

Campus Transition-Cultivating Community Resilience In the Face of Disruption

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The renovation of Tutt Library and new construction of student housing on East Campus invite the Colorado College community to embrace the gift of disruption and the possibilities it offers for greater collaboration, community building, creativity, clarity, and growth even in the midst of our discomfort. Our capacity to cultivate a sense of well-being during these projects depends on how we frame disruption. How we communicate, program, and respond to the disruption, has the potential to support the campus in ways that can ease the challenges we will experience. This is especially important on a campus that is already overly stimulated and reactive, where an unsettled anxiety hovers around the uncertainty of how routines, learning, sense of space, belonging, relationships, and aesthetics will be affected during the building processes. This report seeks to highlight observations and ideas that can help us hold disruption with resiliency in the coming year.

Observations

Students and employees have expressed questions and anxiety related to the library renovation. Most of these concerns are directly related to how specific student, faculty and staff needs will be met, in particular:

- access to books, study spaces, and printing;
- new office locations;
- new parking arrangements;
- and possible changes in working relationships due to the dislocation and disruption.

Additionally, there are questions and concerns about increased level of noise, visual changes and busyness. Having extra sound and visual stimulation will be a challenge for students and others who look to the quad as a place of escape and serenity thus affecting the well-being and mental health of our students.

For some students, particularly rising seniors, their sense of stability will be affected, which has already led to feelings of resentment, anger, fear, and unsettledness. While students have been consulted extensively on the library renovation, they have not been consulted on the disruption planning. Lack of helpful campus communication to-date has heightened their concerns.

Guiding Principles to Helping Support the CC Community

The committee sees the renovation and new construction project as great opportunities to build community resiliency, practice the flexibility the Block Plan is built on, develop new relationships, experiment with new collaborations, and help us reflect on our work in new ways. The committee has identified several important principles that will foster resiliency and facilitate ease during the disruption:

- **Frame** this time of disruption in our messaging with a broader picture of how it helps us build a resilient community. Encourage the campus to see where they do have choice in the disruption (example – places to study) while accepting what is happening in the other.
- **Establish** new thought and communication habits by focusing on the positive while acknowledging the anxiety and challenges as a continual process. Examples of yes it is challenging...AND this is a great opportunity for _____. Find new ways to embodying our own flexibility and openness in this process.
- **Foster** a collective sense of community: we are all in this together, supporting each other, and taking responsibility as a community for knowing how to help others access the information they need.
- **Empower** students to be a valued and active part of making decisions around spaces and programs that would be helpful to them during this process including having students take key leadership.
- **Model** a culture where it is okay to ask for help especially with locating resources. Owning our mistakes in the process as well as celebrating our successes. Allowing ourselves to not be perfect or defensive, instead allowing this process to invite us to be more fully human and cultivate a sense of humor.
- **Create** and maintaining spaces that encourage a sense of belonging and stability, specifically new dedicated new study spaces.
- **Cultivate** trust during this process through clear and timely communication, even if final decisions aren't yet made. Communicating a timeline of what is happening with regular updates is critical. Reassuring students and the campus in these communications that student education is our priority will help relieve anxiety.
- **Messaging and follow through** from the top (President and President's Cabinet) that we are all making sacrifices as part of the time of disruption.

Recommendations for Action

The Committee's recommendations are divided into six sections: Communication, Information Sharing, Resources, Space, Self-Care, and Interactive. Some recommendations have suggestions as to offices that might be helpful in carrying out the work.

Communication

Communication was a top priority throughout our committee meetings. It was clear to the committee that leadership's ability to find ways to communicate openly and consistently throughout the project will have a huge impact on our capacity to foster a community of trust and support. Here are some suggestions of ways to share information and/or communicate that would be helpful to our community.

- *Create a clearly visible, articulated and centralized hub of communication making sure the campus knows who is coordinating and making decisions regarding communication efforts. Create an easy-to-use webpage with resources, updates, pictures, and mechanisms for feedback and responses. Include spaces for feedback about how the disruption is going (good and challenging) and mechanisms for responding that will acknowledge people being heard. Ideally this should be ready by Block 5, even if it is basic to start.*
- *Keep an up-to-date timeline of renovation and construction plans, giving information, even if the timeline just indicates when the information would be coming. Share the same information consistently with the entire campus.*
- *Send regular updates, including emails and website posts, that include interesting stories related to the two projects. Use models of other colleges engaged in construction projects (example: <http://www.bates.edu/news/category/campus-places/campus-construction-update-2014-16/>)*
- *Develop an app or interactive map that has available study spaces, quiet spaces, and special events. (Communication, ITS, Wellness Resource Center)*
- *Provide a way to identify spaces on the campus event calendar or other interactive mechanism.*
- *Use either an image or hashtag, such as #chaseChas (Chas for the statue) throughout communication about the projects to give updates. Have students come up with the # or symbol by way of a contest. (Library Staff and Campus Activities)*
- *Create an FAQ of relevant questions that is easily accessible all over campus in the form of posters, information sheets, and on the website.*

Information Sharing

Just as it is important for communication to be clear and centralized, it is equally important to distribute information widely across campus.

- *Create a cohort of students who function as Peer Helpers to help connect other students to relevant resources (how to get books, find offices etc.). They could be work-study students and available during the fall and/or the whole year. At the beginning of the year they could wear t-shirts in Worner and by Tutt South indicating they are available to help: for example, “Ask Me” T-shirts.*
- *During Fall Conference, have an introduction for all Faculty and Staff related to important information and resources to support the campus during the renovation and construction. Including an information sheet with FAQ’s they can use to answer student questions with. (Dean’s Office in partnership with Library Committee)*
- *Include a special session during NSO related to accessing library resources and information as well as places of study. This could happen in FYE’s or as a larger program. (Campus Activities)*
- *Make sure Residential Advisors are well versed in information related to library resources and information and that they share this information (verbally and written) during their first RA meetings with their halls. (Residential Life)*
- *Have a main bulletin board in every Residence Hall dedicated to library resource information for the first few blocks. (Residential Life)*
- *Have periodic updates and information about the renovation and construction of the new residence building(s) in the Catalyst.*
- *Have the librarians create and maintain a blog related to the disruption and interesting books related to different types of disruption...(Library Staff)*

Resources

- *Micro-grants for students to support and help with the disruption via specific programs. Students would have the opportunity to apply for small grants to create programs/events that would support study spaces and community care throughout the year. This would help foster students taking ownership of their own experiences during this year as well as bring in joy and creativity into the process.*
- *Create a disruption team of work study students managed by the library that could serve as proctors in more remote study spaces around campus and as Peer Helpers.*

- *Enhance relationships with local businesses* within walking distance of the college where students are likely to study such as the Wild Goose, Poor Richards, and Dog Tooth Café and see if there might be special student discounts for this coming academic year. *(Collaborative for Community Engagement and/or Student Activities)*

Space

- *Carry out a Space Utilization Study* this winter/early spring that accesses buildings on campus as possible study spaces, particularly in buildings we don't commonly connect to study spaces. i.e. El Pomar, East Campus, Spencer, Tutt, Alumni House.
- *Have special places open for studying* only for the 2016-2017 academic year. This might include places like Alumni House, Gates Commons, Slocum Commons, the Cossitt Faculty Lounge, and Spencer Building.
- *Create an updated list of students' favorite quiet and study spaces* this spring. Have students write periodic reviews of favorite study spaces and post them on the website and in the catalyst. Have periodic visitors spend time in study spaces, such as favorite professors and surprise speakers. *(Chaplains' Office and Wellness Resource Center)*
- *Have a series of pop-up study spaces* through the 2016-2017 academic year in addition to the more permanent one, that add a sense of spontaneity and fun, while also piloting the "outposting" concept that's important to the new library. Possible pop-ups could be afternoon/early evening study tents on the quad or Yampa field sponsored by the ORC, or in a particular building for one block like in in Alumni , Faculty Commons, and Spencer boardroom. Pop-up spaces offer us possibilities to engage creativity and relationship building in new ways. For example, if Alumni Relations and Advancement each offered to help host study spaces for a block, they would have the opportunity to connect with students in new ways that would enrich their work at CC. *(Tiger Pen working group)*
- *Create more flexibility* with the scheduling and timing of booking spaces in Ungerboeck for the 2016-2017 academic year. Ask venue managers to be extra understanding to some of the challenges of reserving space in the coming year.

Self-Care

- *Help students to start thinking* about the types of spaces they like to study in now, so that they feel like they have multiple options of places to study next fall. Encourage and coordinate various Student Life Offices hosting conversations with specific groups of students this winter/spring *(Wellness Resource Center)*
- *Create regular opportunities* for skill building around self-care to help address potential stress AND help students connect this skill building heightened by the disruption into something that can translate into other areas of life. *(Wellness Resource Center and Chaplains' Office)*

- *Have a campus practice, like a "get out of trouble free" card, that could help staff and faculty practice patience with each other when our work isn't flowing how we would like based on challenges related to being disrupted by the two projects. (Staff Council and FEC)*
- *Have earplugs and other items available in Worner Center that might help the campus deal with the extra noise and sensory stimulation of the renovation and construction projects. (Campus Activities)*

Interactive

- *Tear it down party initiated by students before the renovation begins on the library. Have the Junior Class student government representatives coordinate a party where members of the junior class get to decorate a wall that will be torn down with spray paint, paint etc. For the rising seniors who are anxious about not having the library during their year of thesis, this could help transform some of their energy kinesthetically. (Junior Class)*
- *Include Students in decision-making regarding spaces and programs that might happen during the period of disruption.*
- *Have Food trucks scheduled to come to various study spaces at night throughout the year. It could help create a sense of something to look forward to among the students and connect students to studying in particular places throughout the week.*
- *Explore through intentional conversations and programs how disruption is part of every day life and how we intentionally choose ways of being disrupted, like the Block Plan and study abroad. Host a Disruption Series related to experiences and moments of disruption in peoples' lives and how they navigated through them. (Chaplains' Office and Wellness Resource Center)*
- *Have a small mobile book cart in Worner a few times a week staffed during lunch and early afternoon by a librarian and a faculty or staff member. Each week, the highlighted books could be based upon the staff/faculty member's favorite books. If possible, there could be a way the CC community could check out the books there. (Library in partnership with faculty and staff)*
- *Periodic find Chas treasure hunts with prizes throughout the academic year focused on finding a miniature/picture of Chas, the statue. (Campus Activities and Library)*

