The Four Year Plan

www.reslife.coloradocollege.edu
At Colorado College our goal is to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. Drawing upon the adventurous spirit of the Rocky Mountain West, we challenge students, one course at a time, to develop those habits of intellect and imagination that will prepare them for learning and leadership throughout their lives.

College Core Values: As members of the Colorado College community, we share a commitment to:
• honor the life of the mind as the central focus of our common endeavor;
• value all persons and seek to learn from their diverse experiences and perspectives;
• practice intellectual honesty and live with integrity;
• serve as stewards of the traditions and resources of Colorado College;
• nurture a sense of place and an ethic of environmental sustainability;
• encourage engagement and social responsibility at local, national and global levels;
• seek excellence, constantly assessing our policies and programs.

Department of Residential Life and Housing Mission & Philosophy
Colorado College is a residential college, which means that living on-campus for three years is an integral component of each student’s experience here. The mission of the department of residential life is to provide a positive residential experience conducive to learning and personal growth. To achieve this goal, members of the residential life staff are responsible for the maintenance and operation of the residential facilities, and are committed to assisting in the development of each student.

Living on campus is an integral component to each student’s experience here and is required for the first three years that a student attends CC. This requirement is based on the “CC Plan,” which prescribes that a student’s education comes from the triangle intersection of academics, activities, and residential life. We believe that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom, and the residential component of the CC experience gives students many opportunities to educate their whole person and apply the theories they are learning in the classroom to their interactions with each other in their living environment. Students are given the opportunity and responsibility to define their own community values and determine how they will uphold those values within their living communities. Students are expected to align their behavior with the values of the college as they travel on their educational journey and determine their own standards of behavior and ethics.
Living at Colorado College- A Four Year Journey

Residential communities at Colorado College serve as learning laboratories where students can discover and practice skills in self-actualization and responsibility, understanding and appreciating diverse
perspectives, and civic engagement. Residential living provides a consistent, steady base amidst a frequently variable lifestyle dictated by the Block Plan. Residential communities are also places for extra-curricular activities and social events that are an integral part of life on this residential campus. This is where students can put their classroom theories to the test in their real lives as they learn to live with others on campus. We believe that students have a responsibility to engage themselves in their living community, and our staff is committed to providing opportunities for them to do so. On campus living serves as a cushioned stepping stone before students study abroad, move off-campus, or graduate and become a member of the global community.

Colorado College is a “residential campus” which means that students are required to live on campus for the first three years of their academic career. The on-campus community is shaped by the influence of upperclass students who lead the younger students in creating a campus culture that reflects the values of the students. For this reason, students who are sophomores and juniors are required to live on campus to assist in shaping the experiences of the students who will follow in their footsteps.

All students are required to live in college housing except seniors, students who are 23 years or older, military veterans, students living at home with their parent/guardian, students who are married, and students with dependent children living with them. Approximately 80% of Colorado College students live in one of the residence halls, apartment buildings, or small houses. There is wide variety in the types of living communities available on campus, as we strive to meet the needs of our ever-changing student body.

The Residential Life staff follows a “four year plan” wherein students are provided with developmental opportunities in which they can engage themselves intellectually, socially, and personally. The diversity in facilities available to students create distinct educational living environments appropriate for each year in school. At each level, students are given choices in their living situation. For first year students, the choice comes in the form of asserting their living preferences, and our department determines wing designations based on the first year preferences each year. Upperclassmen are given the responsibility of selecting their own living space within the room selection process. As students progress through their four years at CC, they are provided with opportunities to live in less supervised communities as they begin to live out the values of the college and practice self-responsibility. There are 5 learning objectives associated with each year, focusing on the following areas: personal responsibility, decision-making/developing purpose, relationships with others, civic engagement, and personal identity.

Community Agreements
All residential communities develop a “Community Living Agreement“ which is a living document that describes how the residents will live and hold each other accountable in the shared space for that semester. The agreement is revisited each block at a community meeting, and also describes how residents will confront each other when their agreed standards are violated. This gives students an opportunity to engage themselves civically in a tangible way, and serves as practice for when students move on to live off campus in apartments or neighborhood associations. The residential life staff will facilitate these conversations until residents are capable of doing so on their own.
First Year Experience
During their first year on campus, students live in one of the traditional residence halls, where they have the opportunity to learn about themselves within a larger community context. Emphasis is placed on helping students learn about themselves and each other, campus resources, and how to live together responsibly in a wing or floor community. Most first year students have roommates to experience negotiating with another person about the shared living space. The learning objectives for first year students living in campus housing are:
• Students can articulate student life and residential life policies.
• Students can identify campus resources that can contribute to their education.
• Students will identify resources that can help them make informed decisions about their lifestyle choices and social situations.
• Students will actively participate in their living community, exercising independence and interdependence, under the guidance of their student staff member.
• Students will be exposed to a diverse community of their peers.

Sophomore Year Experience
The sophomore year is focused on learning more self-responsibility as well as how to communicate with peers and hold each other accountable for their shared values and expectations. Students are given opportunities to live with friends within the larger buildings or to pursue specific interests in a language house or themed learning community. Our department has higher expectations for students during their sophomore year, as they begin to be role models for the first year class as well as their peers. The learning objectives for the sophomore year are:
• Students will act in accordance with the college and community values and will take responsibility for their own actions.
• Students will utilize campus resources as they determine their academic and personal goals.
• Students will make informed decisions about their lifestyle choices and social situations.
• Students will engage themselves in their residential community, the college community, and the local community.
• Students will reflect upon their own identity, especially issues of diversity, friendships, and personal development.

Junior Year Experience/Senior Year Experience
During the junior and senior years, the apartments, small houses, and themed areas provide environments where students learn how to engage themselves in more global communities, such as transitioning to a study abroad experience or learning how to cook and clean within an apartment. During the junior and senior years, students are expected to be self-governing and to also give back to the residential community by serving as role models as well as engaging in conversations about how to improve College practices and policies. All of these efforts are designed to prepare students for living off campus during their senior year or after they graduate from college. The learning objectives for the junior and senior years are:
• Students will reflect on the college values and policies and seek to impart them on others.
• Students will plan for life after college, including setting professional and personal goals.
• Students will assist others in making informed decisions about lifestyle choices and social situations.
• Students will engage themselves in the larger communities, while maintaining involvement in campus and residential communities.
• Students will continue to reflect on their own identity, becoming more articulate of their ideas and more accepting of other viewpoints.

The Staff
Each area has both student and professional staff members who work with residents to maintain a community atmosphere and to provide information, resources, and support. All of these staff members have undergone a selection process and are chosen to serve in this leadership position because of their maturity, adaptability, interpersonal skills, and interest in developing a community. The staff provides appropriate structure to the living community and assists students in developing and upholding community standards. We expect that as students gain experience at CC, they will be able to conduct themselves appropriately in less-supervised communities and train our staff to interact with students accordingly.

Residential Life Coordinators
RLC’s are professional, master’s degree-level staff members who live in on campus. Each of the six RLC’s supervises a student staff, leads the community development in his/her buildings, oversees budgets and facilities, conducts judicial meetings, and counsels students on a variety of subjects. By having a master’s degree in the field of College Student Services, each RLC can provide guidance to residents within that area of campus. These staff members provide a presence within the residential communities so that students can have additional opportunities for higher levels of engagement with educated college community members after the traditional class times. The RLC’s are members of the living and learning communities, and also provide departmental responses after regular business hours.

Resident Advisors/Senior Resident Advisors
RA’s are upperclass students who live in the large halls and are an important link between students and the College. The RA serves as a resource, facilitator, peer mediator, and crisis responder. Senior Resident Advisors live in the smaller buildings and the apartments and are upper-class students who manage and maintain the community under the guidance of a Residential Life Coordinator. The role of the SRA is similar to that of a RA yet with more autonomy and greater responsibility for the facility. Student staff members are role models for their residents and serve to assist the college in supporting students as they work to achieve their academic goals. They also serve as catalysts for conversation and support for their residents as they work to share a living environment for the year.