UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

ACADEMIC REVIEW AND PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RAP REVIEW TASK FORCE

REPORT OF FINDINGS

Presented to Provost Russell Moore
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Contents

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INTRODUCTION

Evidence suggests that a carefully planned and executed first year undergraduate experience builds a foundation for a student's personal and academic success. Establishing basic academic, personal, institutional and community skills, the first-year experience helps the student transition into more mature models of thought, behavior and functioning both in the classroom and in the community at large. For University of Colorado Boulder students, Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) play an important role as one component of this experience. RAPs provide an immersive learning experience, educating through focused missions, community populated courses, and co-curricular experiences designed to educate experientially, individually and collectively.

In 2013, the RAPs underwent their first Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) process, evaluating their visions, identities and goals for the future. Via the ARPAC process, both internal and external reviewers highlighted a series of areas for consideration to improve the overall RAP experience. Amongst its recommendations, reviewers advised that a task force be convened to, "explore the future of RAPs and alternative first-year experiences."

In response to this recommendation, the RAP Task Force (Task Force) was established on October 21, 2016. The Task Force comprised a range of representatives, encompassing all concerned constituencies. The Task Force was given a broad charge to look at the specific recommendations included in the Final Report. The Task Force subsequently divided the language of the charge into five overall points as follows[1]:

1) Administrative Structure – Examine the administrative structure of the RAPs for the purpose of achieving;
   a) Standardized personnel policies, new approaches to funding, and streamlined course approval procedures,
   b) Stronger connections between RAPs and relevant academic departments and colleges/schools, and
   c) Better coordination between Academic Affairs and Students Affairs, with a particular emphasis on the interface between RAPs and Housing.
2) Financial Structure - Examine and make recommendations regarding the sources and uses of all funds for the RAPS, individually and collectively. Implement consistent budget procedures across the RAPs, including cost projections.
3) Governing Structure (purpose) - Consider creating standardized guidelines for RAPs including;
   a) Policies and procedures, guidelines for handling crises, and expectations for RAPs in general,
   b) Governing documents including vision and mission statements,
   c) Bylaws and standards that define RAP programs, and
   d) Description of the roles of faculty and staff.
4) Assessment Processes - Examine and make recommendations regarding efficiency and effectiveness of RAPs, individually and collectively, in improving the student experience and determine whether alternative programs or policies may provide better student support.

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[1] The language in the points is extracted directly from the ARPAC Final Report and the Charge to the Task Force.

5) Equity and Access – Examine the issues surrounding diversity, equity, and access by all students to first-year programs (program equity) as well as access to housing locations (space equity).

Based on this charge, the Task Force began with research. Meeting on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, the Task Force studied the RAPs themselves – their current visions, operating models, outcomes – as well as their histories. This research was accomplished by combing through the 500+ pages of ARPAC materials (original RAP self-studies, the Internal and External Review Reports, the ARPAC Final Report, and subsequent responses by the RAPs), coupled with historical information (processes under which the RAP program was initiated, expanded, and has subsequently been operating).

This research allowed for significant discussion on each of the aforementioned focus areas. The intent of the Task Force was to research, dissect and understand each individual area of concern and then, once fully acquainted with the issues at stake, endeavor to address each within the context of enhancing and supporting the first-year experience.

Once this context was developed, the committee divided into three subgroups to address the Purpose of RAPs, the Administrative Structure, and the Financial Structure. The Task Force reviewed the subgroup recommendations and then hosted a series of fora to obtain additional feedback on these areas from RAP Directors, the Boulder Faculty Assembly, the Arts & Sciences Council, finance staff, as well as individuals in open fora.

Finally, the Task Force reconvened to consider and incorporate recommendations as well as to address the broader issues of personnel and alternative programs. The following sections present the results of the Task Force discussions in the context of this overall process. Finally, an overall set of recommendations is provided as advisory recommendations for consideration by an implementation committee which should be convened as soon as possible.

Task Force Challenges
The development of recommendations for the future of the RAP program faced several issues that influenced the report presented here. These issues do not diminish the final recommendations, but they create additional context that needed to be addressed during the Task Force discussions. The challenges are as follows:

1. **Review Timeline**
    The original ARPAC RAP review occurred during the 2013-2014 timeframe. Because time had elapsed between the generation of the report and the assembly of the Task Force, changes had occurred in the RAPs; changes in Directors, the closing of some RAPs, and new administrative personnel at the college/school level. Consequently, the Task Force conducted additional discussions focusing on what changes may have occurred that influence the context of the Final Report.

2. **Assessment Outcomes**
    The   review   of   the   RAP   documentation   found   no   definitive,   campus-wide

assessment/outcome criteria for the RAP programs. This lack of criteria motivated a conversation as to what metrics are appropriate for evaluating first-year programs. The Task Force dedicated the initial stage of its discussions to the common outcomes that first-year programs would ideally achieve.

3. **Administrative Structure**
The review of the RAP documentation revealed widely disparate administrative and financial structures across the RAPs. The varied structures resulted in differences in administrative structures between schools/colleges, decision-making authority and reporting structures, RAP implementation models, personnel allocation and management, admission and access, and budget models. The Task Force examined the existing structures to understand how each RAP model functions before considering the ideal model.

RAP ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The RAP administrative structure is currently comprised of a complex collaboration between multiple academic units under authority structures independent of each other below the Provost-Associate Vice Chancellor position. In response to the ARPAC report, the Task Force recommends the development of a revised administrative structure that collaboratively oversees the RAP program. The intent of this structure is to enable the RAPs to be more effective, innovative and sustainable, while balancing the needs of individual RAPs against the need for collaboration between academics, colleges and housing.

Overall Considerations
The overall concept for the administrative structure is to enable RAP Directors and schools/colleges to have control over the vision for individual programs while ensuring that the appropriate resources are made available and learning goals are being achieved. This concept focuses on a collaboration between administration, academic units, and a RAP Executive Council to balance the needs of the multiple constituencies associated with the RAPs. From this overall concept, the administrative model attempts to provide for all of the following:

1. Responsibility for the global mission and learning goals of RAPs.
2. Different models to achieve the mission of the RAPs taking into account the different goals of specific colleges, the different needs of specific student populations and the desire to promote educational innovation.
3. Close collaboration between the various units that attempts to balance the priority of the university's academic mission with the expertise, resources and responsibilities of the various units.

Description of Key Elements

1. **First-Year Experience (FYE) Coordinator** (partial responsibility)
   a. This position would be the primary academic point of contact, report to the Office of the Provost and be responsible for the following:
      i. *Establish, refine and assess global learning goals for the RAPs.* This would include working with Associate Deans from each of the Colleges to assess both the compatibility of each model to the achievement of the overall learning goals and the success of each RAP in meeting these goals.
      ii. *Establish appropriate administrative policies to ensure the efficient collaborative operation of the RAPs across schools and colleges.* This would include facilitating the regular communication between the different units whose collective work supports the mission of the RAPs, streamlining proposal evaluations, evaluating the application for new RAPs, etc.
      iii. *Mediating and negotiating, when necessary, the various differences that arise in the complex collaborations required for RAPs to function effectively.* Directly and possibly through the RAP Executive Committee, work with leaders from the various units to arrive at a consensus solution to a particular disagreement. When this is not possible, the Coordinator would

work with the RAP Executive Committee, the Housing Representative, and the Vice Provost to decide the solution to the dispute.

    iv. First-Year advocate. Work with all constituents to advocate for first-year programs and the overall first-year experience.

    v. Establish and lead the RAP Executive Committee. (See point 2 for a description of this committee and its responsibilities)

b. Represent the RAPs in the integration of the RAP mission with admissions, student affairs, the budget office, the Provost and the Chancellor.

2. **RAP Executive Committee**. This committee would be comprised of the FYE Coordinator (chair), the Associate Deans, a RAP Director and a representative from Housing and be responsible for the following:

    a. *Make recommendations to the Provost and Colleges regarding overall campus RAP strategy.* This would include recommendations regarding the creation of new RAPs, the discontinuance of existing RAPs, the role of RAPs as part of the First Year Experience initiative, etc.

    b. *Review the annual RAP assessment and evaluation reports.* The committee would be responsible for both evaluating the suitability of the assessment process and, where appropriate, make recommendations for improvement to Colleges and particular RAPs.

3. **College-level RAP Leadership**. Each of the Associate Deans focused on undergraduate education from the Colleges that have RAPs (currently A&S, CEAS, CMCI and Business) would be responsible for the following:

    a. *Determination of the RAP model(s) to be developed in his/her College.* In conjunction with College leadership and consistent with the larger educational goals of the RAPs as well as budgetary considerations, the AD would establish the model(s) of that College's RAPs including curricular and co-curricular priorities, target student populations, RAP themes, etc., based on the particular needs and priorities of the College. This would include College-specific RAP policies including personnel.

    b. *Selecting and appointing the RAP Director.*

    c. *In conjunction with the RAP Director, selecting other RAP personnel.* This would include Associate Directors where applicable and faculty.

    d. *Establishing and assessing RAP-specific learning goals.*

4. **RAP Leadership Council**. RAP Leadership Council would consist of the Coordinator, RAP Directors, Associate Deans, RAP Associate Directors and a representative from Housing. The purpose of this council would be the following:

    a. *Provide a forum for discussing opportunities, challenges and relevant issues to the global RAP mission.* Examples of topics to discuss would include coordination with admissions and orientation, active harmer training, assessment, overall campus RAP strategy, student conduct, equity and access, promoting diversity, etc.

    b. *Provide a means for effective communication between the various contributors to the RAP mission.*

    c. *Evaluation and assessment of the RAP assessment reports.*

RAP FINANCE STRUCTURE

Resources, both financial and non-financial, are highlighted as a concern in the ARPAC report. There is currently much confusion on campus regarding the allocation of resources to RAPs as a group as well as individually. Each college/school has a different model and the timing of the RAP creation may lead to differences in resource allocation.

The RAP financial model has evolved over time with little documentation available to pinpoint exact agreements made for each RAP. The result is confusion and disagreement over RAP financial support, financial benefits, as well as financial procedures and reporting. The current situation has set in place the need for a new beginning, a reset, in financial operations of RAP programs. From this perspective, the Task Force recommends that a financial model for the RAPs should be developed on a forward-looking basis rather than a perspective of unravelling past agreements. In this new model, a centralized approach that emphasizes financial transparency, direct financial connection between central campus and RAP Directors (and RAP students), while allowing for flexibility in specific operating models is required.

The Task Force considered four main avenues for addressing a resource allocation model for the future.
1. **No Change**: The RAPs currently are operating and although it may not be perfect, local decision-making is the preferred model;
2. **Centralization**: Resource allocation should be managed directly between the individual RAPs and a central office that allocates financial resources based on RAP Director budgets and assists in ensuring academic resources are available when required;
3. **College Support**: Central campus support is eliminated and RAPs are truly a function of the vision of the individual schools and colleges that oversee individual RAPs; or
4. **A New Model**: A hybrid model of some sort.

The Task Force determined that a **centralized resource allocation model** would provide the best alignment of strategic direction and provisioning of resources. Other benefits of a centralized model include:

- Centralization of resources enables greater flexibility to spread resources strategically;
- Promotes the ability to set standards for allocation of funds;
- Increases degree of transparency in how funds are received and used;
- Creates opportunity for common metrics to assess progress toward goals;
- Builds better accountability for use of resources; and
- Provides the ability to better calculate and justify the real cost of RAPs.

The Finance Subcommittee of the Task Force, with input from the school and college budget officers, recommends the current model should change and move toward a more centrally coordinated / administered model. However, any new model would **need to ensure broad representation and input** from departments, RAP Directors, Undergraduate Education, and financial personnel from the campus Budget Office, Provost Office, and schools and colleges in the resource allocation process (see Needs/Analysis and Decisions section).

Draft Model Recommendation

Under the proposed draft model of centralized resource allocation, there are six primary levels of input and output: Vision, Resources, Coordination, Needs Analysis and Decisions, Allocations, and Investments.

Vision: The Office of the Provost through the Office of Undergraduate Education will set a clear vision for students' first-year experience, and the role of RAPs relative to other first-year programs such as FIGs, LLCs, and first-year seminars. This vision will be supported by strategic goals that serve the success of students' first-year experience and will help the RAPs to align their activities to these goals.

Beneath the overarching Vision are the mechanics of financial resource planning, allocation, and tracking. The activities within these levels are described below:

Resources: The current inflows of funding are comprised of RAP fee revenue paid by students, campus budget support which varies by RAP, and school/college budget support. Under the proposed model, RAP fee revenue and existing campus budgets would be managed by the Provost's Office within a unique org, with school and college support remaining within the individual units to address specific operating models of each RAP program.
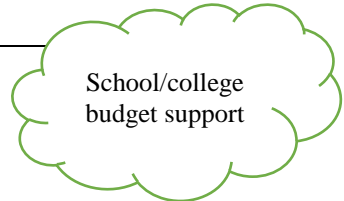
Coordination: A central financial unit, housed within the Provost's Office, will have primary responsibility for determining the amount of RAP fee revenue and campus budget funding available each year and making that amount known to the RAP Finance Council. This office will be responsible for collecting budget requests, coordinating the RAP Finance Council meetings, and ensuring allocation decisions made by the Council are implemented correctly. The central financial unit will periodically evaluate the true cost of the RAP program and work with the Council to ensure transparency into the sources and uses of RAP funding, accountability for expenses, management of resources, and stewardship of resources to support affordability and access for students' participation.

Needs/Analysis and Decisions: The needs of the RAPs may be distinguished into two areas: operational needs, and strategic investments. The RAPs will submit budget requests based on their academic programming requirements, to the central financial unit. These requests will be brought to the RAP Finance Council on an annual basis. The RAP Finance Council will be responsible for deciding how to allocate annual funding based on available revenue and determining the areas where broader strategic investments may be needed to ensure campus goals are being met. This Council will be guided by the vision, strategic goals, and metrics set forth by campus leadership. To ensure the goals of RAP programs are met on all levels, membership within the Council would include representatives from RAP Directors, Undergraduate Education, and financial staff from the campus Budget Office, Provost Office, and schools and colleges.
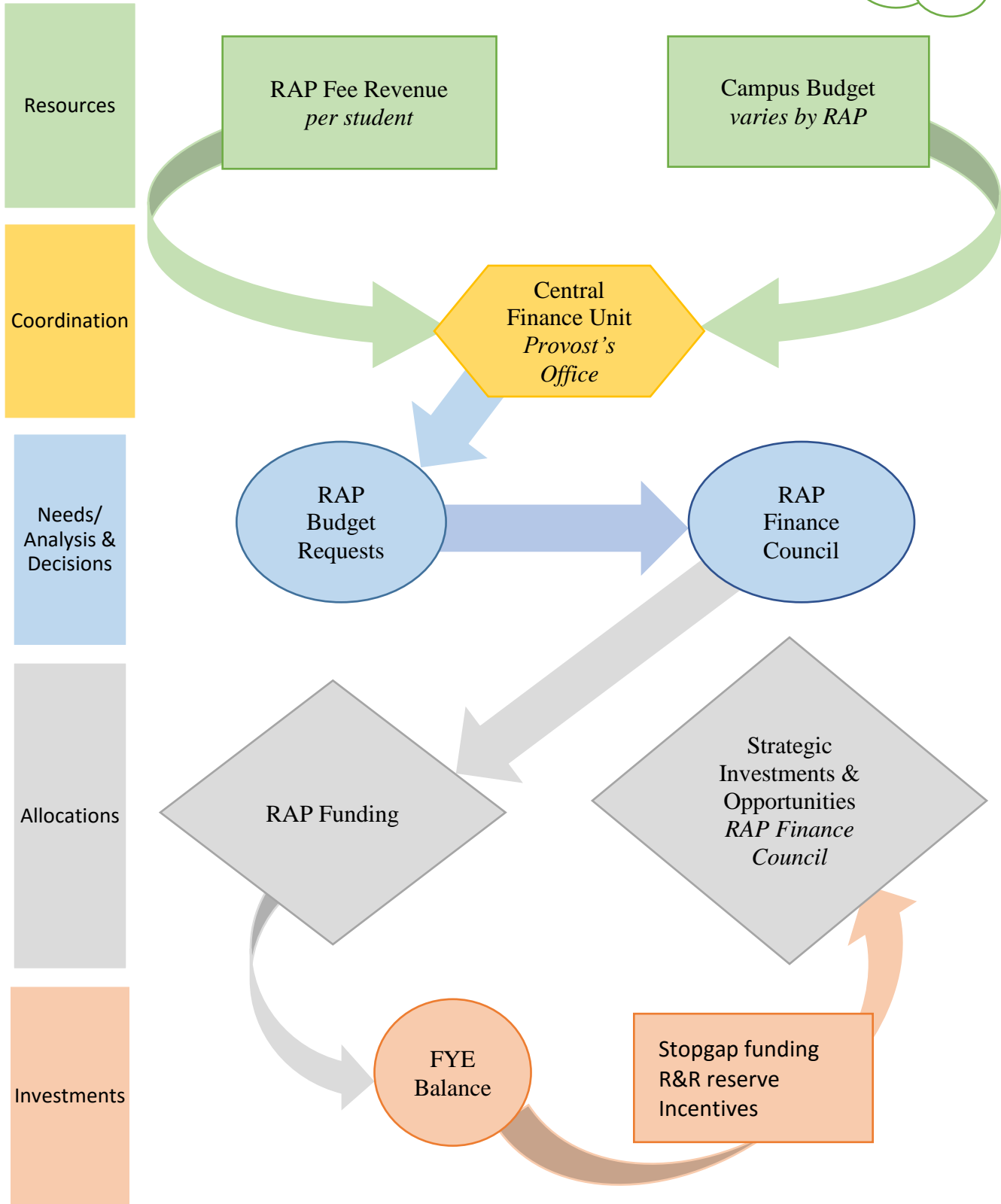
Allocations: Based on the discussions that are expected to occur under the Needs level, the RAP Finance Council will make allocation decisions for each RAP, and will be expected to make decisions based on the vision, strategic goals, and measures that will support the success of the campus RAP program.

Investments: At the end of each fiscal year, any remaining RAP budgets from centralized funds will return to the central unit. The RAP Finance Council may use this opportunity to make strategic investments at that time and/or consider policies that would provide financial incentives based on predetermined measures.

First-Year Experience fee – A consideration put forward by the Task Force is to have all incoming students pay a First-Year Experience fee. This fee would replace the current RAP fee and make first-year programs available to all students. Financial aid would be made available to offset this fee for students with financial need.

DRAFT MODEL

School/college budget support

Resources

RAP Fee Revenue
per student

Campus Budget
varies by RAP

Coordination

Central
Finance Unit
*Provost's
Office*

**Needs/
Analysis &
Decisions**

RAP
Budget
Requests

RAP
Finance
Council

Allocations

RAP Funding

Strategic
Investments &
Opportunities
*RAP Finance
Council*

Investments

FYE
Balance

Stopgap funding
R&R reserve
Incentives

RAP GOVERNANCE (PURPOSE)

The third administrative that requires attention to ensure proper functioning of the program is the specific governance of the RAP program. In a program of comparable size and impact, it is assumed that a standardized set of job responsibilities, vision and mission statements, learning goals and outcomes, and assessment procedures would be put in place prior to the commencement of the program. Unfortunately, the RAP program on the CU Boulder campus was implemented with little or no guidance in any of these areas.

The result of this absence is the need to create these guidance documents for the overall program and each individual RAP that has not generated these documents independently. As this process will require input and collaboration from across campus, the Task Force determined that it was beyond the scope of the Task Force as well as being against the collaborative effort required for RAP functionality, to independently create all of these documents. However, as a starting point, the Task Force puts forth a proposed mission statement, goals, and learning outcomes for the RAP program.

These statements are the result of extensive discussion by the Task Force as well as review of existing literature on first-year programs, analysis of peer institution efforts, and consideration of established RAP practices. The mission and goals do not necessarily reflect what each RAP is currently achieving nor what the individual programs are intended to achieve. However, they can provide the basis for assessing the RAP programs going forward in terms of meeting a consistent set of assessment goals. Upon approval of a RAP-wide mission and goals, each RAP would be tasked with developing measurable outcomes for each goal area that align with its curricular and co-curricular activities. For example, all RAPs are expected to address the goal about developing important academic skills, but *how* the RAP choose to do so and what particular outcomes they hope to achieve are at the discretion of the RAP Director and staff.

The Task Force recommends that once agreement is reached on these statements, a subsequent implementation effort be put in place to address standardized RAP guidelines for; governance documents including bylaws and standards that define RAP programs, and the description of the roles of faculty and staff.

RAP MISSION

Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) are signature living-learning programs of the University. RAP students live together in a residence hall, pursue common academic interests, participate in specially tailored small classes, develop meaningful connections with faculty, and engage in co-curricular activities that reinforce the program's academic theme. Participation in RAPs aids students in their transition to college-level academics, establishing social and campus connections, and developing a sense of belonging to the University community.

RAP-wide GOALS
The Residential Academic Programs deliver a curricular and co-curricular first-year experience that:

- Prepares effective learners by helping students to develop important academic skills and a sense of academic purpose that will enable them to be successful in the first year and beyond,
- Builds confidence in or understanding of planning academic next steps
- Enhances foundational academic skills--writing, communication with faculty/TAs, study skills, office hours, academic integrity
- Offers opportunities for students to form crucial social and academic connections necessary to fully participate as members of the University community including;
  - Connection to a faculty or staff member
  - Peer relationship/friendship
  - Engagement or involvement in organizations or activities on campus
  - Sense of belonging or community
- Equips students with the knowledge and confidence of how to navigate the mission and life of a major research university including;
  - Academic help resources--knowledge or use of
  - Study abroad, internships, student life service, various paths for individual majors
- Enhances student performance in GPA and timely graduation.

Each RAP would develop their own set of measurable outcomes for each of the following goals, having the flexibility and discretion to determine in what context these goals are achieved.

RAP Task Force initial proposed learning goals
The above goals are an evolutionary step from the initial draft learning goals that the Task Force identified based on its research and discussions, included here to show the progress of our thinking. The intent of these goals as listed below is to provide a basis for each RAP Director to develop an individual vision and mission that meets these goals in a manner that matches the individual mission and vision.

- First year is about opportunity to embrace academic rigor and explore academic interests (finding passion)
- Develop multiple levels of social and academic relationships (creating "roots" - interpersonal, lasting, feeling heard and respected)
- (Campus Culture) What does it mean to be a good citizen and valuing others, being a member of a community (cultural characteristics), being a college student, appreciation and empathy for multi-culturalism. Learning about the value of co-curricular engagement
- (Personal Growth) Personal development (sense of ownership, self-directed, larger understanding of responsibility, view selves as source of knowledge--move out of dualistic thinking, Critical thinking
- (Intentionality for future endeavors) Build foundation for academic and personal success - how to use and leverage available resources of all types including knowledge of and use of campus resources (academic & non-academic)
- (Transferability, integration as full human beings) Understanding of the context of their courses in their overall education and long-term professional development

RAP ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The ARPAC Final Report focuses on the need for standardization in RAP practices, in part to provide a basis to develop assessment procedures. This need is emphasized in the report through statement such as, "RAPs should seek out other evaluative techniques to garner information on the experiences of students in RAPs versus non-RAPs," as well as, "In large measure, the effectiveness of RAPs has not been proven." These are only a small sampling of the statements that focus on a similar emphasis on the need for consistent assessment functions for the RAPs.

The Task Force spent a considerable amount of time discussing the issue of assessment and whether it would be appropriate for the Task Force to assess the RAP programs. The result of these discussions was an agreement that the lack of any guidelines for the RAPs in terms of learning goals or outcomes made the assessment of the RAPs unfair to all constituencies. Any evaluation made by the Task Force would be arbitrary and not lead to a constructive discussion regarding the future of the program. Rather, the assessment of the program should occur once the central purpose and goals of the program are established for the overall program.

However, along with the decision to postpone the assessment exercise in favor of developing the mission and goals presented in the previous section, the discussion was held regarding the assessments that have taken place to demonstrate the success of the RAP program. Documents have been produced advocating the RAP program on the basis of items including retention, low cost of credit hours, student satisfaction, student performance, and marketing impact. While each of these perspectives are informational and valid, they lack the standardization on which all first-year programs can be equally evaluated.

In response to the lack of a standardized assessment process, the Task Force recommends a centralized assessment process that is overseen by a campus assessment specialist and utilizes instruments and methods directly aligned with the RAP-wide mission and goals, and the RAP-specific learning outcomes.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

The issues of equity and access are raised in the ARPAC Final Report in response to data showing that students who participate in RAPs consistently enter CU with higher academic preparations based on predicted GPA (PGPA), and have consistently lower participation rates by students of color and underrepresented minorities. While overall RAP participation has increased to over 50% of students living on campus over the last decade, the percentage of students of color who are not in RAPs has increased from 15% to over 25%. Similarly, for underrepresented minorities, the PGPA gap between students living on central campus (primarily in RAPs) and those living in Williams Village (primarily non-RAP), has increased over the last decade from .01 to .11, a full tenth of a point. These differences are only a few of the multiple measures indicating an ongoing and increasing issue of equity and access to RAP programs.

The solution to equity and access is multi-dimensional and requires a reexamination of policies in many areas including housing, RAPs, and admissions, among others. Each of these constituencies has oversight over areas that play a role in access and equity as defined here:

- Program Access – The ability for all incoming students to have access to RAP programs without financial barriers.
- Space Access – The ability for all incoming students to live in any of the three housing complexes without the barrier of paying an extra RAP fee. The issue of space access receives less attention, but is becoming increasingly important as students who can't or don't wish to pay for added programs face continually decreasing options.
- Program Equity – The ability to participate in RAP programs is biased towards students who have the financial ability to apply early, have the knowledge of the process to make informed decisions, and have the understanding of program offerings to consider all alternatives. This bias appears to have disproportionate impact on first generation students as well as students of color and underrepresented minorities as indicated by participation numbers.

Although the equity and access issue is complex, options exist that could result in a step forward in addressing the equity and access gap. The Task Force presents several options here that can be considered for implementation. These options are presented in increasing order of complexity of implementation. **The Task Force strongly recommends that an implementation effort be undertaken from a systemic perspective that includes all of the administrative constituencies that have the ability and responsibility to alter the decade-long trend in reducing access and equity.**

Option 1: Eliminating First-Come, First-Served
An option identified throughout the ARPAC process has been the modification or elimination of the first-come, first-served housing allocation process. Although it should be noted that some modification of this process has been implemented since the start of the ARPAC process including facilitating access through a payment extension option for housing deposits, this is still the primary occupancy allocation process. The bias inherent with the current model is that it favors students who have the financial resources to make early deposits, who understand the need to make housing

decisions, and who understand the process that allows early housing applicants to have the greatest opportunity to gain access to location preferences. The modification of this practice would allow greater access to housing locations as well as to associated RAP programs. The Task Force recognizes the challenges associated with this change including impacts on occupancy management, admissions, and financial planning.

Option 2: RAP Relocation
All housing options at CU Boulder are equally appropriate for students depending on individual needs and preferences. However, the issue of space equity is exacerbated by both the lack of non-programmed space on central campus and the reduced academic/learning opportunities available at Williams Village. Given that 16% of the students who applied for housing in 2016 had a first preference that was in a location that did not have a fee attached to it, there is evidence that a demand exists for housing options that do not have an academic associated program fee. Space equity requires that these locations be made available in all three housing areas at similar rates. To achieve this equity, the relocation of some RAP programs to Williams Village is one option that would enable housing to offer a greater number of non-programmed rooming options to students while also increasing academic programming in Williams Village.

Option 3: Demand-Based Allocation (DBA)
The DBA option is based on approaches adopted by institutions such as the University of Missouri where the size of residential programs reflects student demand for the programs. In this scenario, the intent is to balance the need of RAP programs for continuity and stability with the need for greater student access and equity. Achieving this balance is accomplished by focusing on student demand for individual programs.

In the DBA approach, students would complete a Program Preference Application (PPA) when applying for housing in addition to just indicating a housing preference which is currently the practice. The PPA would ask the students to provide a brief set of answers as to why they are interested in a particular program such as a RAP, LLC, or FIG. The benefits being that students would be required to take an active role in selecting a program, and program directors would receive students who are specifically interested in participating in a given program and topic.

The decision to place students in specific programs would now include a step to review the applications to ensure that the students are actively seeking to participate in a specific program. The size of individual programs would then be based on the demand by students for that program. A minimum size could be put in place to address continuity concerns. Wherever possible, RAPs should occupy an entire residence hall including the combining of two smaller RAPs into a single building.

The adoption of the DBA approach would begin to address the needs of all parties. For the RAPs, this approach retains the building-based approach where RAPs remain associated with a building as well as retaining the programmatic approaches adopted by the individual schools and colleges. For housing, this approach retains the ability to allow students the flexibility of housing preferences as well as the ability to provide housing acceptances on a rolling basis. For the students, this approach provides; 1) greater access to both programmed and non-programmed rooms in all housing areas, 2) an elimination of the location versus program issue of having to pay

a fee for a program where their interest lies in the location rather than the program, and 3) greater equity to programs since interest in a program becomes the driving factor rather than ability to pay at a given time.

Additional Issues
None of the presented options addresses all of the equity and access concerns, nor do they solve related concerns by constituent parties. Key issues that remain to be addressed:

Financial: The issue of financial equity remains to be solved. Questions such as, how do we increase equity to those students who cannot afford to pay a RAP fee and what are appropriate RAP fees are broader questions that need to be resolved in a financial context.

Community: A request raised numerous times during this process has been to retain a whole building concept for RAP communities. Whether it is a single RAP or multiple RAPs in a building, the need for a building to contain a RAP community is a concern that needs to be considered.

Process: The demand for specific locations on campus for housing creates a supply versus demand issue which needs to be addressed if non-programmed beds are increased on campus. Alternative allocation methods should be considered such as a lottery system to provide greater equity for students.

Given the complexity of the equity issue, the Task Force recommends that a working group should be established, or that a key charge to the Implementation group be, to identify best practices for placement of students into residence halls and RAPs. Additionally, the working group should have a specific charge to examine the strategic future of Williams Village and how it fits into the academic fabric of the campus.

PERSONNEL

The ARPAC review process identified several issues of concern related to RAP personnel as well as with the overall relationship of RAP personnel with academic units. In general, personnel fall into one of three categories in the current RAP implementations:

- Full-Time RAP Personnel – Individuals with full-time appointments specifically assigned to an individual RAP. This include both staff positions such as Program Coordinators and academic positions such as Instructors.
- Part-Time Personnel – Part-Time personnel primarily include lecturers and part-time instructors who teach one or two courses in an individual RAP or across multiple RAPs.
- Department Personnel – Department personnel is comprised of academic unit-based faculty who teach a course in a RAP program in addition to their cognate department responsibilities.

Given this diversity of personnel scenarios, the ARPAC review process identified a primary concern of connection between RAP personnel and academic units. Additionally, the report identifies a concern for the professional development of RAP personnel. Through discussions with college personnel, the Task Force recognizes that this issue has been, and continues to be, reduced. Hiring and review processes of RAP personnel are following standardized department and college processes. Additionally, professional development opportunities for RAP instructors are expanding.

The Task Force encourages the continuation of these developments as a response to the ARPAC Report. Additional areas that should continue to be examined include

1. **Specification of positions.** While each school/college may have different expectations, a description of each position in each college should be documented to ensure all constituencies have a clear understanding of expectations for each position. This includes everything from the expectations of a RAP Director to the expectations of individual instructors and individual support staff positions.
2. **Enhancing the formal academic department connection for every RAP instructor, whether they are full-time or part-time.** While this is a benefit for the instructors, it is also a benefit to the students. Specifically, the opportunity to build a connection with an instructor who can guide the student to others in a department or on campus who can assist them at any point in their CU career is invaluable for student retention.
3. **Focusing incentives on individual departments rather than schools/colleges to encourage greater collaboration with associated RAPs.** A concerted effort to incentivize departments to build closer links with affiliated RAPs is required. While some departments such as the biology departments with the Health Professions RAP, and CMCI with the communications RAP have integrated RAP teaching with regular teaching responsibilities, this practice is not universally the case across campus.

The Task Force recognizes that personnel issues are complex and are ultimately under the direction of individual reporting authorities. However, the Task Force strongly recommends that any potential future RAP restructuring be undertaken in a personnel neutral mode wherever possible.

ADDITIONAL FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

The goal of the CU Boulder administration is to have 100% of first-year students have the opportunity to have a formal, structured first-year experience (FYE). While earlier discussions and reports advocated 100% of students participating in RAP programs, the current focus is on providing a menu of FYE options for incoming students. The reason behind this change being that students have different needs and preferences and the university should reflect those differences with different FYE options.

In addition to RAPs, the university deploys several options for first-year experiences as follows:

Living-learning Communities (LLCs) – LLCs have been a part of the CU Boulder residence option for many years in parallel with RAP programs. LLCs provide a residential experience with co-curricluar programs and activities as the common experiences rather than academic courses. These programs are overseen by Residence Life staff.

First-Year Seminars (FYS) – The current, faculty-led version of FYS was initially put in place during the spring 2017 semester and will continue in their regular fall placement in fall 2017. These courses are similar to RAP courses in that they have limited enrollment, but differ in that they are not taught in the residence halls and they do not always count as general education credit.

Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs) – FIGs will be piloted at CU Boulder in the fall 2017 semester. The initial pilot of four FIGs is based on a design of a FYS anchoring a group of 25 students who have similar interests and live in a single residence hall. The students additionally take a second course that is a general education course. The FIG is coordinated by the FYS instructor associated with the FIG who also coordinates co-curricular activities. The 2017 pilot is being deployed as a single semester experience. FIGs are offered as a no-fee first-year experience. A faculty-led task force has created a set of recommendations for continuing the FIG experience.

The combination of these programs with existing RAP programs is intended to provide the diversity required to achieve a 100% participation rate for first-year students. The appropriate mix of these programs should be determined based on student demand as discussed in the section on Equity and Access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The RAP Task Force makes the following recommendations to the Provost in response to the letter charging this committee to action. Should the Provost choose to accept, modify, and implement any of these recommendations, it is the committee's expectation that there be an implementation phase and appropriate collaboration between relevant units. Additionally, given the constraints related to enrollment, space, and academic management, it is unlikely that any major changes should occur during the 2017-2018 academic year.

1. Establishment of Collaborative Administrative Oversight: The Provost should consider establishing a collaborative structure, including a First-Year Experience Coordinator that serves as the academic representative for the first-year experience.

2. Establishment of Collaborative Financial Processes – The Provost should consider fully implementing financial processes that are transparent, traceable, and equitable for all RAPs and collaboratively overseen by appropriate units and a central administrative office.

3. Development of Mission, Goals, and Learning Objectives – The RAPs should individually and collectively establish a mission, set of goals, and learning objectives.

4. Development of Standard Governance – The RAPs, in collaboration with appropriate campus units, should consider, for appropriate personnel, standardized hiring, evaluation, job expectations, and reporting structures.

5. Development of Common Assessment – A common set of learning objectives should be developed on which a common assessment can be developed.

6. Access and Equity: The campus, including colleges/schools, RAPs, Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost, should consider a collaborative effort to move to an alternate allocation of RAP and housing space, including removing financial, time, and space barriers.

7. Instruction: The RAPs, working with appropriate units, should establish formal affiliation between all instructors and faculty teaching in the RAPs and cognate departments.

8. Space Governance: The Provost should explore how the RAPs could retain control of classroom spaces within their buildings to facilitate community building and a sense of place.

9. First-Year Participation – The Provost, working with relevant academic and administrative units, should develop a date by which all first-year students have a menu of structured first-year experiences from which to choose.