
Utilizing Volunteers: Retirees and Alumni



The Colorado College Alumni and Students of Color Association (CCASCA) supports the academic, social, professional, and developmental interests of CC's alumni and students of color. CCASCA fosters a supportive network for students and alumni of color and helps CC be identified as a top choice for students of color seeking a liberal arts education.

BLOCK A PROJECT COMMITTEE

Nancy Baxter, alumna and director of gift planning

Diane Benninghoff, alumna and retiree

Kristie Damgaard, assistant director of alumni relations

Les Goss, alumnus and AAB board member

Bethany Grubbs, senior student life specialist

Barbara Keener, alumna and past president AAB

Carlos Jimenez, alumnus and director of admissions

Stella Mainar, assistant director of alumni relations

Gretchen Wardell, career coach

Introduction

Recommendation 5 of the college's Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of attracting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff and administration and fosters an inclusive campus culture that truly values different backgrounds, experiences, ideas and opinions. That goal easily translates to the idea that our retirees and alumni can provide valuable input and guidance through volunteering and other engagement avenues that are both impactful and meaningful to the college, the retirees and the alumni; thereby retaining their talents and knowledge for the good of the college.

The work of the block project team is to generate ideas for how the college might utilize the talents and knowledge of our retirees and alumni; through events, student and junior faculty mentoring, half block, etc. In addition to ideas, the team is asked to draft the processes by which retirees and alumni can engage with the college about these volunteer opportunities, as well as how the college can invite participation from these two groups and maintain their interest in the program(s).

Executive Summary

Colorado College has a strong tradition of volunteerism that could be enhanced to encourage even deeper engagement, retain institutional knowledge and enrich our knowledge community. The committee recommends further data gathering from our stakeholders: volunteers as well as campus community to better assess the current status as well as opportunity for engagement. Additionally, the committee recommends establishing a volunteer task force staffed through the President's office with the goal of gathering data from all vested parties as well as overseeing technological and communication enhancements optimizing this valuable CC resource.

Volunteers at Colorado College

Volunteer, for the purposes of this project, refers to any alumni, retired employee (faculty or staff) or family member of current students, alumni or retirees, who is providing a service to the college without financial remuneration aside from possible expense reimbursement or small gifts or appreciation. Possible services include, but are not limited to: speaking, writing, teaching, hosting, consulting, researching, networking, mentoring, serving on committees and assisting with events.

What is great volunteer engagement?

The committee shared aspects of their own volunteer experiences that were most rewarding. The themes are listed below:

- inspirational mission
- needed/valued individual's competency(ies)
- defined impact
- strategic guidance
- temporal fit
- immediate results
- organized and well executed
- working with motivated population
- learning and growth opportunity
- facilitating connections
- changing lives
- expressed gratitude and appreciation for contributions

We recommend a survey of a cross section of selected CC volunteers to add to this assessment of what and how volunteers would like to contribute their talents, skills and knowledge to Colorado College. For example, the retirees, AAB board and committees, City Alumni volunteers, Homecoming volunteers and Admissions volunteers will meet on and off campus over the next 12 months. Additional conversations with representatives from these groups might further enhance our institutional knowledge and aid in the attraction and retention of valued volunteers. Please see the sample survey in the addendum.

Ways the college could utilize retiree/alumni talents/knowledge

Below are a range of opportunities for volunteer engagement, some extant and some new suggestions. The committee recognizes that this list is not comprehensive and that our perspectives may not fully represent all opportunities on campus. We highly recommend distributing a questionnaire campus wide to discover how volunteers are being engaged currently as well as to imagine how volunteers could be engaged in their departments. A sample survey is attached in the Addendum along with a sample communication from the President.

Engagement Opportunities:

- career center - mentor, interviewer, industry subject matter experts
- admissions - recruiting, interviewing and hosting events
- Homecoming reunion class volunteers
- academic - speakers, classes, half block, engagement during off campus blocks
- faculty engagement with alumni (i.e. books on the beach, travel, events)
- Butler Center - student hosting programs
- IT - Tech alumni advisory
- fundraising volunteers
- WES - Women's Educational Society
- PIFP – Public Interest Fellowship Program
- additional off campus events
- revitalize class and legacy rep and agent program
- engage retired faculty/staff and alumni to mentor
- engage retired faculty/staff and alumni to suggest or host block break activities
- strategic volunteers for block projects
- represent college at community events when President or senior staff unavailable
- mentor junior faculty members

Opportunities could be catalogued for desired volunteers, profiles and time availability, etc., added to the virtual volunteer calendar and cross referenced against the existing volunteer pool in order to facilitate matching.

Processes

The committee recognizes that volunteers cross many campus departments and cross many categories of constituents on and off campus. Even in our committee interactions, we witnessed the power of enhancing volunteer engagement by bringing together departments who work with volunteers to refine their best practices. Therefore, the committee suggests that new processes might be best initiated from the President's office with the creation of a President's Volunteer Advisory Task Force or equivalent to be comprised of a cross section of the stakeholders.

The purpose of this task force would be to assess where and how volunteers are engaging on campus (surveys previously described), as well as activate technology to optimize the volunteer opportunity and overall experience. Technology improvements could

include establishing a universal 'smart' volunteer 'entry point' on the web, creating an online volunteer calendar displaying engagement opportunities with links to specific projects, and identifying the on-campus smart rooms and applications to facilitate integrative engagement wherever volunteers happen to be located.

If the task force discovers an extensive and ongoing opportunity for and with volunteers, the task force may want to initiate a volunteer fair for campus as well as virtual participants. Additionally, we have included a sample job description for a volunteer coordinator, if the task force and the President's office discover a deep demand and need for a coordinated and enhanced volunteer experience.

One suggestion is to engage an El Pomar Fellow and student interns to facilitate the surveys suggested in this document as well as perform the organizational data collection for this task force to analyze. The committee agreed that benefits to centralizing volunteer information included a more comprehensive understanding of our volunteers, assessment of their engagement and potential to leverage their talents across CC in a way that would also be personally fulfilling.

CC institutional knowledge and management of volunteers could be supported by creating a single online smart volunteer form. We discovered that career, admissions, homecoming and athletics volunteers all have their own volunteer forms for a variety of reasons. A smart online form could gather all information needed from our volunteers to cover any appropriate risk, legal and confidentiality concerns as well as capturing their interests without having multiple entry points for the volunteer. Additionally that form could then feed the data from which to populate the volunteer's Banner records with the appropriate activity code(s). This also, in turn, could provide the data for an annual volunteer thank you card from the President as well as volunteer honor roll listings on the web, etc. The committee also recommends that language be included to allow for the vetting of volunteers and perhaps the delay of deploying volunteers if not immediately needed. A sample volunteer interest questionnaire is located in the Addendum.

Additionally, the committee discussed the need to reduce barriers to volunteering including increasing the literacy as well as the use of technology to engage virtual volunteers. We discovered that there exists an opportunity to share technical knowledge with staff as well as alumni of apps like GoToMeeting, Skype, etc. A list of smart rooms as well as simple

instructions for staff and off-site volunteers to connect could enhance who and how volunteers engage with the campus. Training on campus for how and when to use technology to enhance interactions would be helpful. Tuesday Tech talks might offer a great venue for the knowledge transfer.

We also recommend facilitating volunteer stories in CC publications including shout outs on Facebook, enhancing class notes in the Bulletin to include volunteer activities, etc. The task force could provide volunteer highlights for the Communications team to deploy across publications. 'Ways to Celebrate Volunteers' is included in the Addendum.

We recommend adding volunteers on to existing informational emails including The President's blog, in order to underline their value and being an 'insider'. Additionally, hosting a reception during homecoming at Tutt or Stewart House for all volunteers would give the President an opportunity to thank them in person. Invite all volunteers regardless of reunion year; it is more important that they get invited, than that they attend.

Every member of the committee gained an appreciation for the richness of volunteerism at CC and hopes that these initial recommendations will assist in strengthening that tradition in a coordinated fashion. The committee would be delighted to share additional thoughts if further elucidation of this report would be useful.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Survey stakeholders internally and externally
2. Establish a Volunteer Task Force to unify efforts and optimize engagement
 - a. Assess survey data for next steps
 - b. Oversee technological enhancements
 - i. Single smart volunteer entry point
 - ii. Data feeds to Banner
 - iii. Data feeds for online volunteer honor roll
 - iv. Data feeds for annual thank you
 - v. Calendar of opportunities
 - vi. Virtual volunteer engagement
 - c. Volunteer Fair – on campus and virtual
 - d. Thank you processes
 - e. Volunteer visibility across publications and communications

Addendum

Volunteer Survey

Campus Department Questionnaire

Sample Communication

Alumni Volunteer Interest Form

Ways to Celebrate Volunteers

Job Description

Volunteer Survey

(in person with selected volunteers at events listed previously)

What is the one thing you would like to do for CC?

How have you volunteered for CC?

What was your most impactful experience and why?

How could your CC volunteer experience be enhanced?

Have you been thanked? How would you like to be thanked?

Questionnaire to CC Departments

(sent via email to Department Chairs and their Staff or Office Assistants)

In an effort to gain information on current practices and existing possibilities for utilizing alumni and retired faculty and staff volunteers, we are sending this questionnaire to all department chairs and their administrative staff. Please work together to complete the questionnaire and return it to by

1. Do you currently utilize volunteers in your department's work? If yes, please describe.
2. If you don't already utilize volunteers, do you foresee ways in which you could if there was a pool of interested alumni and retirees?
3. If you are currently utilizing volunteers,
 - A. How do you recognize, appreciate or remunerate your volunteers?
 - B. What technology do you use to track your volunteers?
 - C. How do you recruit your volunteers?

Sample note from the President to the campus about the importance of optimizing our volunteer network

As we move forward and seek opportunities for growth and innovation at CC, we should remember that there is much value in external as well as historical perspective. As a Colorado College community, we possess a valuable asset in our alumni and retirees, many of whom feel a strong commitment to our success and would like to be asked to invest in CC's mission to be the finest liberal arts college in the country. Their valuable and diverse experience, expertise, opinions, ideas as well as institutional knowledge can be of great use during block projects, half blocks, block breaks, department reviews and creation of new initiatives. I encourage you to include relevant representatives from our alumni, retired staff and faculty whenever possible and appropriate, and seek to utilize these valued members of our knowledge community.

Possible ways to consider utilizing alumni and retiree volunteers:

- Connecting with alumni during off campus blocks to host a student dinner or networking opportunity with local alumni
- Inviting a faculty emeritus, alumni or parent to guest lecture in their area of expertise
- Engaging retired faculty or staff to serve on your department's internal or external review committee, or to sit in on a visioning workshop for your division.
- Including alumni and retirees to serve on special projects including block projects

Thank you for responding to the departmental questionnaire. We are assessing how and when volunteers are utilized and how to better optimize this valuable resource.

Volunteer Interest Form (Sample)

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____
(if applicable)

Check all that apply:

- Alumnus/na
- CC Faculty/Staff
- CC Faculty/Staff – Retired
- CC Student
- CC Parent/Family
- CC Friend

Preferred Class Year: _____
(if applicable)

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____
(Where you would like to be contacted?)

Phone number is for:

- Home
- Business
- Cell Phone

Address: _____
(street address, city, state, zip code)

.....

.....

INTEREST AREAS

Please check below any volunteer areas that may be of interest to you.

I would be interested in hosting an alumni event at my home, club or other venue.

- Yes
- No

I would like to serve on a Homecoming reunion committee.

- Yes
- No

I would be interested in serving as an alumni ambassador for a regional chapter and helping the Alumni Office to organize/plan events in my area.

Yes

No

I would be comfortable with and/or interested in asking for gifts from CC alumni, parents, and/or friends.

Yes

No

I would be interested in coming back to Colorado College to assist with events.
(ex. athletic events, homecoming, etc.)

Yes

No

If 'yes,' I am available for...

Day of - Event Support

Week of - Event Preparation

Event Planning

I would be interested in helping the Admission office ...

(Can check more than one)

By participating as an Alumni Admissions Volunteer program and...

Interviewing prospective students (in person and via skype).

Attending college fairs in my region.

Hosting or attending admitted student receptions.

I would be interested in helping the Career Center...

(Can check more than one)

By hiring Colorado College students as paid interns/full-time jobs.

By registering online for OurCC Connections, a searchable database of Colorado College alumni and parents who have volunteered to be a resource to students and fellow alumni about careers and career networking.

I would be interested in helping the Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP)...

(Can check more than one)

By interviewing PIFP student candidates in early February each year.

By mentoring students. This is a yearlong commitment from June to June each year.

*Note: it is very helpful if volunteers have familiarity with the nonprofit sector.

Please select your top two reasons for volunteering.

-
- ___ Give back to CC
 - ___ Give back to the community
 - ___ Share a specific skill
 - ___ Professional networking
 - ___ Meet new people
 - ___ Try something new
 - ___ Institutional knowledge sharing

Please provide any feedback or areas of volunteer interest below.

Ways to Celebrate Volunteers

The premise is that most people like to be valued for their contribution and like to know that it is appreciated and acknowledged by the college and their peers. Additionally, everyone likes to be asked for their advice and wisdom! In addition to the data gathered by the surveys interviewing existing volunteers, below is a partial list of ways to thank volunteers:

Thank you notes

From the President (prepared by appropriate department)

Event hosts

Faculty/retirees volunteers

Alumni who visit/teach a class or lecture on or off campus for CC

Regional Volunteers (end of year)

Reunion Committee Chairs including specific numbers

Class Agents (if applicable) including class numbers

Admissions volunteers (annual with report)

Blog post with link to an annual honor roll volunteer list

Recognition by AAB

Post all volunteers on an honor roll on the web page

Bulletin

Class Notes in appropriate class: "John Smith '82 hosted a new student..." including alumni who attended.

One feature box per issue with an outstanding volunteer (selected by Alumni Director)

CC Facebook Page

Post events with a shout out to volunteer organizer (they can add to their timeline)

Post alumni who teach in the classroom or shared wisdom with students

Alumni Web Page

Honor Roll of volunteers

Career Center and other stories of participating alumni

Homecoming celebration

Reception at Tutt Alumni House or Stewart House where the President can thank all who have volunteered in the past year. Send to all volunteers, regardless of reunion year.

Volunteer Coordinator Position

Responsibilities:

- Establish a cohesive and structured Volunteer Program at Colorado College
- Recruit and engage volunteers from alumni, parent and retiree populations
- Act as the main contact for any volunteer questions
- Assist faculty with study abroad classes with finding and utilizing volunteers that live in the area the class is being taught
- Assist with bringing volunteers to campus for all departments
- Respond to any volunteers that would like to offer their services; coordinate communication with any office that the volunteer would be a good match for
- Research a variety of ways volunteers can be utilized on campus and internationally, for example: classes, half block, summer session, presentations, mentoring, programs, engagement, admission, fundraising, networking, career planning, homecoming, block break activities, represent the President at various events etc.
- Create and maintain Volunteer Office website and social media platforms
- Organize and run volunteer forum twice a year
- Create a calendar of events and coordinate volunteers for each event
- Brainstorm ideas on how to recruit more volunteers
- Review survey results and initiate a plan to implement suggestions
- Organize recognition reception
 - Organize Volunteer Advisory Council
- Recruit campus volunteers, organize meetings as needed
 - Spearhead database cleanup with how volunteers are coded in Banner
 - Create or simplify new system on how volunteers are coded
- Coordinate with Human Resources in creating, collecting and maintaining all Volunteer Interest Forms
- Train campus users on how to find volunteers in Banner with the new codes
- Track all volunteer engagement
 - Act as the main communications expert for any volunteer project
- Coordinate with the College Communications Office for print, email, social media and web communications
- Elicit stories from volunteers for recruiting purposes to be used in a variety of ways: Bulletin, web, social media
 - Design recognition program to honor any and all volunteers
 - Conduct and analyze surveys to multiple populations about volunteer needs and desires: CC faculty and staff, CC administration, alumni, retired faculty and staff

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree

-
- 3-5 years experience

Reporting Structure:

- This position will report to the President's Office, however strong connections will be with the Advancement Division and Alumni Office.