



COLORADO COLLEGE

THE COLORADO COLLEGE PLAN:
BUILDING ON
THE
BLOCK

From the President

Two years ago, our Colorado College community began a conversation — and journey — that led us to rediscover ourselves. I look back at this “Year of Listening” as the foundation for the plans and recommendations you’ll find here, and I’m proud to see how our planning process raised awareness of what makes this college such a powerful force in the world. We have gone very far to create this plan, and many, many people have contributed to it. But our journey leads us back home by affirming our core mission and defining powerful opportunities to make Colorado College an even more dynamic center of learning.



Colorado College has always been identified with bold action. You need look no further than the Block Plan, developed in 1970 and still thriving today with a new generation of independent learners who just happen to have a whole lot more technology at their fingertips. For the new strategic plan, we focused on our core strengths — the liberal arts, engaged teaching and learning, distinctive place of learning — in the context of higher education and what today’s Millennial-era students need.

In the global economy, a liberal education paired with strong career development is the new gold standard for educating tomorrow’s leaders. The plan recognizes this connection by including strategies to help our students move from college to work more easily. To this we added ways to extend our reach beyond our immediate circle of students, alumni, and parents, so that more people around the world are able to connect with us — and stay connected throughout their lives. The need to thrive in a rapidly changing environment is an important theme that runs throughout the plan. One way to do this is by staying more nimble and flexible so we can adapt to new generations of learners, new issues, and ever-changing technology. These types of changes are easier when you know who you are and what’s important. This plan strengthens the most distinctive parts of CC (the Block Plan, engaged teaching, and our special place of learning), while encouraging a more innovative, responsive organization.

We believe the Block Plan is more relevant than ever, especially for students who are looking for an intensive liberal arts experience. Close interaction with faculty and hands-on experiences in the classroom and in the field show students how to translate ideas into action and work together as teams. Our new Center for Immersive Learning and Engaged Teaching will support faculty, students, alumni, and others as they advance the block and take full advantage of our unique location. With a strategic focus in this area, CC will become even more widely known nationally

and internationally as a premier liberal arts college that stands apart because of our unique Western culture.

Our new Innovation Institute will offer students and faculty a place to go from theory to idea to practice, while showcasing students' cutting-edge work on social and environmental issues. Of course, innovation won't be limited to the Institute, but rather will extend to academics, the residential program and its integration into the curriculum, and the very landscape itself. Both the Institute and the Center will reach out to involve alumni and the community in meaningful ways. As these additions develop their own profiles, they will also raise the profile of the entire college. The plan will strengthen Colorado College by making us more resilient than ever before. As part of this approach, the college will become a more sophisticated organization that emphasizes shared leadership and progressive professional development programs for faculty and staff. In particular, staff members will find more opportunities for collaborative and cross-functional work, and increased informal interaction across departments all over the campus.

Developing this plan has been quite a learning adventure for everyone involved — not unlike the adventure our students engage in on campus. I invite you to join us as the journey continues. Already, the CC Board of Trustees is collaborating to execute parts of the plan, students are engaging with its innovative ideas, teams of faculty and staff are taking other parts forward. I am asking groups of alumni for advice on implementation and how we can inform the entire community on our progress and ways to invest in our future in the years ahead. In this next critical phase, our work will continue to be defined by listening, collaboration, and bold action as the college reaches new heights in the decades ahead.

Our students are our greatest asset, and their curiosity and energy are the driving forces behind our intensive learning environment. Thanks to their close interaction with each other and with dedicated faculty and staff, we are able to make a lasting impression on them as they live out the values and lessons of our special residential liberal arts education. That they do all this amid the majestic Colorado Rockies, one of the most beautiful places on earth, adds even more to the experience.

— Jill Tiefenthaler, President



The Colorado College Plan: Building on the Block

August 2013

Liberal arts colleges are facing important questions about how to educate the next generation of students in this era of global change, technological innovations, new approaches to engaged learning, continued economic challenges, and increased competition for the very best students and teachers.

At Colorado College, we have looked closely at the various challenges, opportunities, and areas for further investment, while also taking stock of our strengths, especially the Block Plan, our distinctive place of learning, and our national reputation.

Frankly, we are fortunate to find ourselves in such a strong position. We see unprecedented demand from applicants and families who understand the value of our educational experience. The Block Plan is attractive to this generation of students who want to be actively engaged in learning. For those talented students who cannot afford to pay full tuition, we can provide financial aid support through our endowment and thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends.

Many colleges and universities now face tough choices, such as hiring more adjunct or contingent instructors and increasing class sizes to control costs, cutting back the liberal arts curriculum to

focus more on job training in an attempt to meet enrollment goals, and replacing face-to-face interactions between students and professors with impersonal online courses to boost demand. However, because of our position of strength, our strategy at Colorado College is simply focused on being ourselves, but even better.

That means focusing on quality...

- Tenured/tenure-track faculty who are deeply engaged in their students' learning, who can be mentors as well as classroom teachers, and who continue to advance scholarship in their fields.
- Small classes and hands-on, immersive learning experiences where students are engaged and accountable — where they are co-creators of knowledge, not merely consumers.
- A traditional liberal education that not only offers a foundation of knowledge but also builds those skills necessary for success and fulfillment in the 21st century: Critical thinking; the ability to communicate clearly in writing and speaking; comfort with ambiguity; understanding and respect for different ideas and cultures; and sorting, organizing, and analyzing information.

As class size in classrooms and online increases across the country, our classes will be smaller. As more students learn from the computers in their bedrooms or in large lecture halls, CC students will learn from a faculty mentor in small classes and in the field, whether they are studying French in Paris, exploring the geology of the Rockies, or undertaking community-based research for a Colorado Springs nonprofit. Instead of a one-size-fits-all education, CC students will discover a residential liberal arts experience that connects them deeply to our campus in the breathtaking Rockies, where they'll learn 24/7 from dedicated faculty, staff, alumni, and each other.

Our strategy is counter-cultural — instead of jumping on the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) bandwagon, we aim to be SSIP (Selective, Small, Immersive, and Personal... Yes, we just made that up).

Our strategy is to strengthen our core, to enhance what we already do. Therefore, the top priorities that will shape the college's strategic development in the coming years are increasing our focus on engaged teaching and learning, emphasizing our distinctive place in the world, and extending our reach and well-deserved reputation. By finding new ways to capitalize on our strengths, particularly the Block Plan and our unique place, we will attract top students from around the world who are looking for a one-of-a-kind academic experience. Once they are here, we will help them become lifelong learners, imaginative individuals and inspired leaders of diverse communities in a rapidly changing world.

The following recommendations are designed to help us realize this strategic direction. Each has a distinct focus, yet they complement and reinforce each other to create a more dynamic liberal arts experience that is authentically Colorado College.

1. Provide additional support to realize the potential of our pioneering Block Plan.
2. Build both a nationally recognized summer program and an inventive half-block program for a new generation of learners.
3. Create an innovation institute.
4. Enhance our distinctive place of learning — our campus — to support our engaged, globally connected academic program and embody our regional and historical identity.
5. Focus on workplace excellence to foster an organization that is as innovative and dynamic as the CC academic experience.

Recommendation 1: Provide Additional Support to Realize the Potential of our Pioneering Block Plan

Our Block Plan, started in 1970, is now an honored CC institution. Because it naturally supports a more active, collaborative form of learning, it has stood the test of time — and fits in extremely well with the learning style of today’s generation of engaged and independent students. By committing to the Block Plan, our faculty have chosen a different and, yes, somewhat more arduous path. The intensity of the Block Plan requires innovative pedagogy and daily, mutual accountability between faculty and students. There are no best practices or off-the-shelf programs to guide us — only our own pioneering efforts. For that reason, we must continue to innovate and boost support for faculty and students as they define the Block Plan for this new era of learning.



One question we hear when extolling the benefits of the Block Plan is – “If it is so great, why doesn’t anyone else do it?”
The answer is – IT’S HARD!

To support our faculty and students as they experience the full potential of the Block Plan, we will create a Center for Immersive Learning and Engaged Teaching to be a focal place for

academic support. The Center will be a dynamic place where students, faculty, staff, and alumni come together, where resources are available to discover and share best practices and support new ideas.

Bringing together our current academic support programs under one roof; the Center will include the offices of sustainability, community engagement, international programs, and academic technology as well as the Help Desk, the Crown Center for Faculty Development, and the Colket Student Learning Center. The Center will also provide a home for new resources such as an Office for Field Study, which will model our successful Office of International Programs and support and assist faculty in all disciplines as they design and implement local and regional field trips. We also envision the Center including support for undergraduate research and students writing theses and fellowship proposals, where faculty from across the disciplines will mentor thesis and summer research students in an interdisciplinary workshop for writing.

*Need help organizing your block abroad or field trip? Want to flip your classroom (or just find out what it means)? Want to do a community-based research project for your senior thesis? Want to Skype in for a class discussion with an alumnus who served in Vietnam? Want to offer your expertise as a class speaker? **Go to the Center!***

One strength of the Block Plan is its condensed schedule, which enables distinguished scholars and practitioners to come to CC to teach for all or part of a block. To take better advantage of these opportunities, our new Center will build on the block and extend our reach with in-residence programs for artists, scholars, social entrepreneurs, journalists, postdocs, filmmakers, and others. To fully engage our alumni and parents who are experts in their fields and interested in sharing their experiences with students, we will embed someone from the Alumni Office in the Center to help faculty identify and build connections with these wonderful resources.

Finally, our new Center will develop a higher profile for the Block Plan by delving deeper into its unique academic experience and sharing our findings with others. Not only is there internal demand for research related to pedagogy, but we routinely receive inquiries from other institutions, particularly high schools and institutions offering a J-term or Maymester, that are interested in how the plan supports student learning. We'd like to be able to share sound research both internally and externally.

To boost the pedagogical approach of the Block Plan, the Center might feature visits from higher education scholars who want to study learning on the block, a national conference on language immersion study, a journal on innovative pedagogical approaches, a workshop on teaching summer and January courses for colleagues at other institutions, and a workshop on best practices in teaching in the field.

To provide a physical home for the new Center for Immersive Learning and Engaged Teaching and prepare Tutt Library — the intellectual hub of the campus — for this generation of students, we will renovate Tutt Library. This renovated physical space will offer technology-equipped seminar rooms, study space, and group collaboration rooms, as well as a cafe to bring our community together in both structured and unstructured ways. Being flexible to engage both faculty and student interests will be the key to the physical — and academic — space the Center offers.

While our new dynamic center will enable us to accomplish all that the block allows us to imagine, building on the block also requires that all these programs — field trips, blocks abroad, and other experiences — be available to all students regardless of family income. ***To open CC's full academic experience to all students regardless of income and to free the imagination to do even more with the block, we will eliminate all program fees.***

As we embark on these new initiatives, we must remember that the success of the Block Plan depends on a talented and diverse student body and a dedicated, excellent faculty and staff. The CC academic endeavor for each student is greatly influenced by one's peers. The small classes, engaged classroom environment, field trips, athletic teams, co-curricular activities, residential life, and collaborative work that are part of our educational enterprise mean that peers are an integral part of each student's experience. This experience is richer for each student when surrounded by talented and curious students from different backgrounds, cultures, and places — and with different talents and gifts. ***To recruit the best and brightest students, especially those who would benefit most from a CC education, we will build additional resources for financial aid.*** This effort will include funds to support scholarships for Division 1 athletics.

A talented and diverse student body is key to student learning on every campus, and it is even more important at a liberal arts college on the Block Plan.

Teaching on the block requires strenuous, sustained effort and planning. ***To continue to attract, develop, and retain an engaged faculty who are equal to the challenge of teaching on the block, we must enhance resources and flexibility to support faculty scholarship and creativity across the disciplines and activities that make up the learning experience.*** We must be open to new ideas for support and resources, including creating new opportunities for collaborative work such as team teaching or a humanities colloquium; increasing travel, equipment, and grant funds for researchers; boosting support for coaches and other important mentors and guides; and establishing a more flexible sabbatical policy.

Building a faculty of dedicated teachers who are also committed scholars engaged in their disciplines has been and will be critical to providing the finest liberal arts education to generations of CC students.



Recommendation 2: Build Nationally Recognized Summer and Half-Block Programs for a New Generation of Learners

Two of our most distinctive assets are the Block Plan and our one-of-a-kind place of learning in the Colorado Rockies. Doing more to capitalize on both of these tremendous resources will offer new opportunities to our students and extend our reach to new constituencies. By redesigning our summer and January half-block programs for a new era of learners, we will increase flexibility for both faculty and students in support of our mission, provide new revenue, and enhance one of the best liberal arts experiences in the U.S.

Faculty members at Colorado College are experts at teaching focused, immersive courses in 3.5 weeks. Colorado is a beautiful place to learn and live in the summer and provides a plethora of opportunities for outdoor adventure. *To take full advantage of these strengths, we will create one of the premier summer learning experiences in the U.S.* Our summer program will not just offer random courses. Instead, we will create summer programs of linked thematic blocks that will attract our own students as well as students from other institutions across the country and the world.

These linked summer blocks will be organized around themes such as film, arts, pre-med, sports, foreign languages, environmental education, and geology. Students will learn more than just high-level academics — they will get hands-on experience with internships and meet active professionals face-to-face. For example, a summer program on film might involve taking a couple of filmmaking classes for credit, producing a short film, and talking with alumni about their work in the movie or TV industry. A pre-med summer block program might involve taking courses in basic sciences and math, working in hospitals through internships, and receiving career support directly from medical professionals.

We expect to see several benefits for current faculty and students. Some faculty prefer to teach in the summer to take advantage of opportunities in the field, for example, in biology, geology, environmental studies, or other courses that include significant outdoor work in the Rockies. Teaching responsibilities could be spread across the year, allowing more flexibility in class scheduling. The summer program will also offer new, exciting opportunities and flexibility to current students, leading to more students on campus year-round and making better use of facilities and other resources throughout the year. We also foresee attracting students from other universities, both domestic and international, who are interested in spending an adventurous summer in the Colorado Rockies.

As we redesign our summer blocks, so too will we use half blocks more effectively. A liberal arts education is more relevant today than ever before for preparing students for work and life. Young people today need to know how to see things from different perspectives and how to collaborate and communicate expertly. The best way to prepare students for the future — for jobs that don't yet exist and problems that don't yet have solutions — is to help them develop nimble minds; comfort with different cultures and ideas; skill at problem solving, writing, and speaking; and the capacity to work through the flood of information that is now available at our fingertips. All these habits of the mind are developed by the liberal arts.

Yet we can do more to help our students to transition from college to the world of work. Our students today are members of the Millennial generation, born between 1982 and 2000.

In many ways they are further away from the world of work than any previous generation. Millennials are less likely than previous generations to have held a job as a teenager, and now they face a slowly recovering job market. Surveys also show that Millennials have higher expectations for their future careers than previous generations. To help bridge the gap between their academic and professional years, we must offer them strong career development as part of their overall learning experience at CC.

A liberal education paired with strong career development is the new gold standard for educating tomorrow's leaders.

To better educate our students about their options after college, help them to reflect on and articulate the relevance of their CC experience, and build the practical skills that ease transition to today's workplace, we will create a dynamic half-block program. New offerings during the nine-day half block in early January will concentrate on what students need to do to prepare for the future in both their academic and professional careers. These short courses and workshops might focus on basic programming code or analytics software, choice of majors, personal finances, or writing workshops on fellowship proposals or resumes. We will also develop half blocks for students returning to campus after study-abroad programs and venture grant experiences that allow them to reflect and build on their meaningful time spent off campus.

Our new summer and half-block programs will engage our alumni, parents, and local community members as teachers/mentors and students. The half-block program offers especially rich opportunities for students, faculty, and others to engage with alumni and the Colorado Springs community. Alumni, parents, staff, and community members are great sources of expertise to teach some of these practical skills courses, or they might enroll in these classes themselves alongside traditional students. For example, veterans and soldiers in transition might find the career courses particularly valuable. *To offer our unique immersive learning experience to new constituencies, we will also develop special “block breaks” – short courses for alumni and parents on campus, at Baca, in the field, and around the globe.* These block breaks will create new opportunities for alumni and parents to engage in lifelong learning and be intellectually engaged with the college and each other.

Recommendation 3: Create an Innovation Institute



Our innovative and adventurous spirit — which grew out of our founders’ ambition to build a world-class institution of higher learning to educate citizens for the New West — defines us.

Colorado College is not your typical liberal arts college. It appeals strongly to certain kinds of people — those with a strong sense of self-confidence and curiosity. High-achieving students from around the globe are drawn to CC because they’re excited to learn off the beaten path. They see learning as an adventure and are motivated by the rigor and intensity of the Block Plan. As the only liberal arts college in the Rocky Mountain West, we have a special opportunity to harness this spirit of the West — innovation, creativity, and big-picture thinking — to produce real-world answers to complex questions.

Our aim is to develop an Innovation Institute to provide resources, structure, and encouragement to students and faculty as they investigate social and environmental challenges, understand the context in which they exist, identify sustainable solutions, and put them into action. By

offering students and faculty a place to go from theory to idea to practice, the Innovation Institute will bring together the skills of the liberal arts — creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication — with our own innovative spirit and commitment to making the world a better place. This will position the college to do an even more powerful job of demonstrating the vital connection between doing good and doing well.

Making connections across disciplines is at the heart of innovation — making it the best path to addressing some of the world's most challenging issues.

We are fortunate to bring many assets to this exciting enterprise, including four strong programs that encourage students to use creative approaches to pursue their passions. Those include the State of the Rockies Project, with a decade of experience in using research and innovative approaches to draw attention to environmental issues in the region; and Keller Venture Grants, awarded each year to more than 100 students to help them undertake their own intellectual adventures as individuals or in collaborative groups. Other assets are The Big Idea, a year-long workshop for students interested in learning how to build a business and become an entrepreneur, leading to an annual competition that funds the best idea; and the Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP), which gives students practical experience in working on critical issues in our region by placing them in Front Range nonprofit organizations for summer- and year-long internships.

Currently, these programs help students take critical steps in the innovation process, but they are disconnected. For example, State of the Rockies and Keller Venture Grants help students — as individuals or in groups — identify and understand important problems. State of the Rockies goes a step further by disseminating research on problems that are identified or understood. The Big Idea helps students imagine solutions to problems that are identified and understood, and PIFP offers students front-line experience in our region. By connecting these critical components, the Institute will serve as an incubator of sorts where students imagine, develop, and test ideas at all levels — and then go further by launching solutions.

When it achieves all parts of its mission the Institute will be a sandbox for problem solving from beginning to end. It will help students and faculty identify and understand problems, disseminate research, craft solutions, launch solutions in the practical world, and with the PIFP, sustain those solutions as organizations as well.

In the process, the Institute will increase our scope and range by launching new initiatives that complement our current strengths. Driven by student interests and led by faculty and alumni mentors, these efforts will draw attention to key issues in the region and create opportunities for students to act as social entrepreneurs.

With so many alumni involved in education, for example, there is much interest in developing a program like State of the Rockies that is focused on research and creative approaches for K-12 education in our region. Another idea is an Innovation Fellows program for alumni, parents, and community mentors who are social entrepreneurs or members of boards. These experienced professionals could mentor students and partner with many on campus to engage in solution-based thinking. Drawing these new and existing programs closer together will enrich each one and provide the resources that students and faculty need to flourish.

As the Institute evolves, faculty leaders and students will continue to shape and extend its scope. Even now our scholars are thinking creatively about how this new part of the academic profile might one day include outdoor education and a growing international focus on combining adventure, scholarship, human health, and social change. Others imagine organizing trips for students — and perhaps alumni — who want to know more about the impact today’s social entrepreneurs are making around the world.

To sustain the connections it needs to thrive, our Innovation Institute will be housed in a new academic setting of vibrant cross-disciplinary work. Our students are primed to be social entrepreneurs, and in the new physical space we are imagining they will find a place that supports their efforts to forge discoveries that make a difference in the world. This new academic building will house the Innovation Institute as well as a mix of departments and programs from across the disciplines.

Recommendation 4: Enhance our distinctive place of learning — our campus — to support our engaged, globally connected academic community and embody our regional and historical identity

While virtual communities are capturing headlines and tweets these days, we believe that a sense of place will become even more important to the next generation of students as they balance virtual mobility with a deeper, more enduring awareness rooted in community and the immediate physical environment.

From their very first steps on our campus, we want our students to know that they have entered a dynamic intellectual community, one that reflects a global outlook and a strong liberal arts tradition, and one that also takes into account our unique place in the West. We want them to know that they have entered a distinctive place of learning — a “place apart” — to reflect and yet to be seamlessly connected to the world.

We only need to look at the recent wildfires in the West to realize how interconnected we are in this environment. Balancing the need for progress with the need to sustain our environment will require creative solutions.



To that end, our campus should promote the liberal arts, embody the engaged and immersive teaching environment of the Block Plan, and explore the themes so important to this region — healthy living, sustainability, the value of water, and spirit of adventure. Today’s students are rightly concerned about issues that affect the health and well being of communities around the world and the limited resources of this planet. The entire campus should be a living laboratory and exhibit space for critical themes and aspirations, as well as an invitation for collaboration, a sanctuary for reflection, and most of all, a place of excitement.

CC’s identity as a distinctive place of learning depends on developing a relationship between the campus physical environment and the functions of our institution. In order to enhance our campus, we must provide a sustainable landscape and built environment that is in harmony with our educational mission and embodies our regional identity.

To ensure coherence in campus design as related to aesthetics, sustainability, and the educational mission, we will develop a master plan for the physical campus to help guide and shape each new project in the coming decades. Guided by this campus master plan, we will enhance our identity through development of a beautiful, sustainable landscape and built environment that embodies our regional and historical identity and fosters our collaborative approach to teaching, learning, and community building. In keeping with our liberal arts aspirations, an aim for the master plan is the design and creation of aesthetically adventurous places and spaces that encourage formal and informal learning, traditional and technology-enhanced educational experiences, curricular and co-curricular activities, intercollegiate and intramural athletics, and spontaneous intellectual encounters, along with personal reflection.

Together with this plan for the physical campus, we will develop a communications plan to present the college to our constituencies and to the world. To offer a clear, unified message to the campus community, alumni, and visitors, our communications efforts should reflect the nuances of our distinctive curricula and programs and our special place, signifying who we are as an intellectual community. External communications, ranging from the continued development of our brand to the signage we use to identify our physical resources, should portray a powerful, integrated presence.

We supply the dining hall with fresh vegetables that we grow at the CC Farm and we are building a new greenhouse to teach students and the public about efficient, renewable solar energy and four-season growing techniques.

As part of our identity and responsibility as the only liberal arts college in the Rocky Mountain West, Colorado College is committed to working toward carbon neutrality, and already we have made significant progress in reducing energy and water use. ***In the coming decade, we will ensure that the college is recognized as a model of environmental stewardship and innovation by advancing both the study and the practice of sustainability.*** To achieve this recognition, we will “talk the talk and walk the walk” as we continue to reduce our environmental impact, integrating sustainability across the breadth of our curriculum more deeply and cultivating the ethic of sustainability in all aspects of campus programming. Looking forward, we have an opportunity to advance practice at the national level on a full range of issues related to sustainability — energy, materials, food, wellness, aesthetics — all the while drawing on the new power of the Innovation Institute to turn ideas into action.

While we reside in this unique physical location, we also need to stay abreast of rapidly changing technology in the digital era. Our students are among the first generation of “digital natives,” young people who grew up with mobile devices and constant connectivity. They are naturals at using technology to access information and interact with others. Just as the liberal arts extend across national and cultural boundaries, so do the interests of our students, encompassing everyone and everything.

As we invest in and nurture our authentic surroundings, we will utilize the latest technology to connect the CC community of alumni, students, faculty, staff, and parents to each other and to intellectual and creative resources around the world. For example, this online community and supporting infrastructure will allow a student who is interested in a career in advertising and an alumni mentor who has years of experience in the field to meet via video chat. It will allow scholars and other experts from across the globe to be guest speakers in campus classes. It will allow students studying or doing internships abroad to meet with their advisor or connect to a class on campus. It will allow faculty to offer online lectures and discussions for alumni.

This online community will bring alumni and others to our distinctive place and enrich our place by connecting us seamlessly to the world.

Recommendation 5: Focus on workplace excellence to foster an organization that is as innovative and dynamic as the CC academic experience



Implementing our strategic plan and fulfilling our mission to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country requires a campus culture that supports a first-rate staff in connecting to that mission and developing enthusiasm for life-long learning, flexibility, open-mindedness, and other 21st century skills our students are acquiring. A culture that emphasizes building an inclusive community, helping each person develop as a professional, and sustaining workplace excellence will advance our goals while also making CC one of the best places in the nation to work.

To create a campus culture that is truly creative and innovative, we must attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and administration and foster an inclusive campus culture that truly values different backgrounds, experiences, ideas, and opinions. An inclusive community provides the foundation for an excellent liberal education — a diverse faculty and staff is a critical component in generating creative ideas and providing the most effective mentoring. In fact, one main benefit of a residential liberal arts education is our capacity to model democratic community, helping students acquire the habits that will shape them long after they leave CC. At the same time, to attract top professional talent in today’s competitive global economy, the college must be a welcoming place for people from all backgrounds.

All our work indicates that staff members are full stakeholders in CC’s distinctive undergraduate teaching mission and share in the college’s allegiance to its students. At no point did we detect any confusion about this central mission.
— Scrum Team Report, 2013

Through our strategic planning process, campus climate survey, and the work of a special faculty and staff team (known as the Scrum Team) we have identified strategies for continuing to build diversity and inclusiveness on campus. Adopting innovative strategies for hiring and retention is one way to achieve our goals. For example, adding a talent acquisition manager to the community, along with a new formal program for onboarding, will ensure that we do all we can to hire and retain a highly talented, diverse staff and faculty.

Because lifelong learning is critical for individuals to reach their potential in today’s dynamic and rapidly changing world, we will create a top-notch professional development program that supports our staff and faculty in adapting to the changing environment. As part of this program,

we will develop a shared leadership philosophy and set of competencies, and create programs for staff and faculty to build those identified skills. Our growing supervisor training and wellness programs are a base for this program, as will be new efforts to train staff members in specific skills designed to promote and enrich collaborative and cross-functional work, and to increase informal interaction across departments all over the campus.

Great places to work and effective organizations share cultures of helpful internal communication and transparency, active collaboration and cross-functional work, and an infrastructure supported by clear policies and practices. The campus climate survey and the Scrum Team identified these characteristics as traits CC should do more to achieve. ***To strengthen our culture and improve workplace excellence, the college will build strong internal communication, vibrant collaboration, and organizational transparency as strategic assets.*** Specifically we look forward to establishing a formal internal communication function, encouraging departments to use an internal communication plan, and promoting face-to-face interaction among the staff. To boost collaboration, we will establish cross-functional projects and block projects, two new categories of collaborative work designed to bring new levels of coherence and support to work across administrative divisions. We will also seek an innovative physical space to encourage shared work. To ensure that our infrastructure is ready to support these new approaches — as well as implement this plan — our leaders are working together to establish clear policies and increase alignment and strengthen business practices in a number of critical areas.

We see the recommendations above as part of an ambitious strategic plan with a dynamic, organic shape that will continue to grow with input and action from the community. Already we have received so many ideas — and so much encouragement — for these recommendations that we have great confidence in their success. We are ready to get started with implementation, and we ask students, faculty, alumni, parents, and friends to engage in initiatives as they are rolled out, provide us with more feedback, and in some cases, provide resources to make these exciting initiatives possible. For up-to-date information on the status of the plan, please visit our website.

At the heart of Colorado College's strategic plan is a focus on being ourselves — but even better. That means focusing on our strengths, especially the Block Plan, our distinctive place of learning, and our national reputation, while rising to the challenge of educating students in this era of global change, keeping pace with technological innovations, discovering new approaches to engaged learning, and continuing to recruit and retain the very best students and teachers. The above recommendations do just that. They begin with the premise that a liberal arts education builds the skills necessary for success and fulfillment in the 21st century, then add the steps necessary to create a unique premier liberal arts academic experience.

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