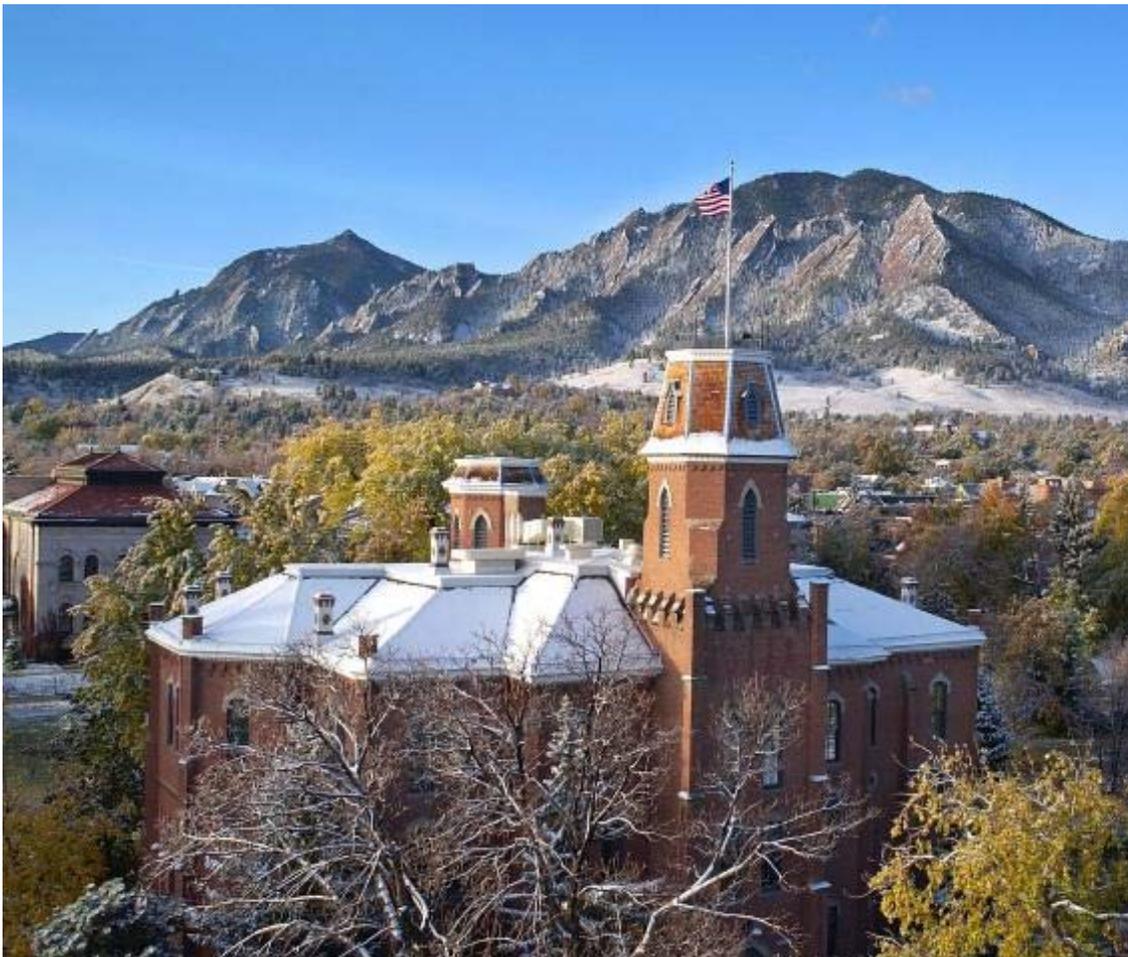


# TASK FORCE REPORTS

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## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN



**Colorado**  
University of Colorado at Boulder <sup>TM</sup>

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# LIVING-LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



*"CU-Boulder's reputation for excellence depends on visionary leadership, facilities that inspire innovation and creativity, and ongoing support."*

*—Robert H. Davis, Dean, College of Engineering and Applied Science*

# Report of the Task Force on Living-Learning Environments

January 2010

## Introduction:

The membership included representatives from the CU Department of Athletics, CU Recreation Services, City of Boulder Parks & Recreation Department, CU Planning Department, CU Facilities Management, as well as faculty, staff and student representation.

*Task Force Membership:* Scot Douglass (Chair), Cindy Carey, Curt Huetson, Darna Dufour, Kambiz Khalili, LaRuth McAfee, Paula Bland, Tom Goodhew, Tom Higginbotham

***The primary purpose of this report is to identify the key challenges facing the implementation of the Residential College model and provide specific recommendations to meet these challenges.***

The Flagship 2030 Vision put the creation of Residential Colleges (Flagship Initiative 1) at the very foundation of its strategy to transform the undergraduate educational experience at the University of Colorado, Boulder. This decision reflected an understanding that the most decisive influence in how students respond to what is being offered and asked of them in the 15-20 hours per week they spend in class is the environment and culture in which they spend the remaining 140+ hours per week outside of class. This is especially true for our first-year students as they navigate all the transitions associated with the rigor of university courses and living away from home. Since the growth in the number of incoming students has steadily outpaced any increases in housing capacity, the residential population at CU has become dominated by first-year students, peaking at close to 96%. As a result, we have created a residential culture almost entirely populated by those students least capable of self-regulating their behavior and understanding what is required to succeed at the university, while squandering the incredible potential of the residential component of the university experience for non-first-year students (academic, leadership training, integration of lifestyle choices with life ambitions). Far beyond simply addressing concerns about behavior, the clear vision of the residential college system is creating a holistic culture centered around the academic mission of the university. A new partnership needs to be forged between academics, residential life, upper-division students and graduate students if we are going to create the type of Residential College (RC) communities in which:

- incoming students arrive into existing communities (already defined by academic, residential life and student leadership) that promote academic success and responsibility;
- students form a primary identity with their RC that lasts throughout their university career (even if/when they live off-campus);
- faculty, staff and advanced peers provide mentoring relationships;

- all the university resources work together in a comprehensive and integrated approach to the way the we provide education;
- faculty are committed to the cultivation of student leaders (both undergraduate and graduate) who embody and promote the vision of the RC model;
- a significant and strategic presence of upper-division students actively contribute to the vision of that particular RC; and
- facilities provide the right mix of classrooms, common spaces, study spaces, and strong faculty presence (both residential faculty and office space);

### *RCs and RAPs*

The creation of multi-year Residential Colleges (RC) builds on the success of the Residential Academic Programs (RAPs), programs designed specifically to help first-year students make the transitions to university life. The RAPs are academic programs located within the residence halls. They offer standard courses in small class sizes, opportunities for personal interaction with faculty who have offices within the hall, and an array of social and cultural events. Their goal is to bring students into the intellectual life of the university community while providing the support and intimacy of a small school.

The RCs as envisioned will take the current RAP model a step further by expanding the student body to second year students and beyond. Some RCs will also enjoy the benefits that a live-in faculty member can provide. Whether we will ultimately refer to these expanded programs as RCs or RAPs is in discussion and in this document we use RC/RAP for convenience.



## *The Creation of Sustainable RAPs/RCs*

Given the goal that every first-year student belongs to a Residential College with the overall residential hall population being 20% returning students, five key areas of challenge must be addressed:

- 1. Sustainable Programs:** As we increase the number of RCs/RAPs from 9 to approximately 30 (based on the average size of existing RCs/RAPs and projected residential population growth), we have to adopt a flexible model for creating new programs that are sustainable in terms of value, interest and invested leadership.
- 2. Sustainable Leadership:** For the university to support a comprehensive RC system comprised of 30 RCs/RAPs, there must be an increased investment from the Academic community to provide sustainable leadership (working closely with Residential Life) of these programs—both in terms of new program creation and long-term program viability.
- 3. Adequate Facilities:** In order to support RCs/RAPs, current residential facilities must be upgraded and new residence halls built. Given the projected growth in the student population (including the desired increase in international students), the University needs to add an additional 1500 beds, minimum.
- 4. Fair/sustainable financial model to support RAP/RC programs:** The current model of supporting RCs/RAPs through direct student RC/RAP fees needs to be rethought when (1) the model is required for every first-year student and (2) RCs/RAPs will have an ongoing role in the educational experience of all upper-division students (both those living on- and off-campus).
- 5. Sustainable financial model for Housing Dining Services (HDS):** The current model of HDS shouldering the costs of renovations, new hall construction, academic support buildings (e.g. Kittredge Commons) as well as ongoing maintenance of academic spaces (classrooms and offices) within residence halls and the need to pay for these costs through direct student fees (room and board) and revenue recapturing (e.g., office rental) needs to be rethought. Not only does the current model ensure escalating costs for students and the eventual lack of financial competitiveness between living on and off-campus for upper-division students, but given that HDS does not have the unregulated authority to raise rates to cover actual costs, HDS is now at the point that they cannot fund necessary new projects.

### **1. Sustainable Programs**

*Current Inventory* of RAPs/RCs: 9

*Projected Need* of RAPs/RCs by 2030: approximately 30

This number (30) is based on the following calculations. Given current enrollment projections, the average size of the existing 9 RAPs, the 2030 goal of every incoming

student belonging to a Residential College, and the overall target of a 20% upper-division residential population, we will need approximately 30 residential programs (21 new) to meet the Flagship 2030 standards. This number could increase with the creation of smaller RAPs/RCs, vital programs whose optimal size might be closer to 100 students.



**A.** *The University needs to develop clear processes, templates and support systems that allow different models, multiple organizing principles and a differential scope for RAPs/RCs*

**(differential scope)**

a) RAPs/RCs should be organized around specific 2 and 4 year programs with differential percentages of upper-division students. The two year programs would be an expansion of the current RAP/RC model to second-year students. The four year model would be for the few programs that have strong 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>-year components.

**(different organizing principles)**

b) RAPs/RCs should be organized around different academic goals:

i) discipline specific (e.g., American West, Communications, life sciences, education, engineering)

ii) honors (e.g., A&S, Engineering),

**iii)** thematic (e.g., Sustainability, Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Global Studies, Pre-health Professions/Health Sciences)

**c)** RAPs/RCs should be organized around common interests, framed within an academic context: service, diversity, all female, undergraduate research, women in science and engineering, undergraduate research, etc.

**d)** by default, a significant number of RAPs/RCs should be organized around the idea of the RAP/RC, itself (following the model of institutions like Rice or Yale). Although these RAPs/RCs would not have a specific academic disciplinary focus, they would strongly focus on academic success and include all the strengths of the RAP/RC model: strong faculty presence, in-hall smaller classes, a leadership-defined culture (including returning students), etc.

### **[NARRATIVE]**

A number of factors support the development of a process that allows for a variety of RAP/RC models.

- the academic community might not be able to support 30 distinct academic programs for 200-300 students each.
- given the high and growing percentage of “open option” students, close to 40%, many incoming students would lack a clear direction toward a specific academic program.
- the university’s commitment to a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary education points to the value of both thematic learning communities (e.g., sustainability, leadership, etc.) and those organized around common interests (e.g., service, inclusiveness, etc.)
- different models would have different strategies for upper-division students, creating the need for a differential approach to the percentage of upper-division students in each of the RAPs/RCs. For example, the two honors programs (that have senior research/thesis requirements) might want more vertical integration amongst its students than the generic RAP/RC with a high percentage of open option and mixed major students.
- the model for creating RAPs/RCs must support variable sizes, providing “start-up” programs the freedom to begin small and grow commensurate with their success. The university would also need to smaller programs that would never grow beyond 80-100 students.

In practice, we would envision something like 20 RAPs/RCs with a clearly stated organizing principle (whether academic, thematic or common interest) and the remaining 10 RAPs/RCs organized around the concept of the Residential College, itself, and particularly dedicated to first-year excellence and transition. These latter programs would draw upon students who did not seek (or get accepted to) any of the specific RAPs/RCs. They would, therefore, be comprised of students who were open option, had declared a variety of majors and belonged to different Colleges (A&S, Music, etc.). Each of these halls, under the direct leadership of

specific faculty (including residential faculty), would forge their own identities over time, provide direct support for first-year excellence (common classes within the hall, tutoring, hall events and programs, etc.) and foster a sense of community that would endure throughout the undergraduate experience. The model for these latter Programs would be something like those at Rice or Yale where students are randomly placed in different Residential Colleges and the idea of the Residential College, itself, (centered on promoting a productive university lifestyle) is the organizing principle.



## 2. Sustainable Leadership

*Both the short and long-term success of each RAP/RC is deeply dependent upon direct faculty leadership in close partnership with Residential Life and the strong cultivation of student leadership*

### A. Faculty Leadership

- a). The type of faculty leader necessary to build the RAPs/RCs being envisioned would need to be able to do the following:
  - i). develop a clear vision for the purpose and identity of the RAP/RC
  - ii). cultivate inspired student leaders who will take on the responsibility of establishing the RAP/RC culture
  - iii). administrate a program in terms of curriculum, events, collaboration with residential life, management of staff and participating faculty, oversee budgets, etc.
  - iv). teach courses and maintain an active research agenda
  - v). for faculty-in-residence, spend 24/7 in the residence hall, have a willing partner/family (if applicable),

**b).** The current reward, incentive and support structures need to be rethought comprehensively in order to entice faculty to become involved: those tenured to take on the challenges of creating and leading the new RAPs/RCs and those tenured/tenure-track to teach in them.

**i).** for faculty involved in RAPs/RCs, their participation must be integrated within the larger academic culture on campus. Currently, the great bulk of the excellent teaching that takes place in RAPs/RCs is done by a very dedicated group of highly skilled instructors whose contributions need to be bolstered, supported and rewarded. For faculty rostered in departments, their involvement cannot be sustained if it commonly requires doing so as an overload.

**ii).** for faculty-in-residence (and their families), there needs to be specific thought as to the necessary support they need to make such a commitment viable. Issues to be addressed would include: size of the apartment, quality of apartment finishes, access to dining facilities, parking, entertainment budget, etc.

**c).** Expanding to 30 RAPs/RCs will require active leadership from the Chancellor, Provost and Deans to promote the value of the RAPs/RCs within the academic culture and integrate them with the life of academic departments. Being a Director of a RAP/RC and/or faculty-in-residence must be seen as something prestigious and desirable.

**B.** Partnership between the academic and residential life communities.

**a).** Historically, much of the community-building work being envisioned in the new RAPs/RCs has been done by Residential Life. This model has a number of structural problems: the linkage in RAs between judicial responsibilities and community building; the lack of specific organizing principles unique to individual communities; the number of RAs in any particular hall is very small compared to the overall hall population.

**b).** The shift of responsibility of community building to faculty and student program leadership, and upper-division students in concert with Res. Life student and professional staff requires a rethinking of the academic-residential life relationship. This re-thinking is a function of the desire for each community to be unique. Areas, for example, that will require rethinking are Hall Governance, Student Conduct Review, Facility Usage and Program Structuring. There is also great potential in rethinking the role of graduate students and “Graduate Residence Tutors” as they are called in other universities who have residential colleges.

**c).** In rethinking the academic-residential life relationship, there needs to be a clarity of mission within the residence hall, a relevant inventory of the various strengths and expertise of each group and strong university leadership for a new way forward in working together.

**C. Student Leadership:** Any sustainable model that will create the type of residential communities we are envisioning will require the strong cultivation of student leadership. This is one of the great untapped resources on campus.

- a) There must be a strong enough upper-division leadership presence that the majority first-year students do not re-define the residential culture each year.
- b) To cultivate student leaders, each RAP/RC must have a compelling vision for what it is trying to accomplish and how student leaders can contribute to this vision
- c) Since student leaders must be cultivated (trained, encouraged and supported), faculty and residential life leadership must not only work very closely together but they need the resources (time, policy, money) to attract, support and train student leaders.
- d) Since it takes a specific type of faculty leader to cultivate this type of student leader (specific skills, vision, commitment to developing student leaders, willing partner/family if becoming a faculty-in-residence), the university needs to be able to identify, support and reward such faculty and be committed to developing this type of faculty leader.
- e) Graduate students can play significant roles in the RAPS/RCS (mentoring, program leadership, etc.) while getting valuable training for future academic careers. A more effective involvement of graduate students would provide both valuable support for faculty leadership and enhancement of the undergraduate experience.



**[NARRATIVE]**

Central to any success in implementing a comprehensive RAP/RC model is the identification, development and support of highly qualified faculty leaders. For there to be vital integration between the academic and the residential, there needs to be leaders who can forge that integration. The time commitment necessary to do this has to be adequately recognized in terms of the way in which the university evaluates and rewards its faculty. For the RC/RAPs to fulfill their potential of bringing students into the intellectual life of the university, there must be strong student leadership, cultivated by the leadership of faculty, actively promoting this integration.

**3. Adequate Facilities**

*The renovation of existing residence halls and the construction of new ones must include: a strong faculty presence, classrooms and strategic student spaces. It is understood that the renovation of any particular building might involve certain structural limitations as to meeting the following recommendations.*

- A.** The University must increase its residence capacity by 1500 beds in order to accommodate first-year students and a residential population of 20% returning students.

NOTE: The research done by the Flagship 2030 group indicated that 30% was a much better percentage of non-first-year students for a successful RC. The general consensus is that this target will need to be decreased to 20% to meet current affordability. This reduced target will still require the addition of approximately 1500 new beds. To reach the more effective percentage requires 2000 new beds and a rethinking of the financial model (see below).

- B.** In order to integrate the academic and the residential, there must be a very strong faculty presence in the residence hall.

**a).** Faculty Offices: each RAP/RC should have faculty offices for a Director, an Associate Director and additional Teaching Faculty so that there is one faculty office per 50 students. For example a RAP/RC of 200 would have 4 faculty offices, a RAP/RC of 300 would have 6 faculty offices.

**b).** Faculty-in-residence: wherever possible, a faculty apartment should be included whose size, design and finishes would be enticing for a tenured faculty member (and family).

- B.** In order to integrate the academic and the residential, there must be dedicated space to administrative support.

**a).** Each RAP/RC should have the following: an office for an administrative assistant, a workroom and a storage room.

- C.** In order to integrate the academic and the residential, there must be adequate classrooms.

a). Each RAP/RC of 200-300 should have two classrooms (approx. 350 sq. ft. and 450 sq. ft. with movable seating; 18-20 students each); RAPs/RCs of more than 300 students should have add a third classroom of 500 sq. ft. (25 students).

b). The classrooms should be standard SMART. The third classroom for larger RAPs/RCs should be “Mini-ATLAS classrooms with teleconferencing facilities).

**D.** In order to integrate the academic and the residential, there must be strategic student spaces.

a). Each RAP/RC should have (wherever possible in renovations) a large common space that can accommodate large RAP/RC events and program. The common room in Andrews, for example, is 1000 sq. ft.

b). Each RAP/RC should have numerous smaller rooms dedicated (according to program need and desire) to study spaces, smaller common rooms, studios, reading rooms and libraries, music or game rooms.

c). Each RAP/RC should have a common kitchen.

d). Each RAP/RC should have technology/IT support accessible to each hall and adequate to its academic mission.

**E.** In order to integrate the academic and the residential, academic program leadership must, whenever possible, be better integrated into the design process for specific renovations and new hall construction.

#### **4. Fair/sustainable financial model to support RAP/RC programs:**

**A.** There are currently 2 models for funding RAP/RC Programs.

a). The A&S model is based on a combination of student fees (typically \$765 per student per year), general fund allocation and College support. In AY08/09, this worked out to the following percentages: RAP Fees, 46%; General Fund Allocation, 16%; and College Support, 38% (out of a total budget of \$3,071,232). The majority of these funds go directly to support RAP faculty leadership and RAP-specific faculty (70% in AY08-09), and an administrative assistant (11%).

b). Since the College of Engineering supports the Engineering Honors Program (EHP) independent of its residential component, the College of Engineering covers all costs associated with faculty leadership (Director’s salary stipend), EHP courses (both within Andrews and outside of Andrews) and salary for an administrative assistant. As a result, all the RAP fees go

directly to support student leadership, programming and services. The EHP RC fee has been \$330/yr and is increasing to \$600/yr. 20% of these funds provide compensation to student mentors (\$2000-\$5000/student/yr), 60% supports student programming, and 20% supports infrastructure improvements in Andrews Hall.

**B.** When every first-year student is required to participate in a RC/RAP, the residence hall population is 20% upper-division students with the expectation that all students will maintain an involvement with their RC/RAP, the financial model of how to support the approximately 30 RC/RAPs must be rethought.

There are 3 models that have been proposed.

**a).** *Direct RC/RAP Fees:* This would be a continuation of the current models. This seems less viable when it is required of all incoming students and the experience is foundational for the University's academic mission. Students should not have to pay an extra fee for one of the primary vehicles in delivering their education.

**b).** *Dedicated Portion of Tuition Bill:* The costs of supporting these programs would be included within a student's tuition bill. There are 2 proposals for how this could happen.

**i).** *Differential Tuition:* Students would be charged a differential tuition based on their year in school. First-year students would pay the most. Second, third and fourth year students would either pay the same reduced amount or an amount that decreased each year.

**ii).** *Common Tuition:* All students would pay a tuition rate that included a dedicated portion to RAPs/RCs, benefiting from their involvement in their RAP/RC even after moving off-campus.



## 5. Sustainable Financial Model for Housing and Dining Services

Since the Residential College Flagship Initiative makes RAPs/RCs the centerpiece for transforming the way in which the University fulfills its educational mission to undergraduate students, there needs to be a rethinking of how various elements of this joint-effort between Academics and HDS are funded.

**A.** In the **current model**, HDS self-funds the costs of hall renovation, new hall construction, associated academic support buildings (e.g. Kittredge Commons), as well as the ongoing maintenance of RC/RAP academic spaces such as classrooms and offices (utilities, furniture, IT support). HDS covers these costs through direct student fees (room and board) and revenue recapturing (RC/RAP office rental).

**a).** Concern #1: This model puts constant pressure on increasing room and board rates, escalating costs to the point that living on-campus will become financially non-competitive with living off-campus. We will not be able to have a residential population of 20% returning students.

**b).** Concern #2: Since HDS does not operate on an independent business model in respect to the relationship between rates and actual costs, HDS will get to the point that they cannot fund necessary new projects.

**c).** Concern #3: As RAPs/RCs become the main vehicle for providing a significant part of the educational experience (especially for first-year students), HDS is being asked to cover more and more costs that are explicitly academic (faculty offices, classroom spaces, program support spaces). Although Academics pays for office maintenance via rental fees paid to HDS, HDS carries the capital cost (actual construction costs plus debt financing) of building these offices.

**B.** Possible new models to consider would involve clear accounting of actual costs for construction, maintenance and operation in discrete categories according to usage: primarily academic and residential. This accounting would include, in addition to construction, such things as utilities, cleaning, furniture, IT, etc. Some of these could be calculated on a square footage basis; others (such as furniture) on an actual cost basis.

### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Task Forces/Committees should be established to explore the following issues:

- new administrative structures needed to implement, support and lead a campus-wide Residential College system with 30 RAPs/RCs, 30 Faculty Directors, Programs that cut across disciplines (e.g., sustainability, leadership, pre-health) and have students from multiple Academic Colleges. This new administrative structure and possible

new administrative post would facilitate and oversee the long-term contributions from each Academic College.

- a full cost projection for all aspects of implementation of the RAP/RC system and an analysis of where these monies will come from (this includes the questions of direct fees vs. tuition, and cost sharing between HDS and academics).
- the rewards and incentives needed not only to attract our best faculty members to lead and participate in the RAPs/RCs, but that reflect the strategic importance the University has placed upon the establishment of the RAP/RC system.
- the creation of a transparent process for proposing, developing and implementing new RAPs/RCs, including adequate support (seed monies), evaluation and oversight.
- given that CU room and board rates are already amongst the most expensive in the nation, we suggest looking at ways to contain these rates, including the looking at how other universities are able to contain their HDS costs.