

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**ACADEMIC REVIEW AND PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RAP REVIEW TASK FORCE**

REPORT OF FINDINGS

**Presented to Provost Russell Moore
June 1, 2017**

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TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Paul Chinowsky, Chair

Associate Vice Provost for Student Success

Andy Cain

Associate Professor – Classics, A&S Faculty Representative

Scot Douglass

Associate Professor – Herbst Program of Humanities in Engineering,
Director of Engineering Honors Program

Carla Ho-a

Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Business Strategy

Leslie Kavanaugh

Director of Assessment, Student Affairs

Kambiz Khalili

Associate Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary Services and Student Support

Amy Lavens

Assistant Dean for Finance & Operations, College of Arts & Sciences

Kyle McJunkin

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Arts & Sciences

Roseanna Neupauer

Professor, Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, BFA Representative

Fernando Rosario

Associate Professor, Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering
BFA Representative

Eric Stade

Professor, Mathematics

Director, Libby RAP

Ted Stark

Senior Instructor, Theatre and Dance
Arts & Sciences Council Representative

INTRODUCTION

Evidence suggests that a carefully planned and executed first year undergraduate experience builds

- 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

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.

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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

RAP FINANCE

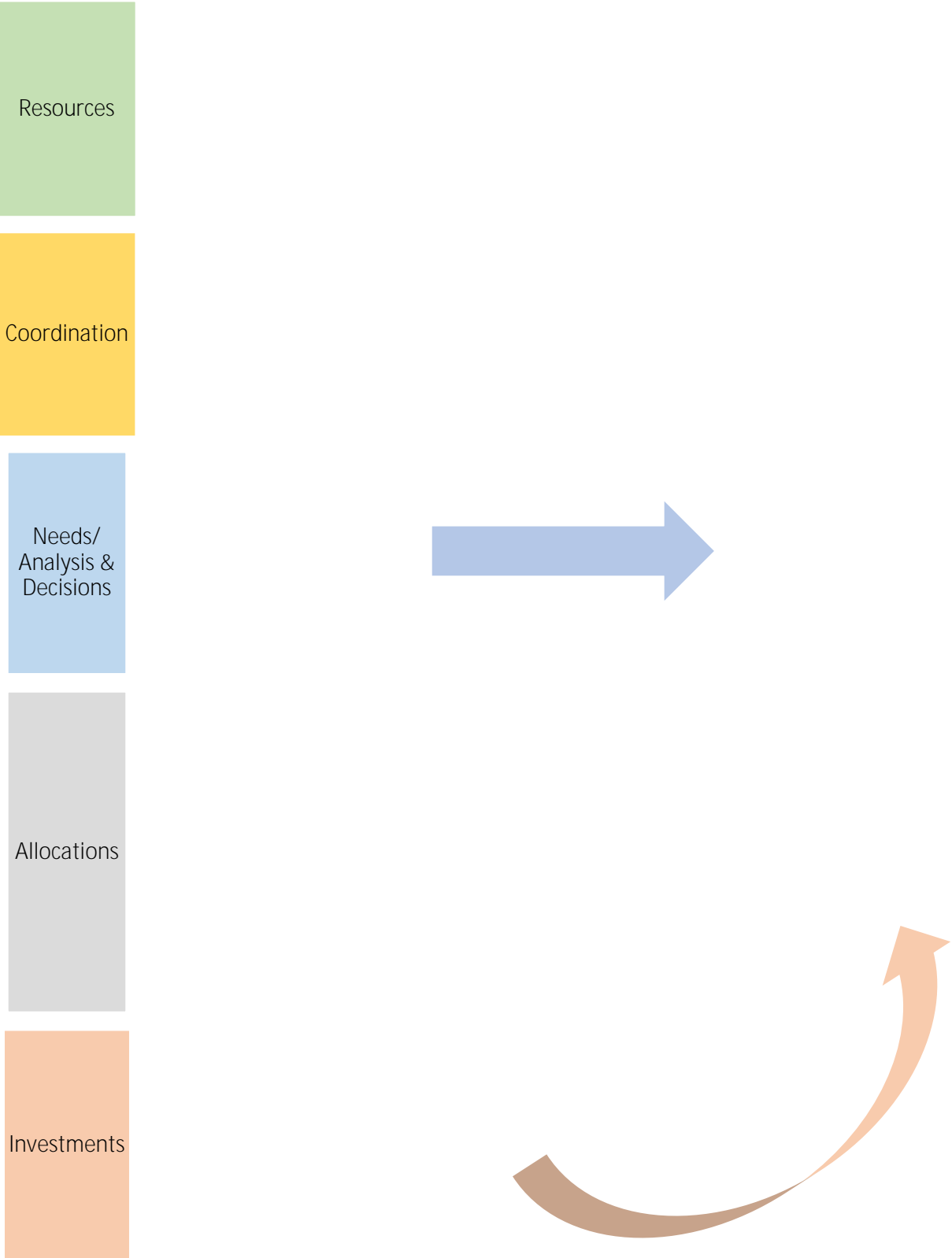
Needs/Analysis and Decisions: The needs of the RAPs may be distinguished into two areas: operational needs, and strategic investments. The RAPs will submit budget requests based on their academic programming requirements, to the central financial unit. These requests will be brought to the RAP Finance 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



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

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.

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.

decisions, and who understand the process that allows early housing applicants to have the greatest

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.

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-curricular programs and activities as the common experiences rather than academic courses. These programs are overseen by Residence Life staff.

First-

ARPAC RAP