

First-Year Experience Transition Committee Draft Report

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DRAFT

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Introduction

Starting in 2015, CU Boulder began an unprecedented period of self-study and self-transformation designed to respond to national changes in higher education and to prepare the campus for further change. Those national changes include the aftermath of the recession of 2007-10, growing public skepticism toward the value of higher education, the rise of digital platforms for educational delivery and desire among American college students to diversify and customize their courses of study (often with an eye toward making them more relevant to work and life beyond the academy), and a collective desire by campus leadership and many faculty and staff to institute change. The initiatives the university has undertaken within this umbrella of self-examination and transformation include:

- A diversity, inclusion and equity strategic plan (2015) that in 2018 became the [Inclusion, Diversity and Excellence in Academics \(IDEA\) Plan](#), designed to promote diversity, improve equity for all people underrepresented in the campus community, and engage the CU Boulder community in continuous reflection and action to support making excellence inclusive at all levels;
- Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano's [Strategic Imperatives](#) (2016) to position the university as a leader in addressing the humanitarian, social and technological challenges of the 21st century by shaping tomorrow's leaders, being the top university for innovation, and positively impacting humanity;
- The [Foundations of Excellence initiative](#) (2017), a campus-wide effort bringing together multiple staff, faculty, and students to evaluate and improve the first year undergraduate experience for all students ;
- The [Academic Futures initiative](#) (2017), a three-year effort to re-imagine and re-invigorate how the university educates students and engages in cutting-edge scholarship and creative work, research and discovery;
- The [Financial Futures initiative](#) (2018), a process of supporting and enhancing the mission of CU Boulder through strategic financial alignment achieved by a university-wide diagnostic analysis, collaborative solution design, and rigorous implementation.

As part of the implementation phase of Foundations of Excellence and in alignment with recommendations from Academic Futures -- specifically, its lead project to [Create a Common Student-Centered Approach to Learning](#) -- Provost Russ Moore established the [First-Year Experience \(FYE\) Transition Committee](#). He charged the committee with assessing recommendations from the Foundations of Excellence Report to (1) change our housing allocation process to allow all students the opportunity to select residence halls and living-learning communities of interest, and (2) coordinate first-year academic experiences across resources/programs/units to ensure that all first-year (FY) students have opportunities for individual connection in a small academic setting. Furthermore, the committee was asked to identify how certain campus operations would be impacted by changes in housing and the current first-year experience on campus.

The FYE Transition Committee also benefited from previous reports, in particular, those from the Residential Campus 2020 Study Group (2006) and the Residential Academic Program (RAP) Task Force

(2017). The Study Group focused on the academic and social benefits provided to students by the RAPs and explored how to expand the program to all incoming students. It recommended a 15-year build-out of new RAPs combined with renovation of residence halls to accommodate spaces for RAP programs and a financial analysis and plan to seek donor and corporate funding for the programs. In response to that report, RAPs increased from 9 in 2006 to 12 in 2018.

The RAP Task Force, which reviewed campus RAPs in AY16/17, raised concerns regarding RAP financing, governance, equity and access. The Task Force recommended an improved governance structure with closer collaboration among the various academic units and Student Affairs. Most important, the Task Force recommended that *“all incoming students [needed] to have access to RAP programs without financial barriers”* and the ability *“to live in any of the three housing complexes without the barrier of paying an extra RAP fee.”*

Early on, the FYE Transition Committee concluded that its goals should include expanding a residential academic experience to all incoming first-year students and making that experience financially accessible to all students. The committee divided into seven subgroups that focused on: academic courses and classroom space, governance structure, programs at other institutions, focus groups, FYE staff, communications, and budget.

This report provides (1) facts on current first-year experiences at CU Boulder and the costs of individual programs; (2) results from focus groups conducted to better understand students’ residential experience and impact of RAP participation; (3) information on residential first-year programs at other institutions; (4) recommendations for a new first-year experience (FYE) for CU Boulder; (5) assessment of the impacts of the new model on the Office of the Registrar, Admissions, Residential Life, current RAP instructors, and the Schools & Colleges; (6) a new Governance structure; and (7) a proposed budget.

Overview of where we are: the first-year experience landscape at CU Boulder

CU Boulder currently offers three kinds of first-year experiences: Residential Academic Programs (RAPs), which commonly include academic courses in the residential hall; Living-Learning Communities (LLCs), which do not include academic courses; and First-Year Seminars (FYSM), which are academic courses outside the residence halls.

Current RAP programs – student numbers, academic programs, funding

- Leeds has two RAPs with 620 students (Table 1). Incoming pre-business (PRBU) students can participate in the PRBU RAP in Williams Village. The Business RAP is on main campus. Demand exceeds the beds available by ~60 students for the Business RAP and ~100 students for the pre-business RAP.
- The College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI) sponsors one RAP located in the Kittredge area. Most of the 204 students are first-year CMCI students.

- The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) sponsors two RAPs, both in Kittredge. Global Engineering (GEP) has 154 students, and Engineering Honors (EHP) has 208 students. Both RAPs are unusual in having a number of returning, upper class students.
- The College of Arts & Sciences (A&S) sponsors seven RAPs that include ~2300 students, ~95% of whom are first-year students. All A&S RAPs are on main campus.

RAP Personnel

All of the RAPs have a director and program manager/coordinator. With the exception of the two Leeds RAPs, the directors are faculty, who may provide a course(s) to the RAP. A&S also has an associate director (typically a RAP instructor) for each RAP. The RAPs in CEAS and CMCI have faculty-in-residence as do two RAPs in A&S. Leeds also has one academic advisor dedicated to each of its two RAPs, and student peer advisors are also available. The various RAP staff monitor student progress and provide support.

Academic Component

The RAPs provide academic courses to varying degrees (Table 2). Leeds students take all business core courses and some electives in the RAPs in classes of 18-45 students (typically smaller than regular business courses). The CMCI RAP offers 10 courses that include CMCI courses and A&S Gen Ed/CMCI core courses. Courses are taught by CMCI faculty and two RAP instructors or other RAP faculty (A&S courses).

The Global Engineering Program (GEP) Director teaches three RAP courses each year; additional courses are taught by other faculty, primarily from CEAS. EHP students have a required first-semester course with the director (3 sections and 18 recitations taught by upper-division RAP students). Four math courses are available, but not required, each semester. These are taught by instructors in APPM.

A&S RAPs provide ~150 courses each semester (Table 2) taught in the RAP in small sections (<20 students). Courses are taught by instructors and lecturers rostered in the RAPs. Many instructors are shared across several RAPs to provide full course loads.

Table 1. Residential Programs Fall 2018

Residential Program	Beds
PRBU RAP	250
Leeds RAP	370
EHP	208
GEP	154
CMCI RAP	204
A&S RAPs	2,307

Table 2. Courses offered in RAPs - 2018

RAP	Fall 2018 3+ credit courses	Fall 2018 1 credit course	Spr 2018 3+ credit courses	Spr 2018 1 credit course
A&S	157	17	155	13
PRBU	6	5	9	0
GEP	3	0	4	0
HEP			4	0

Engin LLC	495
Traditional Beds	3,057
Commuter	350

RAP Fee

All RAPs charge a fee of \$850. Those funds are supplemented by the colleges to fund RAP academic staff, instruction, operating expenses, and programming (Table 3).

Table 3. RAP funding and uses

RAP	\$850 Fee Uses	College Fund Uses
Leeds	staff salaries, RAP programming	Scholarships, instruction contributed by departments; some programming
CMCI	operating expenses, RAP programming	Director salary, faculty salaries (2-3 courses/semester)
Engineering	RAP programming, program assistant salary, additional courses in GEP	Director salaries, some instruction, operating budget, student hourlies; College subsidizes 50% of the \$850 RAP fee
A&S	RAP instructors, operating expense	Director & associate director stipends, program coordinator salary; CAS provides \$175/student for instructors and operating/programming

A majority of traditional beds (charge no fee) are located in Williams Village (Table 4). Central campus and, especially, Kittredge campus are dominated by beds requiring a RAP or LLC fee. That distribution and fee has raised key questions of equity around the RAP model. First-generation students and students with need-based aid are less likely to live in RAPS and, thus, more likely to live at Williams Village.

Table 4. Current Distribution of Residence Hall Beds by number and percentage

Area Breakdown	RAP Fee \$850	RAP Fee \$850	LLC Fee \$130	Traditional No Fee	Traditional No Fee
Central Campus	1,855	50.4%	13.5%	1327	36.1%
Kittredge Campus	1,402	92.8%	0.0%	109	7.2%
Williams Village	250	13.4%	0.0%	1621	86.6%

Student Characteristics

First-generation students and students with need-based aid are less likely to be in a RAP (Table 5). Two consequences are retention and housing location. After controlling for a number of factors including high school GPA and test scores, financial aid, residency, and entry college, the 2nd fall retention percentage gap between RAP participation and No RAP participation is 3%. Also worth noting is that although ~14% of all first-year residence hall students are first generation, 32% of the students released from the housing requirement are first-gen students.

Table 5. Differences in student characteristics for RAPs and non-RAPs (ODA data)

First-Gen Status	No RAP	RAP	Need Based Aid	No RAP	RAP
Not First Gen	51%	49%	No Need Based Aid	51%	49%
First Gen	64%	36%	Need Based Aid	59%	41%
IPEDS Race/Ethnicity	No RAP	RAP			
AMERIND	52%	48%			
ASIAN	64%	36%			
BLACK	66%	34%			
HISPA	58%	42%			
NON-RES ALIEN	79%	21%			
PACIF	59%	41%			
TWO-PLUS	56%	44%			
UNKNOWN	61%	39%			
WHITE	49%	51%			

Living Learning Communities (LLC)

Engineering oversees Living Learning Communities for ~500 students in four residential halls on main campus (Table 1). Student Affairs oversees four LLCs for 241 students in Hallett Hall with no cost to students. None of the LLCs provide academic courses. Residents of the Engineering LLC pay \$130/academic year to participate. In addition to funding the traditional events that occur within LLCs, the program also provides access within the residence hall to a computer lab that has engineering-specific software and printing.

First-Year Seminars

The first-year seminar program (FYSM) in the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) consists of 3-credit hour, academic courses taught by faculty in small (<20 student) sections. FYSMs are available to all first-year students and are not linked to housing. The program has grown to 48 courses with total enrollment of 806 students in Fall 2018. There is no additional cost to students other than their tuition.

Housing Allocations

Housing and Dining Services Occupancy Management (OM) will move to a new structure for the Housing Application/Assignment process for Academic Year 2020-2021. OM intends to eliminate the first-come/first-assign process so that all students can live in a residence hall of their choice. The new randomized assignment process will provide greater access for all students. OM has begun to research other PAC-12 and peer institutions best practices for application and assignment processes. Additionally, OM will engage with campus partners (Admissions, New Student & Family Programs, Institutional Research, Registrar, Faculty, Colleges, Residence Life and Financial Aid) in order to understand how a new housing/application process could potentially affect operations in these areas before finalizing the application/assignment process.

Focus Group Results

From Dec 2018 – Feb 2019, eight focus groups of students and Residence Life staff were conducted to gain a better understanding of students' residential experience and how participation in a RAP may affect this experience. Focus groups were conducted for the following groups:

- Students that participated in a RAP for the 2017-18 school year and are not living in a residence hall this year
- Students that participated in a RAP previously and are Student Ambassadors this year. Ambassadors are students that serve as liaisons between prospective students, parents, and the university.
- Students that lived in a residence hall for the 2017-18 school year but did not participate in a RAP or LLC and are not living in a residence hall this year
- Senior Resident Advisors who are currently working in residence halls
- Hall Directors who are currently working in residence halls

In total, feedback from twenty-six students and five hall directors was collected.

Complete reports of the focus group findings are found in Appendix 1 of this report, but following are some of the key findings:

- Among former RAP students, their experiences with their RAPs were divided depending on how they chose their residence hall:
 - Students who chose their RAP because of their major had a bond with their fellow RAP students and their RAP professors and found the experience overwhelmingly positive for their academic journey.
 - Students who chose their residence hall for location or other factors, but not specifically because of the RAP, did not see the value in having their classes (which they did not want to take) in their hall, felt they were obligated to do so, and may not have connected to their academics at a deep level.
- The student that did not participate in a RAP found the idea of academic programs being offered to all residence hall students appealing. The student felt that taking classes with other students in her residence hall would help build a sense of community.

- Senior Resident Advisors were excited about the prospect of broadening the academic experience to all students in the residence halls, although it was imperative that (1) the classes satisfy a degree requirement for a student’s major and (2) the financial aspect of the program be minimized.
- Hall directors felt that RAP communities currently have some clear advantages over non-RAP communities, such as (1) easier connections to resources, (2) a “safety net” that helps students be successful because of their direct contact with faculty who serve as mentors, and (3) well-designed reinforcements that create variation in a student’s experience. Hall directors felt that creating a unified academic experience in residence halls that is intentional and sequenced appropriately would greatly benefit students that are not in RAP communities.

In addition, two listening sessions with RAP staff and faculty were held in January – February. Those meetings covered a broad range of topics related to the FYE Transition Committee. The committee members who attended the sessions learned a great deal from the conversation and incorporated, as appropriate, into this report.

Review of External Research, Reports, and Programs at Peer Institutions that Inform this Plan

Living-learning communities are high-impact instructional practices designed to connect the social and academic lives of first year college students (e.g., Inkelas, et al., 2008). Analysis of Living-learning communities (LLC) at a range of institutions (Inkelas, et al., 2018) indicates that key elements of a successful LLC include:

- An academic component that includes academic courses (from the LLC or through an academic department) and academic advising
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the program
- Shared decision-making through an advisory board with faculty, associate deans, academic advisors and residence life professionals
- Co-curricular activities that support academic success and social growth. The most effective co-curricular activities include study groups, career workshops, visits to work settings, and service activities.

Various studies emphasize the importance of an academic component in residential communities. Wawrzynski et al. (2010) analyzed 95 living-learning communities and found that students in those with academic courses *“perceived their environments as more enriching and educational and had greater academic interactions with their peers than did students in the combined living–learning communities”* [which lack courses] (p. 209). The NSSE Annual Report (2007) also highlights the value of learning communities in which student cohorts take two or more courses together, whether courses are in the residence hall or not. **These studies indicate that CU Boulder students would benefit from enrollment in two common courses, at least in the first semester.**

If classrooms are not available in residence halls, students in the same residence hall can be offered linked courses in regular classrooms to promote peer-to-peer learning and faculty-student engagement

(Wawrzynski et al., 2010). For example, linked courses are provided by the University of South Carolina through the Common Course program, in which students living in a particular residence hall opt into a 101 seminar linked to an academic course that is typically a core course or popular first-year course in A&S (Lichterman, et al., 2016; Appendix 1). Students select and rank their preferred academic courses, based primarily on academic major or general interests. **Because only some CU Boulder residence halls have classrooms, a new FYE model needs to consider alternative locations.**

Previous research has found that first-year transition seminars (FYS), such as the 101 seminar at the University of South Carolina (USC), have a positive impact on student persistence, performance, and engagement (e.g., Padgett et al., 2013). Transition seminars are typically 1-credit hour courses that help students make the change from high school to college. However, a comparison study of transition seminars to academic-themed FYSs found that, although both kinds of courses produce similar retention results, academic FYS produced gains in academic skills such as critical thinking that were not found with transition seminars (Zerr and Bjerke, 2015). Students found the transition seminars of value for topics and skills related to the college transition. **These outcomes suggest that the CU Boulder FYE model would benefit by linking a CU 101 course with a small-enrollment academic course, which serves as the academic FYS.**

Residential learning communities at the University of Wisconsin Madison (UWM) provide another course model for CU Boulder to consider (Appendix 2). In fall semester, students take a seminar within their community. But spring semester is more flexible with some courses restricted to students in the learning community, some available to students in all learning communities, and a few courses available to all students in the residence halls. **CU Boulder should consider this approach in spring semester as a means of meeting course enrollment targets and providing broader student interactions.**

The other institutions we examined each have several different kinds of living-learning communities, some of which include academic courses and some which do not (Appendix 2). Although difficult to determine the percentage of first-year students in a community with an academic component, the UWM enrolls ~20% of new FY students in “residential learning communities” and an additional 20% in Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS) (without a residential component). Similarly the University of Washington provides non-residential FIGs for ~50% of new students and residential communities with academic programs to ~10% of new students. **CU Boulder RAPs currently provide residential academic programs for similar percentages (~50%) of first-year students.**

A key difference between CU RAPs and residential academic programs at the other institutions in Appendix 2 is the program fee. Students at USC pay an additional fee (\$200) only for faculty-led programs and UWM has an extra fee (\$200-300) only for residential learning communities. **The general absence of a fee means that the learning communities are accessible to all students.**

Recommended Model

We agree with the 2006 Study Group report (p. 1) that a Residential Campus model “*can transform the educational experience for students at the University of Colorado at Boulder*”. The model described here works to achieve that expansion across campus. The committee agrees that:

(a) The best-practice model moving forward is one that allows ALL incoming first year students – those that live in the residence halls and the ~350 students who commute – to participate in a living-learning community.

(b) First Year Academic Experience or “FYAE” is the most appropriate name for the new living-learning communities.

(c) The current RAP fee of \$850 should be ended.

(d) The current confirmation fee of \$200 should be increased to \$325, and that fee should not be refunded but used to help fund the new program and allow all students to be able to participate in the community of their choice.

Overall Considerations

1. The FYAEs reside in one of three residential neighborhoods (all within the “Village” theme) – Williams Village, Kittredge Village, and Central Village. The creation of neighborhoods that include multiple residence halls follows Michigan State University, Elon University, Vanderbilt University, and other institutions (Appendix 2). Traditions that help build a sense of community and identity should be at the neighborhood level in addition to the building level – Elon University provides good examples.
2. Foundational requirements for an FYAE – experiences needed by all FY students
 - Each FYAE provides two **academic** courses for each student – one in the fall and one in the spring semester. Academic courses are intended to launch students for academic success during their first year – the courses are offered in seminar-sized sections (approximately 25 students) and will promote students studying together in the residence hall
 - CU 101 – a 1-credit hour transition course that could be taught by academic advisors, Student Affairs staff, ODECE staff, RAP instructors, FYAE Director, etc. The fall academic course is linked to the CU 101 section (see below).
 - Residential Experience curriculum – linked seamlessly with CU 101
 - Expectation that inclusion, diversity, and equity topics be threaded through CU 101 and co-curricular activities
 - Co-curricular activities: intramural sports, community service, career workshops, education abroad workshops, wellness workshops; leadership opportunities; academic activities such as visits to museums or theatre, student exhibits or performances, etc.
 - Academically Supportive Climate
 - Easy for students to form study groups, promoted by cohorts of students in courses
 - Support programs like tutoring are available
 - Peer support for studying and strong academic performance
3. Additional layers to make FYAEs more robust
 - Summer common reading assignment paired with an activity at Fall Welcome
 - Academic advising
 - Career counseling

- Faculty fellows who participate in FYAE activities such as meetings with students on a regular basis
 - Inclusion of ePortfolios
4. Different ways to create new FYAEs– departments or groups of departments could choose to sponsor a FYAE. The new FYAE Governance Committee (below) reviews proposals by schools and colleges for new FYAE programs.

Academic Component

1. General –
 - The 2006 Study Group (p. 2) emphasized the value of “*seminar size classes (20-25 students per class)*” and ability of students to “*fulfill core requirements and prerequisites for various majors*”.
 - With the large number of FY students, an average of 25 students per course is a sustainable model.
 - Fall semester – every student takes one academic course (see #2 below) and a CU 101 section that is linked to the academic course they want
2. Details of academic courses – How to expand courses currently offered in FYAEs so that all students receive at least one per semester
 - Current RAP Instructors – A&S RAPs taught 312 courses in CY 2018 and contain a group of RAP instructors that can be distributed across more of the new FYAEs to ensure that:
 - instructors with experience with FY students are teaching in the new FYAEs
 - instructors have sufficient courses to teach when course enrollments change to 25 students (currently many RAP courses have enrollments <15)
 - RAPs in CEAS, CMCI, and Leeds also offer academic courses to their students and can accommodate some of the courses required by the new model
 - Courses taught in the current FYSM program are moved to the FYAEs – with an enrollment of 25 students. This could add approximately 60 courses, many taught by tenure track faculty
 - In partnership with the academic departments and schools/colleges, FYAEs could include regular courses that are set aside for a cohort of students from a particular FYAE and taught in a smaller enrollment section (e.g., 25 students). These courses could include:
 - Courses in which FY students have high enrollment numbers (Tables 6, 7); these include: WRTG 1150; MATH 1150, 1300; 2510. Tables 6 and 7 are not meant to represent exhaustive lists. Courses in any subject area are open to consideration, but the focus will be on courses that meet general education requirements and enrollment criteria.
 - Courses normally taught in smaller sections such as PHIL 1000, 1100; ENGL 1991
 - Although we prefer 3-credit hour courses for the FYAEs, recitations of large enrollment courses such as ECON 2010 (Tables 6, 7) should also be considered.

- Inkelas (2017), who reviewed the A&S RAP program, recommended that more courses with a diversity focus be included in RAPs. More first-year diversity courses should be developed and offered in the new FYAE program
 - We expect intellectual diversity among the new FYAEs; however, not every FYAE needs an academic theme. Co-curricular design could drive the theme of a residence hall.
 - Similarly, each FYAE needs to provide academic courses that are appropriate for the academic progress of all students and that are courses typically needed by first-year students (Tables 6, 7). This ensures that, if a student changes major, they do not need to be moved from one residence hall to another during their first year. Instructors are responsible for providing these courses in consultation with RAP Faculty Directors.
- Establishing a CU Boulder common core curriculum would support this goal.**

Table 6 – popular courses for first-time FY students Fall 2018

Course Number	Course Title	Format	# of FY students	% of FY class
ECON2010	Principles of Microeconomics	LEC	1,498	22.4%
WRTG1150	First-Year Writing and Rhetoric	SEM	1,187	17.7%
EBIO1210	General Biology 1	LEC	924	13.8%
PHYS1110	General Physics 1	LEC	807	12.0%
FYSM1000	First Year Seminar	SEM	797	11.9%
PSYC1001	General Psychology	LEC	785	11.7%
APPM1350	Calculus 1 for Engineers	LEC	741	11.1%
CHEM1113	General Chemistry 1	LEC	483	7.2%
MATH1300	Calculus 1	LEC	473	7.1%
MCDB1150	Introduction to Cellular Molecular Biology	LEC	419	6.3%
MATH1150	Precalculus Mathematics	LEC	402	6.0%
MATH2510	Introduction to Statistics	LEC	346	5.2%
SOCY1001	Introduction to Sociology	LEC	237	3.5%
PSCI1101	Introduction to American Politics	LEC	229	3.4%
ENGL1191	Introduction to Creative Writing	SEM	210	3.1%
PHIL 1200	Contemporary Social Problems	LEC	205	3.1%

Table 7 – popular courses for first-time FY students Spring 2019

Course Number	Course Title	Format	# of FY students	% of FY class
ECON2010	Principles of Microeconomics	LEC	1500	22.4%
WRTG1150	First-Year Writing and Rhetoric	SEM	1186	17.7%

EBIO1210	General Biology 1	LEC	923	13.8%
PHYS1110	General Physics 1	LEC	808	12.1%
PSYC1001	General Psychology	LEC	788	11.8%
APPM1350	Calculus 1 for Engineers	LEC	722	10.8%
CHEM1113	General Chemistry 1	LEC	483	7.2%
MATH1300	Calculus 1	LEC	469	7.0%
MCDB1150	Introduction to Cellular Molecular Biology	LEC	418	6.2%
MATH1150	Precalculus Mathematics	LEC	406	6.1%
MATH2510	Introduction to Statistics	LEC	346	5.2%
CHEM1021	Introductory Chemistry	LEC	322	4.8%
SOCY1001	Introduction to Sociology	LEC	239	3.6%
PSCI1101	Introduction to American Politics	LEC	229	3.4%
ENGL1191	Introduction to Creative Writing	SEM	210	3.1%
PHIL1200	Contemporary Social Problems	LEC	205	3.1%

3. Course location –

- Classrooms – FYAEs in residence halls with classrooms have access to courses taught there
- Alternatives for residence halls where classroom space not available:
 - FYAE students could take courses in centrally scheduled classrooms, but be enrolled in a course or section as a cohort from the same residence hall.
 - Data show under-utilization of current RAP classrooms (Table 8). Classrooms not behind locked doors could be made available to FYAEs in other halls in the same neighborhood, which requires central scheduling of classrooms in residence halls
 - Consider allowing access to classrooms behind secured doors to students rostered in classes taught in those spaces.
- Centralize all current RAP classrooms so that classrooms are controlled by the Office of the Registrar during the hours of 8 a.m. -- 5 p.m. There may be departmental or FYAE priorities.

Table 8 – Overall Time utilization - RAP Classrooms

Room Grouping	Spring 2018: 8am--5pm Avg Time Utilization	Fall 2018: 8am--5pm Avg Time Utilization
All RAP classrooms	24.87%	30.11%
RAP Classrooms With One or More Classes Scheduled	37.96%	45.96%
Department Controlled RAP Classrooms Only	37.08%	44.85%
Centrally Controlled RAP Classrooms Only	45.51%	55.42%

4. Course registration – currently, the program coordinator manually registers students into A&S RAP courses. This process consumes staff time that could be redirected to working with students. In the new model:
 - Course registration will be accomplished by the Office of the Registrar in coordination with the FYAE program coordinators. This allows coordinators to spend more time with students in their FYAE.
 - Each FYAE will have funding to offer a sufficient number of courses for the number of students in a particular FYAE.
 - In fall semester, each academic course will be linked to a specific section of CU 101 to ensure that students are placed in cohorts into two courses.
 - The immensity of registering most of the incoming first-year students requires 1.0 new FTE in the Office of the Registrar. The complexity of this process results in the coordination and balance of FYAE courses with those selected by academic departments for first-year student batch registration.
5. Some FY students are enrolled in academic courses offered within a LEAD alliance program such as Miramontes Arts & Sciences Program (MASP) or Student Academic Success Center (SASC). Taking courses linked to their FYAE would be confusing and cause scheduling problems. This problem needs to be addressed.

Impact on Classroom Utilization

The expanded use of residence hall classrooms for FYAE programs and students would result not only in enhanced community building for students within a FYAE, but would increase utilization of instructional spaces on campus. Ideas to explore include:

1. Assigning more General Education/Core and other required first-year courses in the residence hall classrooms in which many residents would need or want to enroll. These determinations must be made in partnership with academic units, particularly in FYAEs that are college/school/discipline-based.
2. Creating a memorandum of understanding that residence hall classrooms are considered centrally-controlled classrooms during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This means that the furnishings, technology and other maintenance of them would be centrally managed as well. Beginning at 5 p.m., the usage and scheduling of them would be managed by the FYAE.
3. Opening up access to classrooms that are behind security doors during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. so that students who don't live in those residence halls can still enroll in FYAE classes being taught there.
4. Determining what renovations or modifications need to be made in the various RAP/FYAE classrooms so they are conducive to broader academic usage. Ensure these projects are budgeted and prioritized with Facilities Management.

FYAE staffing

1. We recommend an overall staffing structure that includes:
 - Buildings grouped by area into three distinct residential neighborhoods. Themes will be developed at the neighborhood and building level.
 - Neighborhood Directors: (3) Central, Kittredge, Williams Village. These are faculty who live in a residence hall.
 - Faculty Directors - We recommend a ratio of 500 students per each faculty director. In this model, some directors will oversee more than a single FYAE, especially if the two are academically aligned.
 - Coordinators: Approximately (1) in each residence hall, 500 to 1 ratio, and, for small (~200 bed) FYAEs, combine program coordinators across several programs.
 - Hire a new position in the Office of the Registrar to coordinate course registration for the new FYAE program.
 - See Appendix 3 for more details on Staffing for Residential Neighborhoods
2. The model for the current A&S RAP instructors needs to be modified. We recommend that all current instructors have 3-year contracts at 100% (unless they desire another percent). Budget for instructor salaries is held in the Provost's office. Those on 100% appointments teach 3+3 courses (70 Teaching/ 20 Service/ 10 Professional Development workload distribution) that are distributed among the residence halls to provide courses as needed by particular FYAE. As part of the teaching load, instructors could also teach CU 101 sections. This central system stabilizes instructor contracts and reduces unnecessary partial contracts and paperwork.
3. Add affiliated faculty or faculty fellows to boost faculty participation but without the need for a stipend. Incentives for faculty fellows could include meal cards, opportunity to teach small enrollment course in the FYAE, ability to interact more closely with first-year students, new incentives determined by campus, etc.

FYE Governance Structure

A campus-wide governing structure is necessary to guide the efficient operations of the FYE Program and to ensure that decisions regarding this student program are aligned with campus mission and resources. In particular, Inkelas et al. (2008) found that collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs practitioners is essential to living-learning communities, and our structure promotes that collaboration. Appendix 4 proposes a new *FYE Governance Committee* to be established.

Timelines, Next Steps, and Communications

1. Following acknowledgment of receipt of the report by the Provost, it should be posted on [the Campus Committees web page](#) for a 30-day comment and review period. Consistent with the review and input processes for the Academic Futures Initiative (and other campus initiatives),

comments can be made on the aforementioned web page through an input form designed by Strategic Relations and Communications; via response papers of no more than two pages also submitted on the web page; and via input sessions that can be requested from April 5 through May 1, 2019 with Mary Kraus and committee co-chair Kevin MacLennan and select members of the committee. In addition, presentations seeking input will be scheduled for April Chairs Breakfast, Deans Council and AVCs Breakfast meetings, and a divisional meeting of Student Affairs.

2. Following this review and input period, the committee will make any necessary additions and modifications and submit the final report to the provost by May 7, 2019. Following a comprehensive review, we recommend the provost should, by Friday, May 17, appoint an implementation committee -- drawn from the FYE Transition Committee plus additional appropriate unit-representation from affected units (similar to the revising committee for the IDEA Plan that followed on the work of the authoring committee).
3. A campus team (up to 8 people) consisting of members of the implementation committee should attend the National Summer Institute on Learning Communities at Evergreen State University (<http://wacenter.evergreen.edu/nsilc>) to be held July 8-11, 2019.
4. Following the Summer Institute, the implementation committee should begin to create a fully working blueprint/implementation plan for a universal First-Year Academic Experience that would commence for all students entering the Fall of 2021. The due date for that document needs to be determined in consultation with the Offices of Admissions and Residence Life.

Conclusion

As we indicated in the introduction to this report, a combination of external factors (changes in the higher education demand landscape among parents and students) and internal activities (self-instituted studies, reforms and calls for change) have provided the backdrop for this committee's proposed plan for instituting a universal First-Year Academic Experience at CU Boulder. The committee has thought both broadly and specifically on the value of FYAEs as a key feature of increased retention of CU Boulder undergraduate students, as a tool in building a more defined and shared sense of community among them, and as a method of more effectively conveying the university's values, traditions and culture to them.

While working together, we also discovered another benefit: that coming together as a campus to transform the first-year experience of CU Boulder students would be the kind of project that could break down barriers between the academic and co-curricular missions of the university. It would bring together, in full and equal partnership, the leaders in both areas whose respective expertise -- and partnership -- is vital for CU Boulder to provide a unique, energized, differentiated first-year, and overall, experience for its students.

In doing this work, we built upon the good work of others. The FYE Transition Committee has worked to address issues raised by the Foundations of Excellence report and earlier RAP Task Force. In particular, this report recommends a new FYE model that can allow all incoming first-year students (even those not living on campus) access to a first-year academic experience without significant financial barriers.

Currently, ~3200 first-year students do not have access to a RAP. If their second fall retention can be raised 3% to match current RAP retention rates, an additional 97 students could be retained -- many of those students being first-generation students. As important, we believe the new model includes components that can promote:

1. Improved student learning and achievement in the first year
2. Increased success rate for under-represented students
3. Improved sense of community within our institution
4. Stronger collaboration among faculty, staff, administration
5. Deeper interaction between the Division of Student Affairs and faculty across campus

We also anticipate that the new model will increase the yield rate for accepted students because parents and students will know that CU is an institution that promotes student success, active learning and intellectual engagement.

Finally, because other large public universities provide living-learning communities for generally no more than half of their incoming first-year students, the proposed model can position CU Boulder as an institutional leader in the first-year experience. This is appropriate, as the campus is dedicated to creating the leaders of tomorrow, being the leading university for innovation, and serving humanity. That process begins in earnest when generations of new students set foot on campus for the first time, seeking to transform themselves and their world. They deserve, from the outset, an experience that itself has been transformed -- carefully considered, conceived and crafted -- to serve their needs and those of a world that needs them.

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