CC Virtual Information Session: Updates for First-Year Students and Families

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Mike Edmonds: My name is Mike Edmonds, and I am acting co-president of Colorado College. In my Opening Convocation remarks, I quoted James Baldwin, author, playwright, and activist, and mentioned in those remarks his quotes about facing challenges. To our new students and to our new families, your entry to Colorado College certainly has been a challenge. I want to acknowledge that these times have been very difficult on you. I want to thank you for everything that you’ve done and everything that you are doing.

I also want to reassure you that Colorado College is working very hard, and we are looking forward to the time that we can have you all on campus to experience the beauty of our campus, just not the physical beauty, but the beauty of our people. This is a wonderful place. We are glad that you are part of our community. We want you to feel part of our community. We want you to experience the excitement, joy, and potential that comes with being part of the Colorado College community.

I am thankful for your feedback, your observations, your thoughts, and your involvement as we move to create the path forward. Thank you so much for being with us this afternoon.

I now want to introduce Brian Young, our vice president for information technology, who has been heading the College’s COVID-19 work.

Brian Young: Thanks, President Edmonds. Hello, everybody. As Mike mentioned, I am Brian Young, vice president for IT and one of the members of our COVID Preparedness team.

We have a lot of people on our panel today, and I will hold the introductions because I don’t want to take away from the important element here, which is the focus on you, our students and our parents of first-year students. So I will ask our panelists to introduce themselves as they potentially get questions.
Before we jump into the questions, I just wanted to sort of give everybody here, our students and our parents, a sense of sort of where we are and where we’ve been and then what we are going to do moving forward, some of the questions that have come in around what got us to this point.

So let me first just say I am sorry that this has not been the CC experience and especially the first-year experience that any of us would want. It’s important to note that the planning efforts, the tremendous amount of time and energy that the campus community has put into our protocols and our procedures still remain strong. And we knew going into this that COVID would be a disrupter, not only to CC at times, but higher ed across the landscape, and indeed, that has been the case.

I wanted to also assure everyone out there that besides the work that’s done around our academic rigor and our quality, that something else remains paramount, and that is that we are always focused on the safety and well-being of your son, your daughter, all of our students. In fact, all of our campus community, faculty and staff. And when I talk about community, that community also extends to our locality, Colorado Springs, as well as the county in which we live, El Paso County. And I think many of you know that in these times, certainly County Health, which we work to closely, county healths across this country have brought authority and even more so in a pandemic, authority to limit services, authority to quarantine, authority to close businesses. And some of which we’ve experienced. And we certainly didn’t want to experience any ongoing large rolling quarantines on any of our student population.

So to that end, I wanted to share with this group some of the concrete efforts that we are taking here on this campus so that we can get more students back to experience the CC environment with the eventual goal of getting all students back in a safe way.

So number one, we are ongoing having weekly meetings with our local and county health professionals to make sure that CC can always understand the changing landscape and/or changing guidance and that we can swiftly adapt to those measures.

Number two, we had a second county walk-through, which many of our panelists, including our presidents, were a part of, the other day with a number of county health officials to make sure that they understood our strong procedures, our strong protocols in both our residential facilities as well as our other campus buildings, such as library, our Warner Center, and our academics facilities.
Brian Y.: We have and are adapting newer and faster and reliable testing strategies that we will employ here on campus, and enhancing that strategy will not only enhance our already strong testing protocols, but will allow us to provide for much faster turnaround times, which enhance our ability to also have contact tracing efforts.

Number four is that we are working with our CC science team and our local county health professionals on new additional strategies in terms of testing. CC most recently was able to get our hands on a number of kits that will allow us to start doing wastewater testing along with our health professionals and along with our county professionals that will just enhance the amount and types of testing that we have available on campus. All of these help catch and mitigate the spread of COVID.

And then fifth and lastly, really developing some additional cohort and living models that will help us continue to de-densify our campus spaces and reduce the need for shared common spaces.

And so these elements, along with a number of other things that we continue to encourage, such as the hand washing, mask wearing, social distancing, our new relationship with an ongoing partnership with our county health professionals, all of these are in this growing effort that we continue to get students back to campus, in the effort to have a full campus experience in this academic year.

So with that being said, I know there are a number of questions and a number of areas that we would like to address in our student life environment, in housing, potentially in billing and food, and so I want us to be able to get to those. Again, this focus was about you and our efforts and our additional things that we are doing to try to make campus safe as we get students back.

So I am going to turn it over to our acting dean of students and vice president of student life, Dean Rochelle Dickey, to talk through a number of things that Student Life and the Residential Experience is doing and to answer some of the questions you had previously sent in. I appreciate that there’s a number of questions that are out there. Please know we will try to get to all of them, but due to the numbers, we probably won’t. But we’ll try to get them answered in later times in our Q&A.

Dean Dickey?
Thank you so much, Vice President Young. Hello to our first-year students and families. As Vice President Young mentioned, I am Rochelle Dickey, she/her/hers. I am acting dean of students and acting vice president for student life. I am parent of an a Colorado College graduate. Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon, and we are really excited to share with you some of the programming and support that hopefully many of you have already experienced in your time here on campus. Students are experience remotely. So whether here in person or remote, there’s wonderful support systems and programs that we are continuing to offer for our students, so I am really happy to be able to share some of those with you.

And I also just want to stop for a moment and add my thanks to you, as students. As we all acknowledge, it’s been a challenging start to the school year, but I am really grateful that so many of you have taken time to reach out and share how you are turning challenges into opportunities and really starting to feel a sense of connection to Colorado College. We are grateful for that, and we want to do whatever we can to again have that engagement and help you continue to develop that connection to CC.

And we want to you have fun. That’s something that we really haven’t taken much time to acknowledge, that having fun is part of the Colorado College experience as well. So let me talk a little bit about activities and programing and support.

Many of you had the chance to experience virtual campus activities night that just took place September 1 through 3. I hope you enjoyed getting a chance to meet and engage with over 60 of our student groups and organizations here on campus. Again, these groups are up and running and will continue virtually and in person as well. So hopefully you enjoyed Campus activities night.

Evening and weekend social programming. So there’s a great list of things that I got from our director of campus activities and student organization, and student own yentation, that’s Amy Hill. A number of things that not only her office is planning, but all of those student groups and organizations I mentioned as well. Those include NetFlix parties, online mixers, escape rooms, comedy shows, magic shows, trivia night, salsa party, musical bingo, and the list goes on and on. Students also take away events. So once a week students can come to Warner to pick up activity kits and take back to their rooms, including paint by number, yoga mats, clay kits, a lot of things going on as well. Also we want to acknowledge our wonderful residential experience staff, so certainly our residential life coordinators and our RAs continue to offer programming and support to students, again, whether here on campus or remotely.
Rochelle D.: Our Outdoor Education Department continues to offer robust programming for students as well. Definitely exploring students being able to do some type of in-person pretty trips, some virtual pretty things coming up later in the year as well because we know you miss that during orientation. So in the meantime, workshops. We’ve heard that the virtual bike maintenance workshop was attended by a lot of first-year students, and we hope you enjoyed that. Block break programming will continue to happen. Virtual, small-scale in-person takeaway activities. So that’s part of the fun part.

Now I’d like to talk a little bit again about engagement and support for you and for all of our students. So emotional and mental health is certainly a priority for us here at Colorado College, just as much as your physical safety as well, and we know that it’s important for you, as our students and families. So we also continue to offer the support through various offices of the college. We are here. We are open for business, in person, and virtually. So there’s a group variety offered for you as well. So I’d like to share some of those with you. Our arts and crafts program, which some of you wrote and told me you experienced already. The Career Center is really excited to offer a signature series for students. It’s called 5 under 25, and that’s featuring 5 of our wonderful alumni under the age of 25, so be on the lookout for that. The Butler Center, hosting events and workshops including the first generation program, for those of you who are perhaps the first in your families to have the opportunity to attend a four-year undergraduate university, so very strong first Gen program. I was a first Gen student here at Colorado College here myself, and I really enjoy meeting students through that program. Butler Center also offers the masculinity Project to name just a few.

I wanted you to know the Butler Center is headed by Rosalie Rodriguez. She is one of our new senior associate deans for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and they all came on board recently as part of the college’s ongoing anti-racism initiatives.

Student Health and Well-being is an organization or an office, I should say here on campus that encompasses Wellness Resource Center, sexual assault response coordinator, Counseling Center, Health Center, chaplains, and also our Native American, Indigenous, and Elder Residence. We do offer six free counseling sessions to all of our students, and if you need more than six, please don’t worry. Cost won’t be a factor. We will cover that for you. We just want you to be able to take advantage of that resource.

For those of you who unfortunately are still experiencing quarantine or isolation, I know the question has come up about having privacy to perhaps be able to engage in utilizing support services.
Rochelle D.: Please check with your RLC if you are over in Mathias in south, and certainly there are private spaces set aside for you, if you’ve got a roommate and you need to be able to go to a private space to engage with our services.

I also want to mention competitive communications program to you. That includes speech and debate. There’s mock trial, model United Nations, and even if you are not interested in competition, a lot of students are still finding that to be a wonderfully supportive and welcoming space. They even started a virtual speech and debate camp for local high school students. So the Advising Hub is certainly available to all of our students.

So that’s a long list. As you can see, there’s a lot that we offer and continue to offer for all of our students and just encourage you to take advantage of that. Our folks are here and excite today serve you, happy to have you as first-years. Again, whether you are going to be staying with us or remotely, please take advantage and engage in all that we have to offer here at Colorado College.

And with that, I want to turn it over to my colleague, Lesley Irvine. She is our vice president and director of athletics, and she’s also got some more information about support for you as first-year students. Thank you.

Lesley Irvine: Thank you, Rochelle, and to echo people’s comments, so happy to spend some time with our first-year students, families, and friends. And happy to have the opportunity to really talk about how hard we are working here to make this an exceptional experience as we can for our students, which is what we strive to do here at Colorado College.

So to build on Rochelle’s discussion, within my own division, we have athletics, but also oversee recreational opportunities. So briefly to emphasize that, for those who are able in person, we have — access to the gym will continue to be open, has been open, can be reserved, and we direct people to our fitness website for that.

We also have a full-time person in the gym. His name is Wes Kosel, and you can set up an online appointment with him, and he can help design workouts. We also have a very robust virtual resource link on our website to obviously encourage our students to stay active and stay fit.

Other things to think about in terms of our student athletes specifically, so student athletes who happen to be able to remain on campus will continue to have access to practice and to the weight room. Obviously, following NCA safety guidelines and doing that in a safe way. Obviously, beyond that, for students who aren’t able to do that in person, we have a robust group of coaches who, on a daily basis, remain focused on engaging those teams and programs.
Lesley I.: So we really see ourselves as providers to ensure that our students, wherever they happen to be, in person or virtually, can stay healthy, can get their work done, and please don’t hesitate to reach out to us if we can help with those resources.

Edwin Hamada: Hello, everyone, my name is Edwin Hamada, assistant vice president for the residential experience. There’s been a couple of questions. We will have a housing information session tomorrow at 12:30, but there’s a couple of points I want to hit on today and allow more time for other questions from our panelists.

One deadline we have coming up. For those folks who have been offered or have received an exception to live on campus or continue to live on campus, we will need to know if you are accepting that and continuing to live on campus or if you are declining that option. That deadline is Monday, September 14, at noon. We need to get that information in order to have other processes in place in order to allow us to different types of bid work and items like that.

Additionally, as was announced last week, there is a temporary removal for the three-year live-in requirement. So for this academic year, students will – freshmen, sophomore, and junior students are allowed to live off campus. So that requirement is – has been lifted just for this year. An announcement or decision will be made in the future if that is extended, but that is only for this academic year only. And again, kind of going back to the housing deadline, the reason why we are needing to know that deadline is because there are different options out there for those folks that have been receiving that exception to potentially not accept on-campus housing but move off campus with that.

I believe Dean Dickey provided a lot of options out there for support systems for our students that are living – or off-campus students. Different resources that are available to all students that the university has. I know that our colleagues here at Colorado College are working on a guide to help off-campus students to navigate what that looks like because it is new to enema of you coming up. So that resource is being worked on and will be shared broadly once that is complete. But that is something that we are very aware of as a concern, and we want to be sure that we are able to assist as much as we can and done in an organized fashion with that. So those are – again, I want to articulate we have a housing-specific information session tomorrow, and so a lot more detailed housing questions will be directed then.

So with that, I will hand it off to some of my other colleagues, whoever is next.
Brian Y.: Thanks, Edwin. Thanks, Rochelle. Thanks, everybody.

A lot of questions around the idea of tuition and billing and some of the other financial components, and so Lori and Shannon?

Lori Seager: Thanks, Brian. My name is Lori Seager. I am pleased to serve as the associate vice president for finance at Colorado College. And I’ve joined today to just provide some context around financial questions you may have regarding your student’s move off campus or decisions that you are making about housing in the area at this point.

One of the recurring themes that we have seen in questions that have come our way has to do with how we are charging tuition. I wanted to just remind those that are on the call with us today that knowing some of the things we would be facing going into this year, the College leadership decided to extend the year and provide flexibility to students in their ability to enroll remotely, in hybrid-type courses, or courses with in-person components to them and allow them to enroll in ten blocks as opposed to the eight that we would normally have in an academic year. So with that obviously comes the flexibility and the remaining quality that Colorado College offers in its education.

In accordance with that, at this point, there really is no difference in the charging structure that we have for courses, regardless of whether they are online, have a hybrid component, or have an in-person element to them. As you will recall, we will be charging for the first three blocks, then one block will be free, then the next three blocks will each have their own corresponding charge per block, and then three additional blocks could be taken for free.

Another question we received, especially with the recent announcement regarding Block 2, is related to refunds. Your student may be moving off campus for housing and maybe either staying in the area or going home or to another area of the country, and certainly concerning to know when those housing refunds may be issued. Many of the students may be using the refund towards housing they are securing in the area. So I just wanted to let you know that we are working very hard to finalize our lists of those students that are approved to either stay on campus if they are already on campus or to come on beginning with Block 2 so that we can appropriately credit students’ accounts for housing charges that they may not be incurring. So essentially what will happen is those individuals that are going to be moving off campus or not in the approved group of students to stay on or come and conduct their in-person classes with us, we will remove all housing and meal plan charges that have not been essentially incurred for the year.
So what that will look like for those that are on campus right now that lived in South Mathias or Loomis and were quarantined, they will not pay for their housing for that block. And all of the remaining charges for the year would be removed.

For meal plan charges, we will remove charges that do not correspond to meals that they've already consumed, essentially. In addition, there is also an infrastructure fee, and we will prorate that to the one block that students have been on campus.

So if your student has not set foot on campus whatsoever, all fall and spring charges will be removed from their account. And then when we determine what will happen for the spring and spring housing assignments are shared, then we would place corresponding charges on a student’s account.

I am going to introduce my colleague, Shannon, because she has some things to say about the financial aid components of the finances.

Hi, everybody. My name is Shannon Amundson. I am the director of financial aid here at CC.

So in a general sense, broad overview, students have until Monday to get a full refund for their tuition. If they choose to drop their course by the extended drop date of Monday, they will not be charged tuition for that course. They also will not receive financial aid for that course. No charge, no transcript. If they choose to take a gap year or anything like that. I believe Vice Provost Pedro will be talking about academic plans. I know there’s been a lot of conversation around those.

For students who choose who have not been invited to stay on campus and choose to move here in the spring into a private sort of situation, their financial aid will not change. We will be asking students to upload their lease to us so that we can see that they are living here in the Springs, and we will be sending an email out before the close of business today to every student who receives financial aid here at Colorado College giving them a link to do that. It’s three questions and an upload. Hopefully we are trying to make that as painless as possible for students. And so we will need them to upload their lease if they are choosing to stay in the Springs.
Shannon A.: And then it will either – when we get that notification from Housing that your student has moved off and we have the lease from the student showing that they are living here in the Springs, we will, you know, adjust bills, leave aid, and it will either reduce the amount that you owe Colorado College, allowing you to help supplement the student off campus, or, if you have financial aid that’s over tuition, you would be receiving – the student would be receiving a refund back to help pay for those expenses off campus.

We anticipate getting a list from Housing next week of who those students are that are moving off campus here, so we are hoping by October 1 to be able to issue refunds to students. So you kind of have a timeline of what that looks like for us. I do see a lot of questions on work study and student employment here on campus. Any student who is living in the State of Colorado, whether that’s off campus or on campus, is going to be able to work either on campus or remotely for a job here at Colorado College. We still encourage students to be applying for jobs, you know, talking to professors, doing that networking. There’s many other benefits on top of just getting paid to student employment for our students. So anybody who can work, we highly encourage that they should if they are still here in Colorado Springs or in the State of Colorado.

If your student is returning home and will be living outside the State of Colorado, they will not be able to work. We understand that. Colorado College is going to supplement half of the fall work study award with grant, and that will be credited toward their student account, the same as any other grant. It will either reduce what you owe if your student – if you are on a payment plan, or it will create a refund, and it will be part of those refunds that happen at the end of this month. So we are going to be doing that once we get the list of students who have left campus and who do not submit their lease to us to keep their financial aid for living here in the Springs.

So those are the things that we are actively working on on our side. We know that there’s a lot of questions around that. Other than uploading the lease, there is nothing your student needs to do. I would like to say if you reach out to our office, if you have individualized questions based on your student’s account, it is, unfortunately or fortunately, very hard to talk about specific situations in a town hall situation. These are great for general questions, but not necessarily for how will this affect my student. So if you’d like to reach out to our office, we are current on email. We are not behind. So we will get back to you ASAP. And let us know what your student’s plan is. Are they returning home? Are they staying here in the Springs in a private rental? Are they staying on campus? Are they taking time off?
Shannon A.: Are they taking a couple blocks and not take their courses after they finish their 120? Whatever that plan is, give us as much information as we can, and we would be happy to look at your student-specific information and break down what that would look like. So don’t hesitate to reach out to us. We very much prefer to give you that information as quickly as we can.

I think I am going now to Pedro. So I will let them talk about the academic plan from here.

Pedro de Araujo: Thank you, Shannon. I really appreciate it. Thanks, everyone, for joining us. We – I have been receiving some questions about academics and academic planning for first-year students, and as much as I kind of hinted at that last week, I understand this audience is perhaps a little bit different. So if I am repeating myself from last week, I apologize, but I think that for most of you, this is probably – may be new information.

So there’s a couple questions regarding first-year students and exactly the timeline to which they have to request a gap year versus a personal leave versus a medical leave and things of that nature. So I am going to try to explain that in terms of a timeline so it makes some sense for folks that are thinking about that.

So we’ve extended – so right now your student is enrolled in Block 1. Right? And your student has until next Monday to decide to stay in the course or drop the course. If the student decides to drop the course and does not want to continue to stay at Colorado College for the semester, that student needs to work with the Admissions Office and request either a gap semester or a gap year. So those are for all students that are enrolled in Block 1 and decide that they want to drop Block 1 by next Monday.

For students that want to continue, which is strongly encouraged, and I will explain why in a minute – for students that want to continue and finish Block 1 and potentially Block 2, after Monday, after the drop deadline, then the only way for this student to be able to take some time off would be to schedule an appointment with our Advising Hub and request a personal leave. And a personal leave could be for two blocks, could be for the semester, it could be for the year. Those would be processed internally. So the difference really would be that when your student completes Block 1, your student is a student at Colorado College and, therefore, in order for that student to take some time off, the student needs to go through Student Support and not Admissions and request for a leave for the semester or for the year.
Pedro de A.: The reason why it's very important if your student's thinking about that option for that student to complete CC 100 and CC 120, the first two blocks, is that when the student returns from a leave, a semester or year, that student will no longer have to take the first-year program courses and could start taking classes towards the major, classes towards some general education requirements, and so forth. So it gives the student a lot of flexibility, right, as the student's planning coming back to Colorado College, either by Block J, by Block 5, or the following year; right? If that makes sense. So I have been receiving quite a few questions about that. Hopefully this clarifies.

The other piece that I also want to touch base on is there are some questions about online courses versus in-person courses versus hybrid and so forth. Right? Of course in terms of the delivery format, no one is going to say that an in-person course is the same as an online course. However, if you start to measure courses in terms of the format is different but the quality of that instruction could be very similar. In fact, the College put a lot of resources this summer to faculty development in trying, in getting faculty to really think about more strategically in terms of how they would deliver the content of the course when it's online. I am going to be honest with you, I am a faculty member, so I teach in the Economics Department, and to plan an online course, a robust online course, it requires probably three, four, five times more than if you are doing an in-person course, and our faculty really, really have put a lot of time in doing this. So I encourage students, if there is this bias against online courses, right, that students perhaps give it a shot. And take classes even in that format. If online ends up – remote learning ends up not being for you, you have the option to take a personal leave. But we’ve done all that we could in terms of support, in terms of training to make sure that these classes are as robust and as quality as possible. And I believe that from feedback I’ve been receiving from some students that it’s actually happening right now.

And then I just want to remind everyone, right, that given our new calendar, we have – right now we are offering – if you think of our calendar as a 12-block year, starting in Block 1, so Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, then Block J; 5, 6, 7, 8; then A, B, and C in the summer, you have 12 blocks, and that's your window. Within this window, you can take 10 out of the 12 for our full tuition. What that means is if your student takes CC 100 and CC 120 and wants to then take a leave for the semester and come back, let's say, in Block J or 5, your student can still finish the academic year with 8 or more units in terms of academic progression. Right? So it's very important for your student to be connected with your faculty advisor, with your staff advisor, to make that plan for the entire year. The nice thing about all of this is that there is – students are not registered for the spring semester yet.
Pedro de A.: So students will be registered for the – registering for the spring semester, and that's Block 5, 6, 7, and 8, towards the end of the fall. So towards the end of Block 3, the beginning of Block 4. So there is time between now and then for all of your students to be in contact with your – with their advisors to plan, even if the student is no longer here for the semester, to plan for that spring semester in the summer in order to finish the academic year pretty much where they would have been in they were here in the fall.

Brian, I think I have covered most of the questions here. I don’t know if there's anything else that you would like to ask me.

Brian Y.: Great. Thank you, Pedro.

I think I'll turn this over to our vice president for enrollment, who many of you know, Mark Hatch, to discuss a few things, and then we will turn this into a Q&A as well to try to get some of the specifics that have shown up in the Chat or previously came in through email. Mark?

Mark Hatch: Thanks, Brian, and yes, I am the last speaker before we go to Q&A.

As the vice president for enrollment, I have been here 20 years overseeing admissions and financial aid, and I want to acknowledge first and foremost what co-president Mike Edmonds said at the beginning. This is not the living/learning experience that we anticipated last spring, last winter, when your students and students committed to Colorado College. For that, we are sorry. We are working very hard to engage students and parents, both in the academic arena and also the co-curricular, extracurricular, residential life arena, as you’ve heard from Acting Vice President Rochelle Dickey and also Vice Provost Pedro.

So as we moved forward, and Pedro did mention the gap year, gap semester request process. Just a reminder that students have until Monday to request a gap semester or a gap year, a semester off or a year off. As Pedro indicated, we strongly encourage students to continue with CC 100 and continue with CC 120. That gives us and you greater flexibility when students can come back to campus. We do have some seats available for our January start program, our winter start program, for both CC 100 and 120. Yet they are limited, and we also do not know if those will be in person or remote. Exclusively for students on campus or off campus. Again, we are beginning to plan for January and the summer, but there are still quite a few details we need to determine and iron out before we can announce any plans for the spring or summer.
Mark H.: For some students have asked can they take a gap semester, and depending on our decision later on, can they switch to a gap year? And yes, we will allow students to do that. Yet we don’t yet know the plans for the spring or the summer.

Finally, I just want to reiterate that we are here to support all of you. A number of different offices and resources. We certainly want to hear your questions. There are quite a few that have come in through the Chat box. Now I am going to turn it back over to Brian Young. Brian, I think you’ve got a synopsis of some of the questions that have been entered in this session. Thank you.

Brian Y.: I do. Thanks, Mark. Appreciate your comments.

And I’ll take a few that have come in. There are a few questions from some of you when I was talking about my remarks and our concrete steps we are taking as we move forward. We want to bring more students back to campus. We are doing that. Our goal is to bring as many students back safely as we can. Hopefully we can bring all of our students back.

Continuing to work with our partners in County Health. Many of you have asked questions, why do we rely so heavily on County Health? Why don’t we rely on the CDC?

Why are the recommendations from County Health so strong? So let me just share, as I mentioned, county health authorities across this country have a broad responsibility and broad authorities. And so although we certainly do listen to the CDC, it’s our county, local county health providers and our partners that have the ability and the authority to limit certain things. They have the ability to quarantine. They have the ability to close businesses. And so we need to have a strong partnership with them. We are having that, an ongoing dialogue so we can avoid what we knew to be coming in terms of larger numbers of large quarantines. I believe our relationship and our ongoing partnership, our weekly dialogues, continuing to show them our science, our strong protocols, our data, as well as our testing procedures and our new, elevated testing options that we are putting into place give us strong confidence that we can safely bring back students and avoid these larger rolling quarantines.

Our relationship is strong. The partnership is good. Our ongoing dialogues are good so that we can understand the guidance as it changes from a local and county perspective. So hopefully that answers to some of you the questions that you had about county health.
Brian Y.: There were a couple of questions in there that I know my colleague, Lesley Irvine, can also help answer about would we be allowing access to facilities for those that live off campus? And it’s something we are aggressively and actively working on. Lesley, I will let you share sort of what our thinking is.

Lesley I.: Yeah, I think we are being thoughtful. Obviously, a lot of the questions are -- and we understand that people are also waiting to make some decisions around this. So we are looking thoughtfully at how can we continue to serve our students who remain in the community in ways or restricted ways that can speak to their interests and needs. So Brian and I, actually, we have a meeting this afternoon to really work with those people who would put those things into operation to make sure those things can be managed, but we do see that as critically important as we continue to support our students.

Brian Y.: Thanks, Lesley.

A couple of questions in the Chat box as well that have asked to sort of talk about, again, our testing protocols and procedures. We, as I mentioned, we have a – thanks to a number of parents, we have some access to some additional rapid testing that we are looking to stand up in relative short order that will provide the same type of sensitivity and reliability that our PCR testing has. We will continue with our partners in health, UC Health, to provide PCR testing. We will also be utilizing our new rapid Abbott test as well in terms of faster turnaround time.

We continue to make sure that any student, any faculty, any staff member that has any symptom can easily get a test. We have a dedicated line and a phone and a nurse triage line with our partners in health that’s dedicated to CC. We also continue to do an aggressive random sampling of all of our students, including those off campus, at a right of 33% weekly. We will continue to shift that as we get more feedback from our science advisory group as well as our epidemiology team that we have partnered with. And so again, with the rapid testing availability, we’ll help campus be able to continue to bring students back safely and a more rapid turnaround time for the COVID tests.

Could I ask Pedro if you could – a couple of questions, if you could reiterate – you’ve mentioned this before in other Zooms. Could you talk a little bit about, just so moms and dads and our students out there understand that as we bring students back for Block 2, the academic protocol around how we got those?

Pedro de A.: Yes, thanks for reminding me of that. I guess it was in my bullets I didn’t mention.
Colorado College, the intention was by Block 2 was to have all students back on campus. And we realized that that was not going to be possible throw Block 1 with the rolling quarantines and so forth. So we had to pivot on that plan and figure out what would be a density that’s acceptable for us to come to campus and how, then, we would make this decision or who would be on campus and who would not.

So after some conversations, we started with an academic criteria. So we were looking at students’ schedule, and we allowed students that were registered for in-person classes in either Blocks 2, 3, or 4 to be invited back to campus, or if a student was registered for a hybrid class that was lab designated, so what that means is that it’s a course that has a lab component that satisfies a general education requirement, but those students would be allowed to come back to campus as well, plus some students that were taking some specialized art classes. This was really the academic bucket or criteria for students to be invited back on campus, and those were the students that received an email from me and Dean Dickey last Friday.

There are also other buckets that are being utilized, right, to invite students back on campus. There were some international students already living on campus or in route to campus were invited back as well. Some students experiencing hardships, our Bridge scholars, our RAs, and our Division 1 hockey program. So those were the buckets that we allowed students back this fall.

When you add that up, in terms of density repopulating the campus, is still below 50% of our student body, which is what we wanted to target in the first place.

Several questions in our chat relating to our student housing, and I just want to remind everybody that our colleagues will be doing a session on student housing and be providing very specifics. Several questions in here that are wanting those specifics, so we anticipated that. We hear you loud and clear. Please chime in to that because we hope to be able to answer many of those questions.

A couple of questions I was seeing, Lori, and Shannon, if you could just reiterate for us about room and board credits.

Lori S.:  Happy to do that, Brian.
Lori S.: As Shannon had shared, we really have -- are waiting to understand the full population of where students will be living. We mentioned this September 14 deadline for responding to the invitation to either stay on or come to campus and live on campus. That information is needed in order to then process credits to accounts that could result in refunds. So indeed, those will be processed, as Shannon mentioned, our intent is to process them well before the October 1 date that she mentioned. But every situation is very unique, and so -- and I don’t want to speak to any individual specific situations, but indeed, if a student has not been on campus in the fall, all the housing and meal plan, of course, will be credited back to that student’s account, as well as any spring housing and meal plan until plans are known for the spring and housing assignments might be made.

And then from there as well, I believe I saw one question related to the comment I made relating to Loomis South and Mathias and the quarantines. There had been some information shared by our co-presidents last week related to anybody assigned to those housing facilities and caught up in the quarantines that happened in this first block would not be paying for their housing in that facility for Block 1.

Were there other specifics, Brian, that would be important to mention?

Brian Y.: Thank you, Lori. I think that hit on the few that I saw.

I may chime in here with Dean Dickey and Pedro, a few questions in here to merge together to talk about when will the rest of the first-year students hopefully be notified about being able to come back to campus? And as before the two of them also chime in, I just want to remind everybody that the campus team has been working very hard, working in partnership with our county health, to make sure that as we bring students back safely, that we can continue to add to our population and also de-densify in our residential and common spaces. So as I mentioned in my remarks, our goal is to bring students back and to bring as many students back as safely as we can we want everyone to try to have a CC experience, even in this COVID time, and I assure you that some of the steps we’ve talked about today and some of the ongoing steps and ongoing relationships that we’ll have are getting us to do just that. Rochelle or Pedro, any other thoughts you have about continuing to get students back to CC?

Rochelle D.: Certainly. And thanks for, again, emphasizing that it’s our desire to be able to do that safely and responsibly. Thank you for mentioning as well, Brian, and some students have also emailed us, again, about examining cohort, pod, cluster living, whatever we want to call it. Just to reiterate, we are definitely looking at doing that.
Rochelle D.: Again, anything we can to avoid, again, rolling all hall quarantines, with the thought that if students are clustered together in social and living groups, knowing that the virus transmits very easily amongst all people, but sometimes we see it clustered together in friend groups or people who are socializing with each other. So of course, the thought behind that is if we can organize housing and around those types of social networks, that if there is a need for quarantine, perhaps it’s then restricted more to clusters or pods of students, and again, not all hall. So we continue to think about that autosing our expertise, as you mentioned, our partners at El Paso County Health. Some of our faculty experts here on campus and social networking, so we are starting to think about that with an eye towards instituting that come, I think, the spring, and Edwin, if you have anything else to add to that, that’s great.

While I’ve got the floor, again, I know Edwin and his team are doing the housing tomorrow, but a ton of questions about how students accept invitations, so Pedro, as you mentioned, students have been invited to stay for academic or other groups of students. Emailing Housing, Edwin, is that the best? Because what you and your team need to know, Edwin, is how many students are accepting the invitation for housing to be able to count those numbers. So whatever other details you have, and I know we’ll get more of that tomorrow as well. Thanks.

Edwin H.: Yeah, we are working on communication for those folks that are not on today’s session, and so we’ll work on getting that information out quickly because we have confirmed a day. Housing is the email to – that our assignment folks will be checking and have been checking, so that’s probably the most direct route to provide that information. But we will get some additional information out there aside from just this information, this virtual information session.

Brian Y.: Thanks, Edwin.

Pedro de A.: Sure. So we – it’s our policy – we accept transfer credit. There’s – the nuance here is the following. If your student requests a gap year, right, that student hasn’t been enrolled at Colorado College yet. Right? So the process of credit transferring for students that are requesting a gap semester or a gap year needs to go through Admissions and not directly to the registrar's office because the student is not enrolled officially at the college yet. Right?
Pedro de A.: So if your student is officially enrolled in the college and takes CC 100, CC 120, and then takes a leave and wants to pursue potentially taking a class somewhere else, then that process would go through the registrar’s office. But not every class is transferable. So the registrar’s office is responsible for making sure the units transfer, that the classes transfer, so forth. My office is responsible for making sure that we can accept the class as a whole. So what that means is we typically want students to think about classes that we don’t offer at the College; right? So classes that are going to make sense for your academic plan moving forward but that we currently don’t offer at the college or we don’t offer it very often. Right? Those are classes that builds into what your academic plan looks like. Right? And that is something that students would then propose that to the registrar’s office, the registrar’s office would request an approval from my office, and we would be able then to let students know if those courses are going to transfer, and not only that, if they are going to transfer, how many units. So four semester hours is equivalent to one unit, one college unit or one block. Right? But also, it would be possible for us to see if the course would also satisfy a general education credit or not. I know we are talking to first year, so really major credits are not playing a role, but if for whatever reason the student was seeking major credit, the department would have to approve that. That would, again, filter through my office and the registrar’s office.

Brian Y.: Thanks, Pedro, and while I have you on the floor, a couple of questions I think we know the answers to these. If a student that’s listening out there has been invited to come back Block 2 or if a student out there is invited to come back Block 3, can they stay for Block 3 and 4? Can they stay for Block 4 if they are invited back for 3?

Pedro de A.: If a student has been invited back to campus this fall, regardless of when they have the in-person class or the hybrid class, they are welcome to be on campus starting Block 2 all the way to the end of the semester.

Brian Y.: Great. Thanks, Pedro.

I know we are at the end of our hour. I want to remind everybody we’ll try to get some additional questions or some additional answers to the questions that are out there. I also want to give my colleagues on the panel to say any final words, and as they are thinking through that, I just want to say thanks to everybody for your questions and for being here today. We care deeply, everyone on this group and everyone on this campus cares deeply about your son, your daughter. The CC experience. All of the efforts going into making sure that we can provide that experience is paramount for us.
Brian Y.: And so all the additional steps, all of our additional work going into making sure that the strong partnership with county health, that our strong enhanced protocols and procedures on top of what we already have are all in place so that we can continue to grow campus population in a way that is safe and gives every student out there the potential to have the CC experience that many of you know and love.

We just continue to thank you for your time, your patience, your efforts. I know that sometimes we don’t have all of the answers. We will get them. And I am sorry sometimes that they are not right front and center, but we will get them, and I appreciate all of the continual efforts and the comments coming in from all of you. So thank you very much.

Any of my colleagues would like to add anything?

Rochelle D.: Just thanks again for joining us this afternoon. First-year students, speaking directly to you, thank you for choosing Colorado College. We are glad you are with us. We look forward to continued engagement, whether you are going to be with us personally or remotely, and we are happy to have you here. Thank you.

Lesley I.: Just thank you. Thanks for spending time with us. Thanks for being patient with us, and we will continue to work hard on getting the answers.

Mike E.: Well, I can’t get my video to come on, but I want to echo the thoughts. Colorado College is a great place. We are glad that you selected CC, and we are doing all that we can to make your CC experience the one that you had hoped to be. Thank you for being with us this afternoon. I don’t know why I can’t get my video to come back on, but you are important to us, and this is a wonderful place.

Brian Y.: Great. Thanks, everybody. Have a good day.