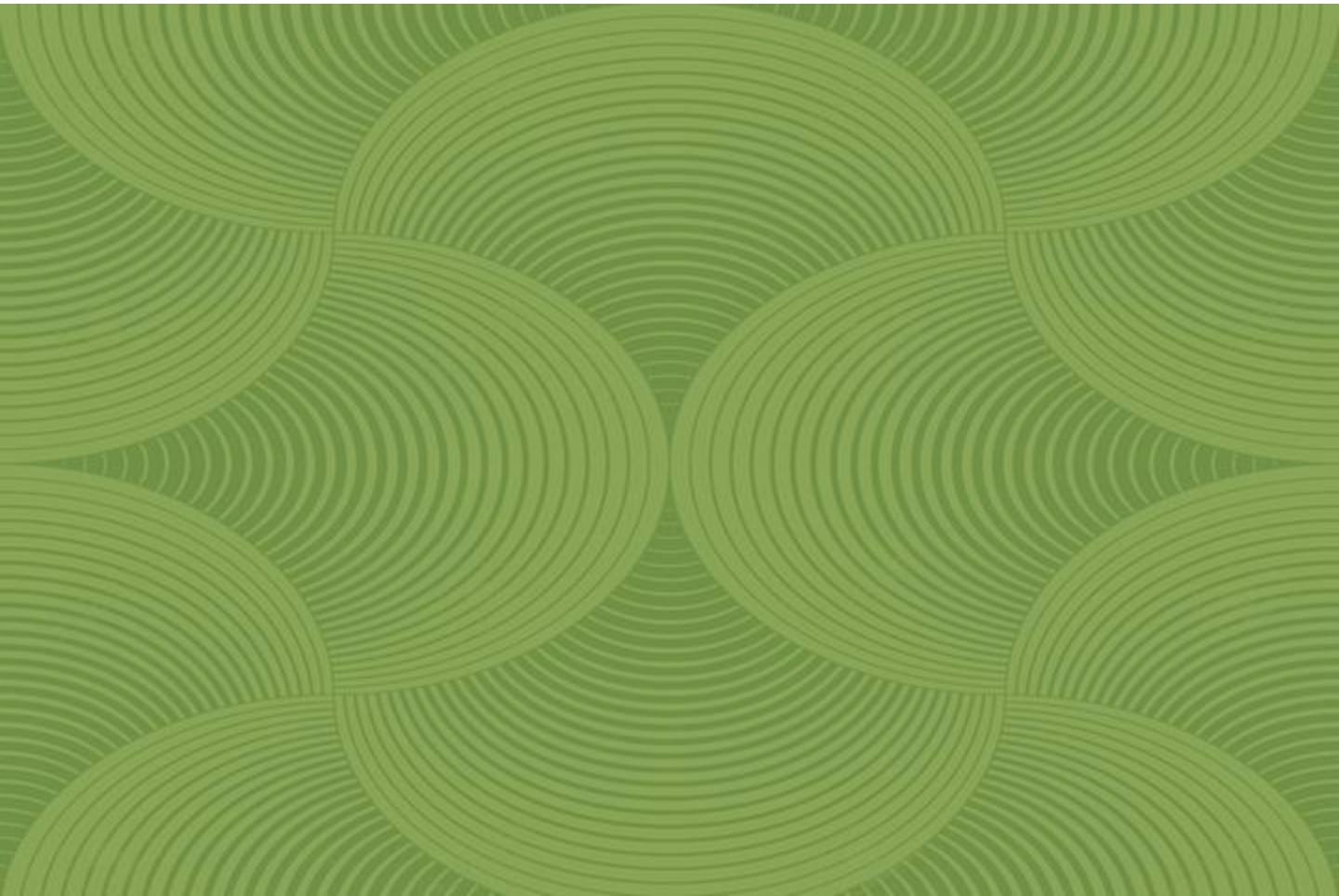
Geographic Representation: The study's focus on Colorado stakeholders may limit understanding of perceptions among out-of-state audiences.

Hypothetical Context: Respondents were evaluating a hypothetical name change scenario, which may differ from reactions to an actual implementation.

Sample Composition: Some stakeholder groups may have stronger representation than others in the final sample.

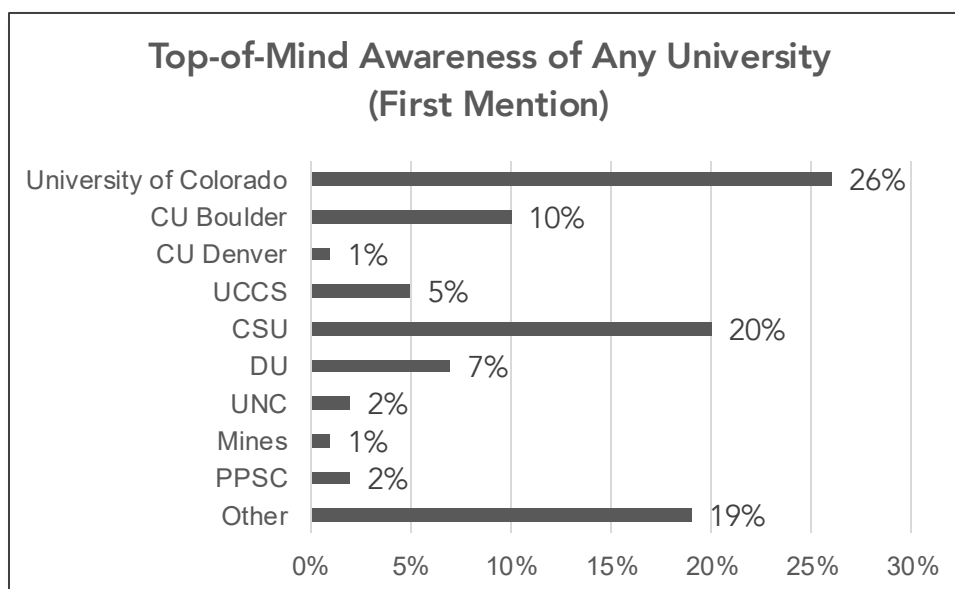
These limitations were mitigated through triangulation of multiple data sources and methodologies, but should be considered when interpreting findings.

KEY FINDINGS



THE COLORADO HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

When asked to name Colorado universities that come to mind, respondents paint a clear picture of the competitive landscape. The data shows the University of Colorado system dominates top-of-mind awareness, with the general University of Colorado mentioned by 26% of respondents and CU Boulder specifically by another 10%. Colorado State University follows at 20%. UCCS is mentioned by 5% of respondents—trailing the flagship institutions and University of Denver (7%).



This awareness challenge becomes more pronounced when examining total mention data. University of Colorado (without specifying campus) was mentioned by 78.87% of respondents, followed by Colorado State University at 44.77%, and University of Denver at 21.13%. University of Colorado Boulder was specifically mentioned by 17.99% of respondents. UCCS (University of Colorado Colorado Springs) was mentioned by only 9% of respondents overall—significantly lower than the flagship campuses but comparable to Colorado School of Mines (also 9%).

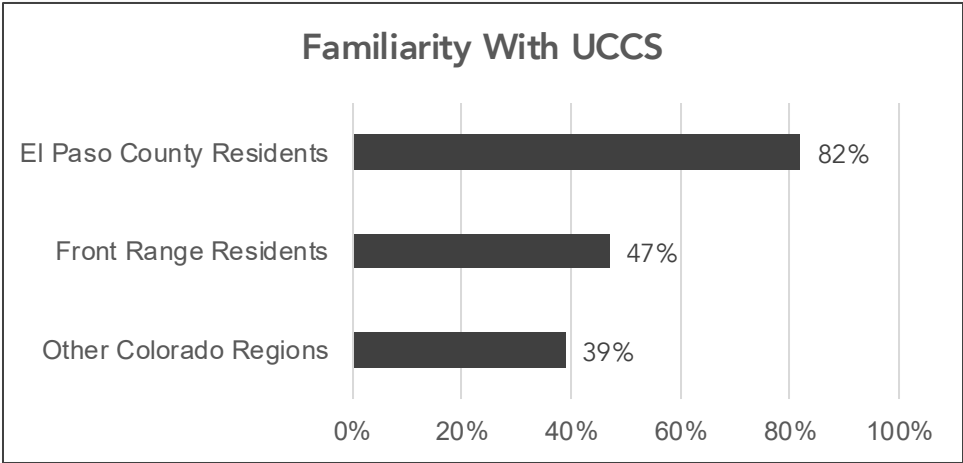
Qualitative Insight: Interviews with admissions staff revealed practical implications of this awareness challenge. As one staff member noted, *"We get that a lot at college fairs, if we just have UCCS on our tablecloth...People like, are you in California or California schools?"* Another admissions staff member observed that simply having "CU" on display materials would trigger immediate geographic recognition: *"If I had a CU on the table [at college fairs], I guarantee someone would look at that and go, 'Oh, Colorado.' You instantly recognize that to Colorado."*

Geographic Variations in Awareness

The awareness challenge shows significant geographic variation. UCCS has strong familiarity within El Paso County but faces recognition challenges elsewhere:

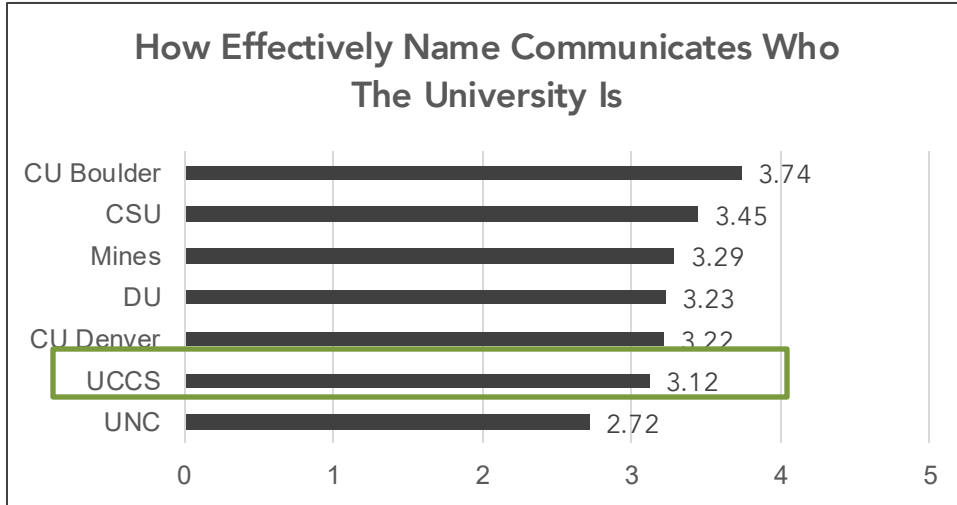
This geographic variation establishes a pattern that will recur throughout the data—strong local recognition but diminishing awareness beyond the immediate region. Front Range respondents consistently demonstrate lower awareness of UCCS but higher receptivity to system association.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews confirmed these geographic variations, with stakeholders noting that UCCS often isn't considered when students from northern Colorado explore college options. As one recruitment staff member observed, *"We're just not on the radar for many Denver area families unless they have some connection to Colorado Springs."*



The Recognition Gap

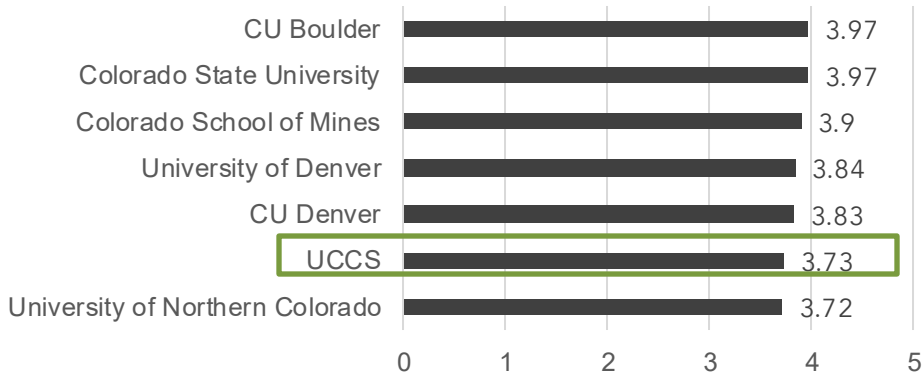
The data reveals that UCCS faces what we might call a "recognition gap"—strong awareness among those who know the institution, but limited reach beyond its immediate sphere. This gap manifests most clearly in the university's communication effectiveness ratings, where UCCS scores 3.12 on a 5-point scale, compared to 3.74 for CU Boulder and 3.45 for CSU.



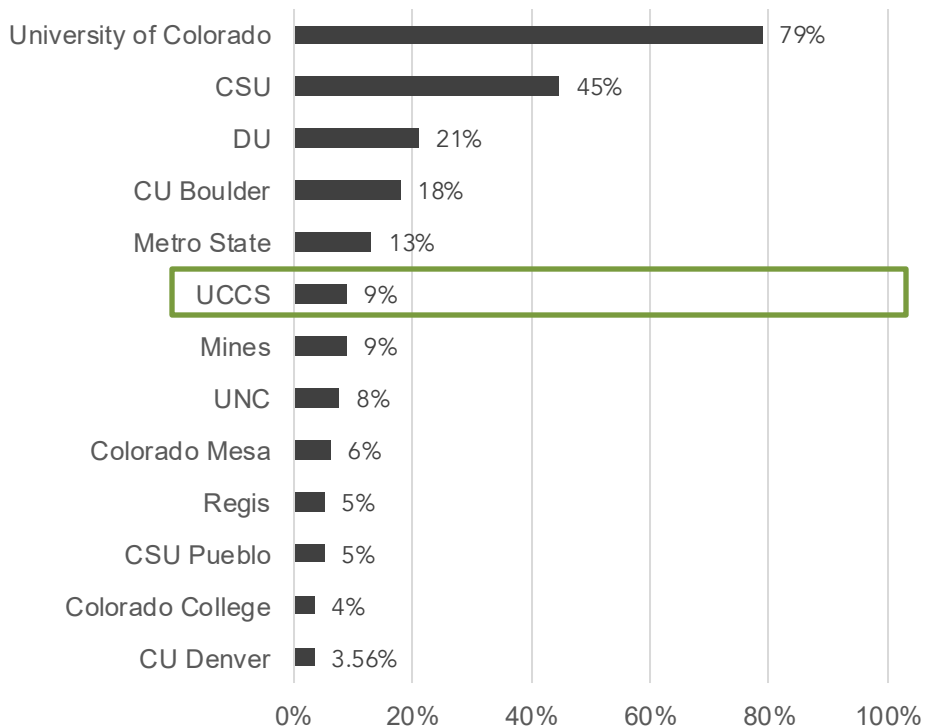
When examining total awareness metrics, UCCS is mentioned by only 9% of respondents overall, significantly lower than the University of Colorado system generally (78.87%), Colorado State University (44.77%), and even CU Boulder specifically (17.99%).

Qualitative Insight: Student interviews provided vivid illustrations of this recognition gap. As one student explained, *"When I say UCCS, a lot of the time people are like, 'Who?' And I have to actively explain it."* Several interviewees also noted that making the connection to the CU system enhances perceptions of the institution, with one student reflecting, *"Me learning they're part of [the system] gave me more respect for them."*

How Effectively University Communicates Their Value and Offerings



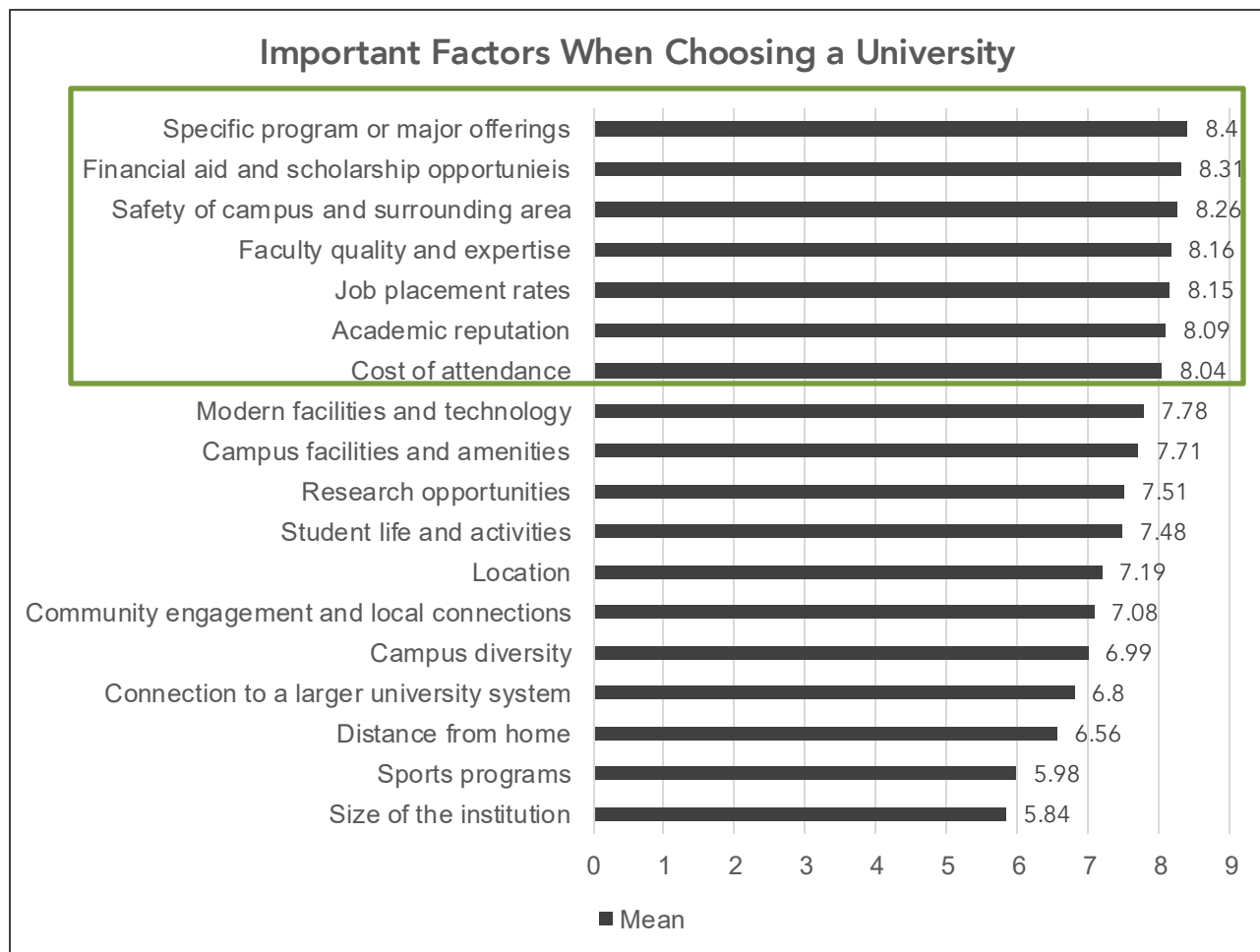
Total Awareness (Unaided)*



**Multiple mentions allowed*

Understanding the Decision Factors

When choosing a university, respondents reveal clear priorities based on a 10-point importance scale:



Notably, connection to a larger university system ranks moderately important at 6.8, suggesting that while system affiliation matters, it's secondary to core educational quality and value propositions. This finding adds nuance to the naming discussion: the CU connection could enhance UCCS's appeal, but only if it reinforces perceptions of academic excellence.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews confirmed the importance of system connection but revealed historical context for UCCS's distinct naming convention. As one long-term faculty member explained, *"Years ago, it used to be our faculty were adamant that they did not want to be CU. They came to UCCS to work here."* This perspective helps explain the deliberate differentiation of UCCS as a name during previous administrative periods.

Familiarity and Naming Preferences

The research reveals an interesting relationship between familiarity with UCCS and naming preferences:

High Familiarity with UCCS (n=232)

Prefer CU Colorado Springs: 19.4%

Prefer UCCS: 24.6%

No preference: 3.9%

Believe prestige would increase: 27.6%

Low Familiarity with UCCS (n=183)

Prefer CU Colorado Springs: 21.3%

Prefer UCCS: 15.8%

No preference: 8.7%

Believe prestige would increase: 18.6%

This indicates that those most familiar with UCCS show stronger attachment to the current name, while those with lower familiarity slightly prefer "CU Colorado Springs."

Statistical Significance: The difference in UCCS preference between high and low familiarity groups is statistically significant (24.6% vs 15.8%, $z = 2.20$, $p = 0.028$), with a small effect size (Cohen's $h = 0.22$). However, even highly familiar respondents acknowledge prestige benefits of the change.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews with highly engaged stakeholders reinforced this pattern. Several long-term faculty and staff expressed attachment to the UCCS name while simultaneously acknowledging that the CU association carries significant weight with external audiences. As one faculty member with over 15 years at the institution explained, *"There's a sense of pride in what we've built as UCCS, but I have to admit, when I travel to conferences and say 'University of Colorado,' people immediately pay attention in a different way."*

Demographic Variations in Decision Factors

Student and family perspectives show similarities in naming preferences:

Students (All students):

UCCS: 44.1%

CU Colorado Springs: 44.1%

No preference: 11.8%

Families of Students (All families):

UCCS: 44.4%

CU Colorado Springs: 44.4%

No preference: 11.1%

While the overall preferences are identical, there are differences in perceived benefits:

- **41.4% of students** believe **prestige would increase** with "CU Colorado Springs"
- **53.9% of families** believe **prestige would increase** with "CU Colorado Springs"

Statistical Significance: The difference in prestige perception between families and students is statistically significant ($z = 2.85$, $p = 0.004$), with a small-to-medium effect size (Cohen's $h = 0.25$). This 12.5-point gap in prestige perception suggests parents place greater value on the CU system association and its potential to enhance their child's educational credentials.

Qualitative Insight: Student interviews revealed additional concerns beyond prestige, particularly about campus identity and community. As one student noted, *"There's no unifying factor here. Boulder has the excuse to rally around football or even Greek life. We don't have necessarily that."* This suggests that naming considerations intersect with broader questions of campus culture and identity.

The Current Perception Challenge

UCCS's current positioning reveals both strengths and significant opportunities. On a 10-point scale, the university performs well on:

Safe and friendly campus (7.35)

Beautiful campus (7.59)

Welcoming environment (7.29)

However, critical gaps emerge in areas that matter most to prospective students and their families:

Prestigious (5.89)—nearly 2 points below CU Boulder

High-quality faculty (6.78)—compared to 7.65 for CSU

Research-focused (5.34)—well behind both CU Boulder (8.12) and CSU (7.89)

These perception gaps directly impact consideration. While 34.5% of respondents would consider UCCS, this trails CU Boulder (52.1%), CSU (43.2%), and even CU Denver (35.8%).

Qualitative Insight: Interviews highlighted additional distinctive assets that aren't sufficiently leveraged in marketing. Many participants identified the campus's natural setting as a significant but underutilized strength. As one student government representative noted, *"I think we don't lean into being on a hill enough...I think this is one of the prettiest campuses in the state."* Multiple interviewees also characterized UCCS as offering a more personalized educational experience compared to larger institutions, particularly serving first-generation, commuter, and adult learners.

Academic Interest and Perception

Perceptions and preferences show interesting variations across academic disciplines:

	STEM FIELDS (n=213)	EDUCATION (n=33)	LIBERAL ARTS (n=65)
Prefer UCCS	22.1%	24.2%	24.6%
Prefer CU Colorado Springs	24.4%	12.1%	18.5%
No Preference	5.2%	12.1%	10.8%
Believe prestige would increase with name change	27.7%	27.3%	21.6%

STEM students show the strongest preference for "CU Colorado Springs," while Education and Liberal Arts students prefer UCCS.

This suggests different academic communities value institutional identity differently, with more professionally-oriented disciplines potentially seeing greater value in system association.

Qualitative Insight: Faculty interviews revealed that some academic programs have developed strong independent identities and worry about being subsumed under a more homogeneous system brand. As one education faculty member explained, *"We've built something distinctive here that isn't just a smaller version of Boulder."*

What's in a Name? The Power of System Identity

Perhaps the most revealing finding emerges from respondents' reactions to university naming conventions. When asked about the effectiveness of different system naming approaches, 72.8% rate the more consistent naming convention (like CSU and CSU Pueblo) as "very" or "extremely" effective for creating unified system identity. However, only 41.3% believe this approach effectively distinguishes between campuses.

The abbreviation test provides crucial insight: When shown "CU," 44.9% of respondents associate it with CU Boulder, while only 9.3% think of UCCS. This suggests that UCCS may not be fully capitalizing on the strength of the CU brand.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews revealed that the mixed naming approach creates practical confusion. A community partner observed, *"I know that the CU system is one of the few that when you graduate, your degree says University of Colorado does not indicate which campus that you graduated from."* One student articulated the perception of UCCS as an outlier: *"For some reason I think UCCS is kind of like different or like stands out just because when we look at the other schools, all the other schools is like...CU...And then you have UCCS."*

System Identity and Geographic Mobility

The research reveals an important connection between geographic mobility and system identity preferences:

	LOCAL/REGIONAL - ≤50 miles (n=194)	NATIONAL/INTER NATIONAL (n=149)
Prefer UCCS	23.2%	18.1%
Prefer CU Colorado Springs	14.9%	24.8%
No Preference	7.2%	4.0%
Believe prestige would increase with name change	19.1%	24.1%

Those willing to consider universities beyond their local area show stronger preference for "CU Colorado Springs," suggesting the CU brand carries more weight for geographically mobile students.

Statistical Significance: The difference between nationally-oriented and locally-oriented students' preference for "CU Colorado Springs" is statistically significant (24.8% vs 14.9%, ($z = 2.31$, $p = 0.021$), with a small-to-medium effect size (Cohen's $h = 0.25$).

Qualitative Insight: Interviews with students confirmed this pattern. As one student explained, *"If I'm looking at schools across the country, I want something on my resume that people will recognize right away. CU has that recognition factor."*

Regional Connection: A Delicate Balance

The data reveals complex regional dynamics. Currently, 91.8% of respondents correctly identify UCCS with Colorado Springs when shown the abbreviation. However, the connection between naming and regional perception proves more nuanced:

- 38.4% believe the UCCS name effectively communicates regional identity
- 52.3% feel it clearly shows connection to Colorado Springs
- Yet only 31.2% think it appeals to students from other Colorado regions

This suggests the current name may be too locally focused, potentially limiting broader appeal while not necessarily strengthening local connections enough to offset this limitation.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews provided additional context on UCCS's regional positioning. While one community partner noted, *"For professionals in this community, there's an enormous amount of respect for this campus,"* several participants observed that UCCS's community integration could be stronger. As one faculty member expressed, *"I don't feel like we're out in the community enough. Like, we don't really have. It feels like we don't have ties to the community."*

Geographic Variations in Name Preference

Geography proves to be the most significant differentiator in naming preferences:

	El Paso County (n=189)	Front Range Counties (n=257)	Other Colorado Counties (n=89)
Prefer UCCS	56.7%	38.6%	45.5%
Prefer CU Colorado Springs	35.0%	49.7%	33.3%
No Preference	8.3%	11.8%	18.2%

Statistical Significance: The geographic differences are highly significant. Front Range residents show significantly stronger preference for "CU Colorado Springs" compared to El Paso County residents (49.7% vs 35.0%, $z = 2.77$, $p = 0.006$). Conversely, El Paso County residents show significantly stronger preference for "UCCS" (56.7% vs 38.6%, $z = -3.43$, $p < 0.001$). The overall association between geographic region and name preference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10.0$, $p < 0.01$), with a medium effect size (Cohen's $h = 0.30$).

Front Range residents show the strongest support for change, aligning with the strategic goal of expanding the university's reach beyond Colorado Springs. El Paso County residents show the strongest attachment to the UCCS name, though notably, 56.7% still believe prestige would increase with the change.

Qualitative Insight: El Paso County stakeholder interviews revealed that local attachment to the UCCS name often stems from personal connections to the institution rather than marketing considerations. As one long-time community partner explained, *"There's a history here. People remember when it was just starting out, and they take pride in how far UCCS has come."*

The Experimental Evidence: Perceptions Under Different Names

The survey's experimental design, which randomly assigned respondents to view either "UCCS" or "CU Colorado Springs" descriptions, yields compelling results. Respondents shown the "CU Colorado Springs" version consistently rate the university higher on key attributes:

System Connection and Prestige

CU System Connection: 4.23 vs. 3.67 (15% improvement)

Prestigious: 7.34 vs. 5.89 (25% improvement)

Academic Quality: 7.89 vs. 6.78 (16% improvement)

Market Appeal and Recognition

Appeal to Denver Metro Students: 3.72 vs. 3.21 (16% improvement)

Appeal to Other Colorado Regions: 3.89 vs. 3.12 (25% improvement)

Employer Recognition: 3.91 vs. 3.34 (17% improvement)

Practical Benefits

Likelihood to Consider: 3.78 vs. 3.34 (13% improvement)

Most significantly, the experimental analysis shows measurable impact from name alone, with "CU Colorado Springs" delivering immediate perception improvements across critical decision factors.

Qualitative Insight: While interviews revealed support for the potential benefits of a name change, they also uncovered concerns about implementation. As one community partner noted, "I think there would have to be probably a pretty robust campaign around, you know, the shift from UCCS to [CU Colorado Springs]."

The Experimental Evidence: Perceptions Under Different Names

The experimental analysis shows that UCCS and CU Colorado Springs rate quite similarly on many attributes, with both names receiving generally positive evaluations (average of 7.01 for UCCS on all attributes and 7.24 for CU Colorado Springs). UCCS demonstrates modest but consistent advantages across measures associated with “community-related” measures, likely reflecting its established reputation and strong recognition within El Paso County. CU Colorado Springs has an advantage on those measures most closely related to prestige and quality, suggesting that while UCCS benefits from local market familiarity, the CU Colorado Springs name offers strategic advantages for broader recognition, reputation and market expansion.

Attribute	UCCS	CU Colorado Springs
Connect to the local community	7.59	7.27
Beautiful campus	7.59	7.51
Strong local/regional presence	7.52	7.13
Career-oriented	7.51	7.37
Maintains its own distinct identity	7.48	7.40
Safe and friendly campus	7.35	6.94
Welcoming and supportive environment	7.29	6.91
Community-focused	7.21	6.89
Offers personalized attention to students	7.11	6.55
Good value for the cost of education	7.09	6.65
Innovative	7.09	7.56
Accessible to diverse students	7.06	6.90
Benefits from the reputation of the university	7.05	7.91
Forward-thinking	7.03	7.12
Academic quality	6.78	7.89
Nationally recognized	6.93	7.35
High-quality faculty/instructors	6.78	7.51
Part of a respected university system	6.61	7.43
Prestigious	5.89	7.34
Research-focused	5.34	7.21

Socioeconomic Factors and Name Appeal

The research revealed interesting patterns in how different socioeconomic groups perceive the naming options:

	Lower Income Families (<\$75k) (n=90)	High Income Families (\$150K+) (n=110)
Prefer UCCS	16.7%	15%
Prefer CU Colorado Springs	24.4%	20.0%
No Preference	10.0%	5.0%
Believe prestige would increase	22.3%	35.0%

While higher income families of students show stronger belief that prestige would increase with the name change, lower income families actually show higher direct preference for "CU Colorado Springs," suggesting different motivations across income levels.

Qualitative Insight: Interviews suggested that for lower income families, practical recognition benefits may outweigh abstract prestige considerations. As one recruitment officer noted, *"First-generation families especially care about the name recognition with employers, and that's where the CU connection can really help."*

The Name Change Impact Assessment

When directly asked how a name change would affect their perceptions, respondents provide clear direction:

Perceptions that would significantly increase with "CU Colorado Springs":

- Connection to CU system (68.4% say "increase")
- Prestige (52.1% say "increase")
- Academic quality (47.3% say "increase")
- Appeal to students from other Colorado regions (44.8% say "increase")
- Benefits from CU system reputation (56.7% say "increase")

Perceptions that would remain stable:

- Connection to local community (61.2% say "stay the same")
- Appeal to Colorado Springs residents (58.4% say "stay the same")
- Distinct identity (55.3% say "stay the same")

Qualitative Insight: Interviews revealed specific concerns about potential drawbacks of closer system alignment. One student expressed worry about spillover effects: *"I feel like a downside could be like if something happens at another school that's like potentially bad, they could group all of us together as one."*

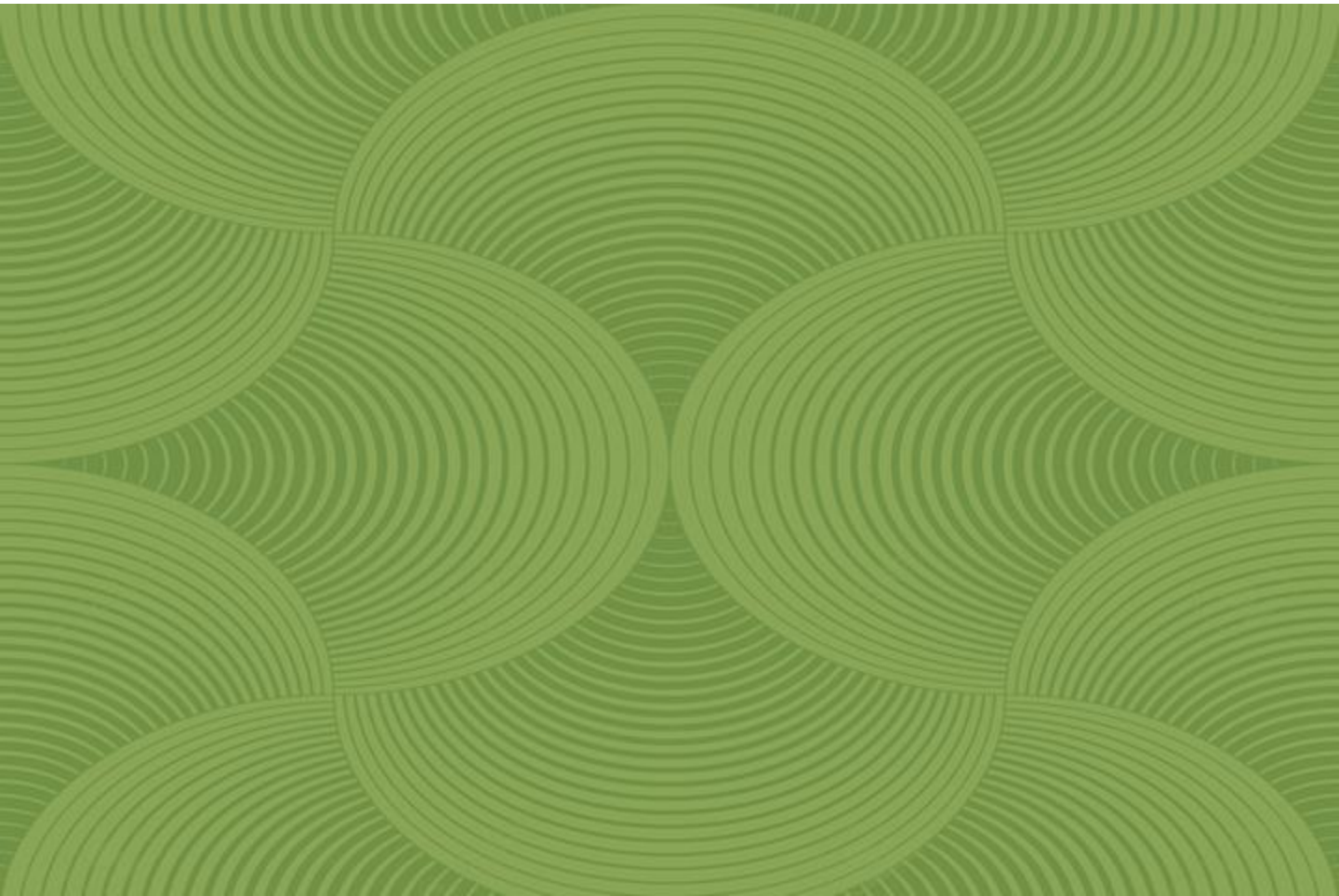
Engagement Level and Naming Preferences

The research examined how institutional engagement affects naming preferences:

	Highly Engaged (n=168)	Low Engagement (n=79)
Prefer UCCS	25.6%	10.5%
Prefer CU Colorado Springs	17.9%	21.1%
No Preference	3.0%	10.5%
Believe prestige would increase	33.4%	10.6%

Highly engaged stakeholders show stronger attachment to UCCS but paradoxically also show the highest belief that prestige would increase with the change. This suggests even supporters recognize the brand value of the CU system.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION



The Bottom Line: Overall Preference Trends

When asked directly to choose between the two naming options, the data shows an even split in overall preference, with 43% preferring "CU Colorado Springs" and 43% preferring "UCCS," with 12% expressing no preference. However, this overall tie masks significant geographic and demographic variations that reveal strategic opportunities.

The reasons for preferring "CU Colorado Springs" are illuminating:

- Stronger connection to the university system
- Name sounds more prestigious
- Easier to remember
- Better recognized by more people
- Clarity about location

Qualitative Insight: Stakeholder interviews revealed that even those who preferred maintaining the UCCS name acknowledged the potential benefits of closer CU system association. Multiple interviewees noted that regardless of their personal preference, they recognized the marketing and recognition value of the CU brand, particularly for attracting students from outside El Paso County.

What Would Be Gained and Lost?

Respondents' open-ended comments reveal nuanced perspectives:

Gains from "CU Colorado Springs":

- Immediate association with CU's academic excellence
- Better recognition from employers outside the region
- Clearer understanding of our place in the CU system
- More prestigious sound that matches our actual quality

Potential Losses:

- UCCS has its own established identity and history
- Might seem like we're riding Boulder's coattails
- Could confuse some who know us as UCCS
- Loss of unique brand that alumni identify with

Qualitative Insight: Stakeholder interviews revealed additional considerations not captured in the survey. Several interviewees emphasized that any transition would need to acknowledge both historical identity and future direction. As one community partner observed, a name change would require *"a pretty robust campaign"* to maintain continuity while leveraging new opportunities.

Strategic Implications

The data presents a clear strategic choice for university leadership:

1. **Maintain UCCS:** Preserve strong local identity and alumni connections while accepting limited recognition beyond the immediate region
2. **Adopt CU Colorado Springs:** Leverage the CU system's brand equity to enhance prestige, recognition, and appeal across Colorado, potentially sacrificing some unique local character

The evidence suggests that adopting "CU Colorado Springs" would:

- Immediately enhance perceived prestige and quality
- Increase consideration among prospective students
- Better leverage the CU system's reputation
- Improve competitive positioning against CSU and other regional universities
- Expand appeal beyond the Colorado Springs market, particularly in the Front Range

However, this change would need to be managed carefully to:

- Maintain strong connections with Colorado Springs community
- Honor the legacy and achievements of UCCS
- Ensure alumni feel their institutional identity is respected
- Communicate the change as evolution, not abandonment
- Develop clear differentiation from other CU campuses

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis provides compelling evidence for a carefully managed transition to "CU Colorado Springs." This change would address the recognized awareness and perception gaps that currently limit the institution's reach beyond El Paso County, while building on UCCS's established strengths and distinctive characteristics.

The research reveals that stakeholders across segments recognize the potential benefits of stronger CU system association, even when they personally prefer maintaining the UCCS name. This acknowledgment provides a foundation for communication strategies that honor the institution's history while embracing an evolved identity that better serves its strategic goals.

The path forward involves leveraging the strong Front Range support for change, carefully managing the transition for El Paso County stakeholders through inclusive planning, and emphasizing continuity of distinctive UCCS attributes like personalized education, beautiful campus location, and strong community connections.

Ultimately, the institution faces a strategic choice between maintaining strong local identity at the cost of limited regional recognition, or evolving toward a more system-aligned positioning that expands its reach while building on its established strengths. The integrated research findings suggest that with thoughtful implementation, "CU Colorado Springs" represents an opportunity to enhance institutional positioning while honoring the university's distinctive character and achievements.

