



University of Colorado  
Boulder

# #BoulderBound



**ARTS &**  
SCIENCES

Recruitment  
Annual Report  
2019 - 2020

## From the Director

The past two years in our recruitment office have felt like a whirlwind. In 2018-2019, we focused on creating an A&S presence in our campus' recruitment. For 2019-2020, we oversaw a sea change in our approach.

Working in tandem with departments, programs and the admissions office, we exponentially grew the ways we connected with students in-person and digitally, delivering content and experiences that became more specific and personalized. The COVID-19 pandemic forced our team to double its efforts again, developing innovative digital experiences and opportunities to connect with our campus at a pace whose speed was impossible two years ago.

Through our efforts, we matched 2018-2019 enrollment numbers. Given the uncertainty the coronavirus continues to bring universities, we consider this an enormous success. Still, we hope to redouble our efforts for next year, diversify our tactics and work with even greater intentionality. Our goal is to grow the number of creative, compassionate, critical thinkers drawn to the one place on CU Boulder's campus that offers unrivaled breadth and complexity of educational experience... the College.



Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'J' and 'S' followed by a horizontal line.

Jason Shelton, JD  
Director of Recruitment

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# At a glance

## Successes

**+2%**

Total applicants to A&S.

**+2,004**

Total applicants to arts and humanities majors.

**0%**

Percent change from 2018-2019 confirmation numbers.

**3,228**

A&S prospects who confirmed their enrollment by May 14.

### Top 5

#### Majors

1. Psychology **(551)**
2. Integrative Physiology **(367)**
3. Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology **(231)**
4. Political Science **(175)**
5. Environmental Studies **(131)**

#### Enrollment Change

1. Spanish **(+300%)**
2. Statistics and Data Science **(+100%)**
3. Women and Gender Studies **(+67%)**
4. Ethnic Studies **(+50%)**
5. Russian Studies **(+50%)**

#### School Districts

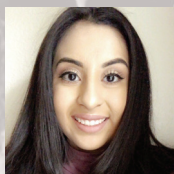
1. Denver Public Schools
2. Cherry Creek
3. Douglas County
4. Jeffco
5. Boulder Valley

#### States

1. CA **(3,462)**
2. TX **(956)**
3. IL **(890)**
4. NY **(612)**
1. MA **(572)**

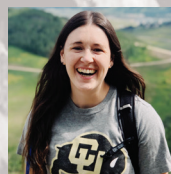
## Welcome new staff

In 2019-2020, we welcomed three new staff members who were critical to our recruitment team's efforts and successes.



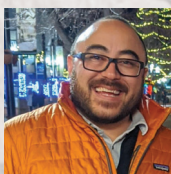
#### Yazzmynn Martinez

Yazzmynn graduated from CU Boulder in 2018. Besides trying new recipes and exploring hiking trails, she co-runs a blog with her best friend.



#### Alex Steele

Alex graduated from the University of Oklahoma and joined the CU Boulder community in 2019. She enjoys spending time with her dog and being in the beautiful outdoors of Colorado!



#### Zeni Whittall

Zeni came to CU Boulder in 2012 from his undergraduate alma mater, Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO. He recently earned his MBA from the CU Boulder Leeds School of Business. Zeni enjoys fly fishing, spending time with his family, keeping busy with build projects around his house and enjoying all that living in Colorado has to offer.





18,462

Total students applied to A&S  
as of June 1, 2020.

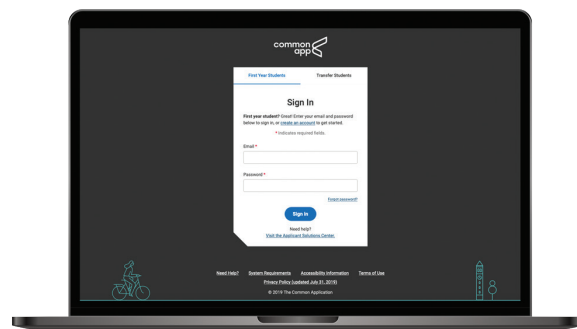
# Application and confirmation to Arts & Sciences

For the 2019-2020 application cycle, our recruitment team set ambitious goals to increase total undergraduate enrollment into the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S). Our desire to grow A&S's applicant pool comes at a challenging time for college recruitment, as reports from [Inside Higher Ed](#) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (whose findings are [summarized by U.S. News](#)) indicate the total number of students who are college-ready is in decline.

Adding to the challenge is the recent shift of the BA in computer science into the College of Engineering and Applied Science. Due to the change, students admitted under the BA in computer science are excluded from our 2019-2020 totals for admitted students, but included in our 2018-2019 totals against which we calculate our growth.

Despite these trends, CU Boulder shipped A&S admission letters to **9,775 students** on January 10. This represents a **7% increase** over 2019 students admitted into our college. In particular, we are encouraged to see rises in our total students who identify as female to 6,857 admits and of students who identify as people of color to 2,511 admits (+8% and +9% over 2019 respectively).

By typical statistical measures of college readiness, these students are as equally or more prepared as past cohorts for college-level academic rigor. Students admitted January 10 hold average ACT scores of 29



points and SAT scores of 1,266 (for reference, the 2018 national averages were 20.8 for the ACT and 1,068 for the SAT). Their 3.76 average high school GPAs and 3.23 predicted GPA are both up over last year's cohort.

## COVID-19's impact on confirmation

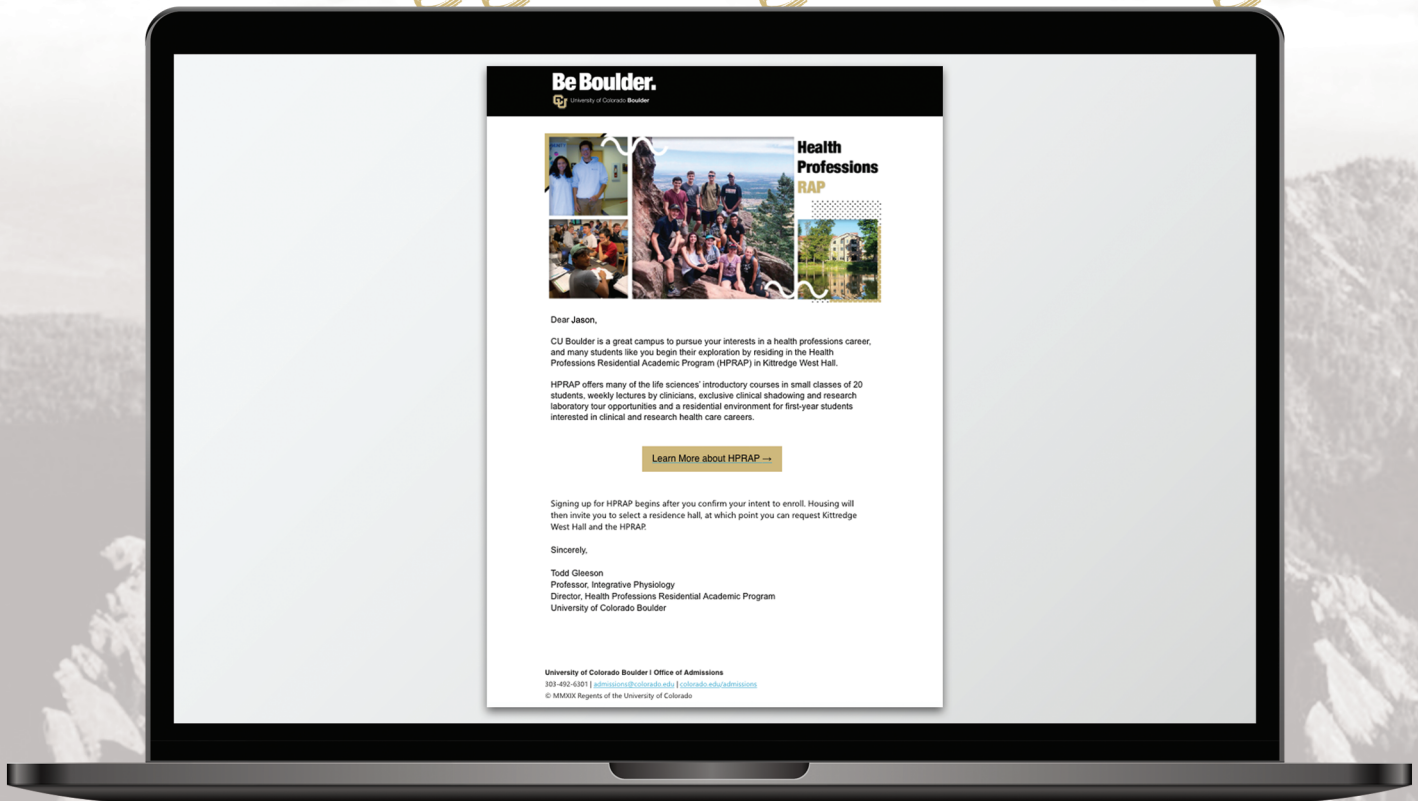
On March 11, CU Boulder took steps to mitigate risk of exposure to coronavirus, including canceling signature on-campus recruitment events. This occurred two months before the May 1 confirmation deadline, and it diminished our ability to provide clarity regarding the manner classes and living will look in fall semester. Additionally, universities, including the nation's top ranked, added [unprecedented numbers of students to their wait-lists](#), further delaying confirmations.

Despite these challenges, our team **equaled our previous year's enrollment** by rapidly creating innovative opportunities to engage with our college. We worked with admissions to create a virtual admissions experience of college-specific video content, information sessions and live chats. Other tactics included emails sent on behalf of chairs or directors, calling campaigns, texting, pre-COVID tours led by A&S student ambassadors, student and faculty Instagram takeovers, postcard mailers with handwritten welcome notes and swag, scholarship events and more. This response was unmatched by peer institutions, which we believe mitigated what could have been a significant decline in enrollment confirmations.



# Adding more personalization and Arts and Sciences content to our

# admissions Tactics



# Changing our approach

Previous recruitment strategies heavily relied on CU Boulder's central admissions and admissions communications teams, who often tried to incorporate A&S content but needed to balance writing and creating new content with the needs of other colleges. Over the past year, we exponentially increased the number of ways students can learn about and connect with our college.

We also sought to ensure we delivered these opportunities when students were most likely to engage, and we focused on segmenting content to their interests. For example, when students requested information and noted they were considering the health professions, we sent information about health-related A&S majors, student groups, careers and resources. When prospects attended A&S tours, we connected them directly with departments of interest. We ran a social media campaign in collaboration with our central admissions communications office that delivered campus opportunities in the arts and humanities to prospects most likely to engage with this content.

In response to our campus' elimination of in-person events and tours, we created a wide number of digital experiences. These balanced video content based on students' interests and opportunities to chat and text with arts and sciences faculty and staff members. The most successful tactics, like Instagram takeovers, provided content that appeared to contain "inside information" about programs and departments. Because of the value and personalization these conversations and experiences offered, we intend to add to these tactics to our 2020-2021 cycle.



# Comparing **tactics**

In 2019-2020, we added new A&S-specific initiatives across every recruitment channel that highlight the College of Arts and Sciences and encourage students to **connect**.

When compared to recruitment efforts from 2018-19, our growth is substantial. Juxtaposed to the 2017-18 cycle only two years ago, the change, which is represented here, is dramatic.



## Email: Greater personalization

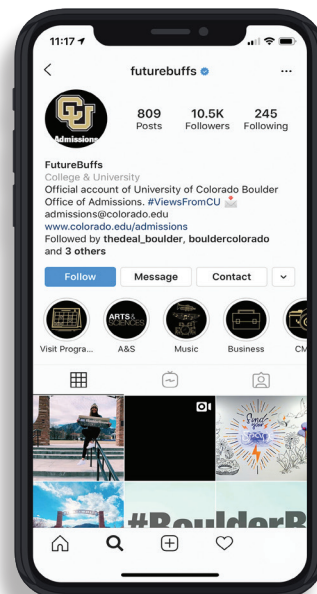
In 2017-18, we did not send A&S-specific emails to students.

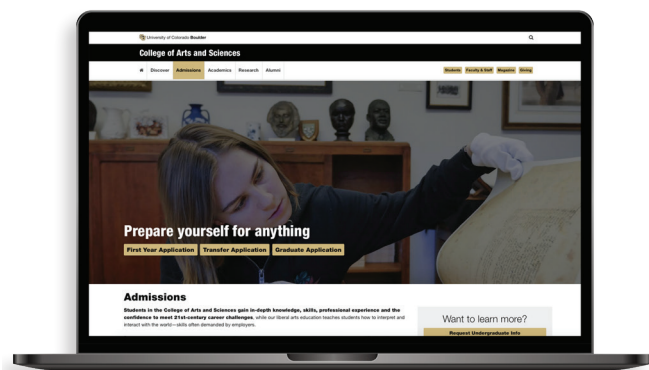
In 2019-20, we created **229 unique emails** for twelve distinct campaigns to more than 10,000 prospects. Each email addresses students by their preferred name and includes tailored messaging from department faculty and leadership.

## Social: More A&S representation

In 2017, A&S did not have a social presence on our @futurebuffs Instagram channel.

For 2019-20, we worked with admissions to organize multiple social campaigns highlighting A&S and a paid social campaign of 85 ads highlighting the arts and humanities. The former campaign resulted in **1 A&S story, 1 story from Dean White and five student takeovers**. 83% of viewers completed the Instagram story in its entirety. The latter campaign yielded 274,071 unique users reached, **3,501 admissions page views** and 11 direct leads.





## Website: Highlighting admissions

In 2017, admissions content was difficult to find, as it was three clicks back from a “Student” tab.

For 2019-20, we **revamped our site** and navigation, adding an “Admissions” tab with revamped headers and prominent RFIs. Our major pages advertise opportunities, careers, salary prospects and RFIs. We posted salary outcomes for a study of 25,000 alumni, as well as 5-year, 10-year and 10+ years salary information for every major. We created first-year, transfer and graduate student-specific admissions pages. We created a scholarships page

for A&S-specific information on scholarships and financial aid. We designed a “Current Students” page with key academic opportunities, deadlines and events. We underwent a content audit and optimized admissions pages to show up higher in search results. Finally, we added a countdown to our admissions page lander, noting when applications were due.

## Print: Updated content & personalization

In 2017, we began accumulating content for A&S-specific major brochures.

For 2019-20, we updated 38 brochures and created **fifteen original designs**, including brochure designs for Honors, MASP, health professions and scholarships, an A&S brochure folder, A&S 1-pager, six A&S postcard designs and thank you cards.



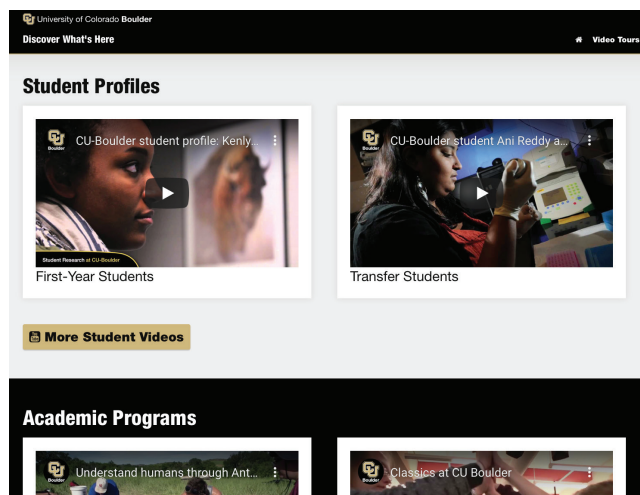
## Video: The student experience

In 2017, many A&S departments approached strategic relations for help in creating promotional videos for their departments.

In 2019-20, we organized nine video initiatives, including drone footage, “day in the life” and “This is A&S” videos for social, an A&S “Just the Facts” video for the CASE atrium, 2 “Lightbulb Moment” videos highlighting undergraduate research, a dean’s welcome video, a dean’s COVID-19 video and four social ads.







## Website: Digital Experience

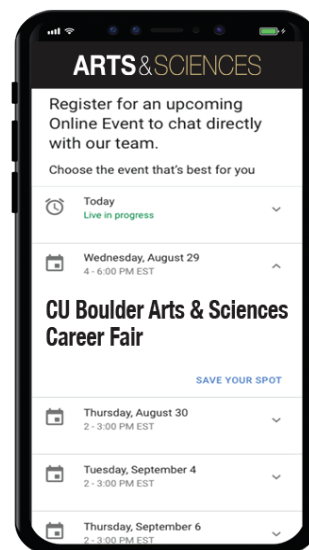
In 2017-18, we relied on our flagship Admitted Students Day event to communicate student opportunities in A&S.

In 2019-20, we created **an online video experience** in partnership with admissions that collected and transcribed captions for 49 videos segmented across three playlists. These also offered opportunities to connect with our recruitment team through chats and scheduled appointments.

## Digital: Virtual information fairs

In 2017, A&S supported the in-person flagship event called Admitted Students Day. This event drew 910 students and required more than 50 faculty and staff members.

For 2019-20, we worked with admissions to organize two virtual information fairs, through which students were able to chat one-on-one with eight recruitment staff and 21 student ambassadors using a platform called Brazen. Through the events, we connected with 522 students over chat.



## Digital: Virtual information sessions

In 2017-18, we supported the on-campus event Explore CU, during which academic advisors presented on major exploration.

In 2019-20, we staffed eight digital information sessions during which viewers heard presentations on the following topics: majors in the natural sciences, majors in the arts and humanities, majors in the social sciences, majors in the biologies, and the economics major. In total, 700 students participated.



### Texting: SignalVine

In 2017, we did not incorporate text messaging into our campaign tactics.

For 2019-20, we worked with admissions to pilot one-to-many text messaging using SignalVine software. We targeted six audiences, including four segments of highly engaged students, students interested in English and students interested in linguistics. Linguistics' student group also texted their admitted majors. Engagement varied dramatically, and we are still exploring the cost-benefit analysis. Of the 742 students contacted, roughly 10% replied.

### Mailing: Postcards and swag

In 2017, students received some postcards from CU Boulder, but not specifically from A&S.

For 2019-20, we mailed 2,723 postcards on three separate occasions to prospective students. We also mailed 133 A&S-branded neck gaiters to high interest prospects.



### Tours: Highlighting the A&S experience

In 2017, campus tours were led by campus ambassadors, who often held majors in other colleges.

In 2019-20, we hired 21 A&S student ambassadors who were specifically trained to speak to the manner students are set apart by choosing a major within A&S. In total, we offered seven tours, through which 50 prospective students and 21 family members participated. 58% were nonapplicants at the time of the tour.





### Phone: One-to-one calling campaigns

In 2017-18, A&S representatives did not contact admitted students by phone.

In 2019-20, our team of ambassadors called 1,069 students by phone over six nights to answer questions and concerns, as well as encourage them to confirm their enrollment.

### Photos: Major-specific photo shoots

In 2017, A&S and strategic relations relied on the photography unit to organize in-class photography opportunities.

For 2019-20, we worked with strategic relations to schedule ten in-class photography opportunities meant to help us deepen our department-specific image library. We plan to scale this to every major in the coming year.



### Swag: Alumni designs and sustainability

In 2017-2018, A&S-specific swag was offered during major in-person events like Admitted Students Day. At that time, academic advising shared their swag of cups, frisbees and pens in support of recruitment.

For 2019-20, we designed and purchased A&S t-shirts, polos, lanyards, Pandanas, Cattongue grips and Patagonia fleeces to improve our event recruitment. In each case, we purchased sustainable made items, like bamboo lanyards, or purchased items from alumni companies like Cattongue Grips, which was founded by alumna Missy Kelly (PolSci, IntAf'94).

## Magazine: Student experience blog entries

In 2017-18, we did not have writers to document the student experience for our magazine.

In 2019-20, we published five articles documenting the manner students and faculty experience the COVID-19 pandemic and one story about a scholarship winner. These were utilized for recruitment, as well as alumni relations. The stories resulted in 734 magazine views and a high average time spent on the article of 2 minutes, 30 seconds.



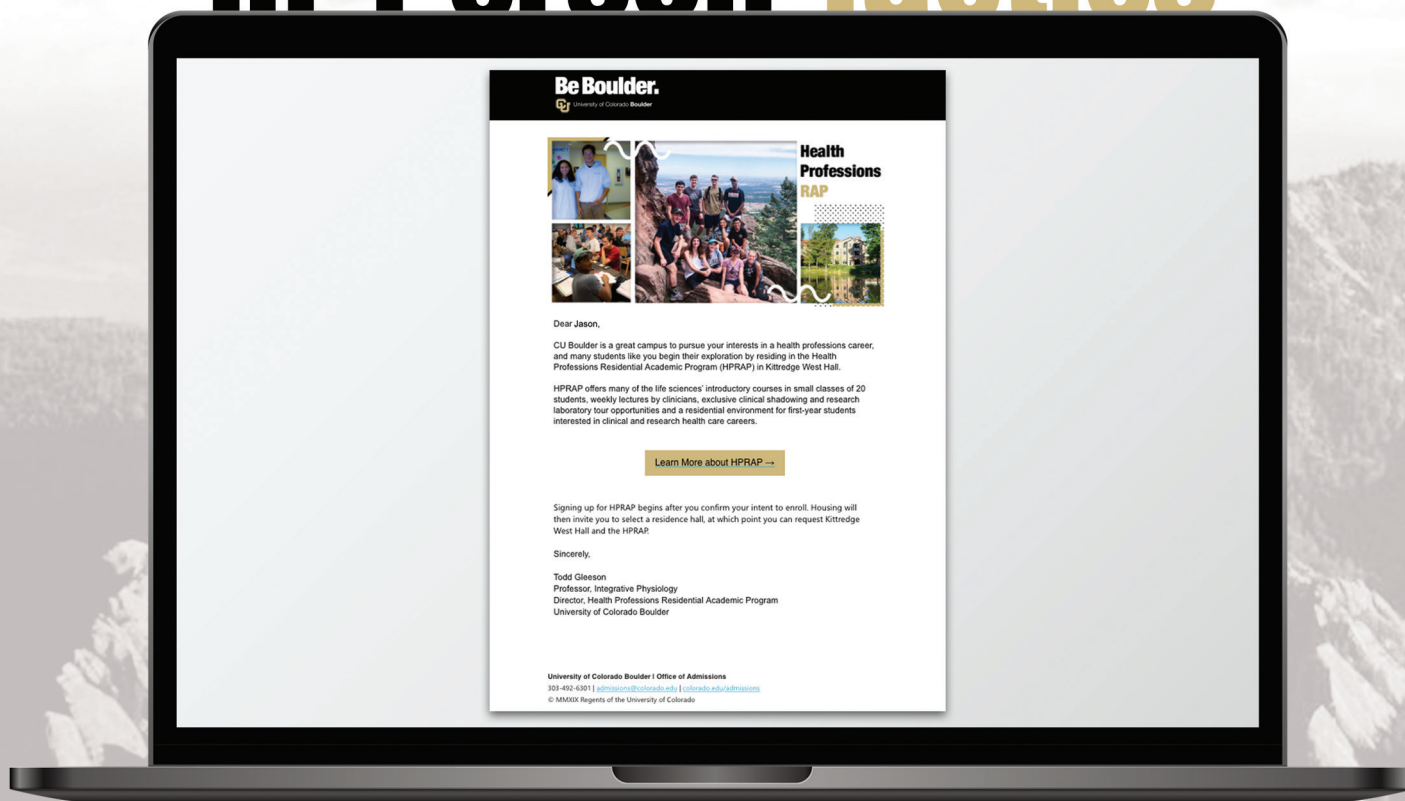
## Scholarships: Spotlighting opportunities

In FY2018, the College of Arts and Sciences awarded a total of \$495,179.94 in student aid.

In FY2020, we awarded a total of \$894,594.51 in student aid, an increase of \$399,414.57 or 80%. This is in part due to increased awarding from specific gift funds. It is also due to identifying unawarded funds that had grown surpluses and more effectively distributing their gifts. We created the Lucile Berkeley Buchanan Scholarship in honor of our first African American female graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder. New Dance Achievement Scholarships are now awarded based on dance

performance criteria, as opposed to standardized test scores, for those students auditioning for our Dance BFA program. We also identified our first Omer G. Voss Scholar awarded to those students interested in a career in medicine.

# Digital and In-Person Tactics





# Next steps

Increasing department participation and improving our digital experiences.

For the 2020-2021 recruitment cycle, we will continue to raise the profile of the College of Arts and Sciences (“The College”) as the academic heart and soul of the University of Colorado Boulder. The College boasts **25 top 50 nationally ranked programs and departments**, over 300 faculty with prestigious awards, and a broad range of undergraduate research opportunities rivaling any Research I Institution in the country.

This year, while traditional fall recruitment travel goes remote, we plan to take advantage, partnering with admissions to do customized “visits” to targeted high schools both in state and out of state for the first time. Once the campus fully resumes in-person operations in the spring, we hope to fully open our new Arts and Sciences Welcome Center located in Woodbury Hall, where we’ll showcase our College achievements to prospective parents and students and conduct customized College tours.

We plan to create an experience that intentionally incorporates digital and in-person tactics. We will design digital tours that provide access to online material like exclusive video lectures. To improve our content through personalization, we hope to garner 100% participation from our departments. We will continue to improve emails, and we plan to further explore departments texting their prospects.

Our ambassadors program will continue to grow, which will improve prospective students’ understanding of our college’s offerings and the manner these stand alone at CU Boulder. In addition, we will promote our peer mentoring program across all tactics as a way to show students of underrepresented populations that they can find a supportive, caring community here.

Finally, we hope to build in greater alumni participation through our social and print initiatives. Our goal is to create a wide community of A&S advocates who encourage those with whom they come in contact to consider our college as the place they pursued the transformative education The College prides itself in delivering.