For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, the University of Colorado Foundation’s Long Term Investment Pool (LTIP) returned 36.83%, which compares to 30.51% for our policy benchmark. The LTIP includes endowments the Foundation holds for the benefit of the University of Colorado. The LTIP’s longer-term results show a consistent track record of investment growth, in line with the Foundation’s goal of maximizing returns over an extended time period while effectively managing risk. Achieving this objective is critical given CU’s long-term educational mission. Faculty, students and programs on all four university campuses rely on consistent funding streams from the LTIP for years to come.

CU investments vs. policy benchmark
As of June 30, 2021, the LTIP’s 3-year annualized investment performance was +14.94%, its 7-year performance was +10.05%, its 10-year performance was +9.97%, and its 15-year performance was +8.73%. The 10- and 15-year returns were achieved with over 33% less risk than the policy benchmark.

*The Policy Benchmark, effective FY 2018, is a blend of 80% MSCI ACWI (equities) and 20% Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index (fixed income). Depending on the return period presented, historical benchmarks of 40% Russell 3000, 40% MSCI EAFE and 20% Barclays US Agg (FY 2009 – 2017) and 50% Russell 3000, 30% Barclays US Agg and 20% MSCI EAFE (fund inception – FY 2008) are components of the policy benchmark as applicable.

Current LTIP value: $2.6 billion
As of June 30, 2021, the LTIP was valued at $2.6 billion. The value of endowments invested for the benefit of CU is a subset of the LTIP, totaling $2.1 billion. Note that increases/decreases of these funds over time do not precisely mirror investment performance, due to increases reflecting fundraising inflows and decreases reflecting distributions made to university programs.

LTIP asset allocation as of June 30, 2021
The LTIP’s $2.6 billion is invested in a diverse portfolio of asset classes with a long-term strategic investment horizon. Here is the proportion of investment by asset class.
The Foundation’s Board of Directors and Investment Policy Committee set the parameters of the LTIP’s investment strategy as documented in the Foundation’s LTIP Investment Policy Statement, which committee members and directors regularly review and update. The Foundation relies on the institutional resources of Agility, the Foundation’s outsourced CIO, and its highly qualified and experienced team, to manage the Foundation’s investment portfolio within the parameters of this policy statement. The LTIP Investment Policy Statement is publicly available on the Foundation’s website.

The LTIP is invested in a wide range of asset classes consistent with the legal requirements of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) and the best practices of the largest college and university endowments. Asset diversification also means that the LTIP has achieved its outstanding investment results with a third less risk than either the policy benchmark or U.S. stock market passive index funds. Because U.S. stock market passive index funds are heavily weighted to the stocks of just a few U.S. companies, they are significantly riskier and more volatile than the Foundation’s broadly diversified portfolio.

The LTIP grew by over $600 million in the last fiscal year – from $1.9 billion to $2.6 billion in value – thanks to an historic investment return and generous philanthropic contributions from donors who established 120 new endowments in the last fiscal year. The value of all CU endowments held by the Foundation exceeded $2 billion for the first time and the Foundation’s total assets under management exceeded $3 billion at fiscal year end.

Because colleges and university endowments are just beginning to report their investment results for the most recent fiscal year, it is too early to know how the Foundation’s most recent annual investment returns compare to those of peer institutions. We do know that the LTIP has performed in the top quartile compared to all college and university endowments and it has outperformed the average investment returns in its $1 billion plus peer group for all measurement periods as of June 30, 2020, the most recent time period for which comparative investment performance data is available.

These exceptional investment results coupled with the continued philanthropic support of our generous donors have enabled the Foundation to be a reliable partner to the University of Colorado. This has been especially important in a year in which CU faced budgetary challenges responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic disruptions. The Foundation transferred more than $200 million in funding to CU last fiscal year, including funds for emergency student tuition relief and supplemental funding for student, faculty and staff mental health services.