Dear Faculty:

In 2014, the Summer Session successfully piloted three thematic “linked blocks.” Each linked block program integrated summer blocks of academic study with additional opportunities that engaged the community, such as externship research and partnerships with local organizations. Through these linked blocks, students immediately practiced what they learned in the liberal arts classroom in applied settings in the local community. See The Colorado Documentary Project as one example of a 2014 thematic linked block course.

We wish to again offer some thematic linked blocks in Summer Session 2015. Advancing the goal of CC’s strategic plan to “build a nationally recognized summer program for a new generation of learners,” these linked blocks should pair our intensive and rigorous liberal arts study with learning opportunities that help students reflect on and articulate the relevance of their CC academics to their options after college, gain hands-on experience, and meet active professionals. Such courses could be based on established or newly forged relationships within the community, partnerships with alumni, as well as courses that build on existing departmental/program offerings.

While the college supports summer internships, the linked block courses are not intended to include internships within the course. Internship options for students may be investigated and coordinated by faculty in connection with the course content. Such internships should take place after the course is completed, and they must be optional for students, and not considered for summer credit. They may not be funded by the college, and faculty should coordinate such efforts carefully with the Career Center.

As always, these courses should be designed to attract our own Colorado College students as well as undergraduates from around the country who are eligible to apply here in the summer.

Faculty who are interested in developing and working to organize a linked block offering for Summer Session 2015 are invited to communicate their interest and ideas, to be eventually developed into full proposals, to Emily Chan and Ann Van Horn as soon as possible. The Summer Session committee will formally announce the submission of ALL summer courses for 2015 on September 1. However, we welcome conversations about ideas as soon as possible.

Formal proposals will be due by September 26 and the committee will ask faculty to address these considerations:

- The academic content of the course.
- Ways in which the program helps students reflect on and articulate the relevance of their CC academics to their options after college, gain hands-on experience, and/or meet active professionals.
- How does the extended length (longer than 1 block) enhance the learning experience and open up community partnership/hands-on opportunities?
- Potential for attracting students:
  - What are the important and appealing characteristics of the linked block’s theme/area to a broad range of student goals and interests?
o Could the block(s) fulfill some all-college requirements for departmental/program requirements?
o How to let CC students and non-CC students know about the course?

- Description and explanation of personnel needs: teaching faculty (including co-teaching), support staff, guest instructor/lecturer/mentor, etc.

- Description of the active role of the faculty in the hands-on components of the course that is conducted in partnership with other organizations (e.g., site visits, externships, collaborative work/learning opportunities.

- Budget and justification. The budget should include course material expenditures, expenses for faculty and students (including field experiences such as food and travel), other support costs, marketing plan and costs (if known). A worksheet will be provided upon request to assist in refining costs estimates for developing accurate program fees.

- Administrative and pedagogical support needs.

We hope you and your colleagues in your department/program are interested in helping the College shape this innovative initiative. We are happy to discuss with you and to help you develop your ideas and explore options. While we are primarily focused on supporting the development of linked blocks for 2015 Summer, we are happy to discuss ideas that would take more time to develop and that you might want to pursue in 2016.

We look forward to hearing from you, and to help you develop your linked blocks idea.

Sincerely,

Emily Chan, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives
Ann Van Horn, Director of Summer Session