

Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

2016-17 End of the Year Report

Committee Members: Kathy Giuffre, Tom Lindblade, Kevin Holmes, Jamal Ratchford, Mark Hatch, Heather Jones

Note: This year's committee continued and built on the work that we began last year. We have, therefore, included last year's report with this year's report. The 2016-17 information is in a larger font.

2015-26 End of the Year Report

Committee Members: Kathy Giuffre, Tom Lindblade, Helen Daly, Kevin Holmes, Mark Hatch, Heather Jones

The CAFA is charged with discussing issues related to College admissions and financial aid policy, choosing not more than one topic or challenge per year to investigate. Committee members also sit in on admissions meetings, call an all-faculty meeting once per year to discuss issues, and meet with the President.

For the 2015-16 academic year, the committee investigated the issue of diversity in admissions, looking especially at ways in which international students are supported and prepared to be successful at CC, how admissions policies affect the types of students we have on campus (in light of racist incidents on Yik Yak), how the current Affirmative Action case coming up before the SCOTUS might affect CC's admissions policies, and how financial aid availability affects which students we admit.

2016-17: The committee continued to investigate issues of diversity and inclusion, following up on the process we began in 2015-16.

International Students and preparation for success at CC: The AAUP approached the CAFA at the beginning of the 2015-16 AY with concerns that many international students may be unprepared for success at CC because of difficulties with language proficiency at a level sufficient to read technical scholarly material.

The Admissions Office recruits globally. We now have an Admissions officer, Megan Rhodes, who is a fluent speaker of Chinese and who works extensively on the ground in China (32+ schools visited in China in Fall 2015) meeting with students and high school counselors. This is one of the best ways to assess language proficiency among applicants and we are expanding in that area, but it is not possible to meet every applicant face-to-face. CC is also using Skype for applicant interviews as well as Initial View (used last year and a half) and Vericant (new this year) , on-line services, to assess language proficiency. In addition, international students now have a more intensive orientation to cover issues of not only language, but also cultural competency. Special adjuncts are now available in the TLC for international

students throughout the year to help with special issues, including language proficiency. Over the past three years, as these programs have come into place, we are seeing a rise in the SAT scores of incoming international students as well as a rise in the middle 50% GPA of international students.

We also looked at policies requiring non-English-speaking students to attend a one-month language preparation course in the summer before their first year at CC. The CAFA supports this program, understanding that for some students it may be redundant and they may be, therefore, excused from attending. We recommend further study to assess the cost and effectiveness of this program.

2016-17: In fall 2015, the CAFA was approached by members of the AAUP who shared concerns that some students were coming to CC without adequate language skills to master high-level academic reading. We investigated the issue and supported requiring a summer program to offer assistance to those students who might need it. In light of discontent by some students in the summer program, as reported in the Catalyst, this year we reviewed the program. Student discontent with the program stemmed from feelings that Chinese students were being singled out for the program on the basis of country of origin and were being forced to pay for the program when other students were not. The CAFA is concerned that

- 1.) students understand the program as a way of helping students make a successful transition to Colorado College by improving the language skills necessary to handle college level work rather than as a punitive measure. The program also helps with cultural transition.
- 2.) the piece of the program focused on cultural transition be available as necessary to all international students, regardless of their language skills.
- 3.) the cost of this program is seen as unfairly targeting students from China.
- 4.) we continue to monitor the efficacy of the program.

In light of these concerns, the CAFA recommends that

- 1.) communication about the requirement that students attend the program be clear and timely so that students know about it before they are accepted at CC.

2.) we re-think the ways in which the cultural transition part of the program may be made more broadly available.

3.) that the cost of attending the program be reduced or, even better, eliminated entirely.

4.) we continue to build in more opportunities for face-to-face (either in-person or by video) assessments of students' language capabilities during the admissions process.

5.) we continue to collect and analyze data about the academic success of students in the program. We recommend a five-year trial period for the collection of data.

The Admissions Office has already changed the way and the timing in which students are informed about the program. The data available to us continue to show that the program does have a positive effect on student academic success.

Racism on campus: In light of the racist incidents on campus this year, the CAFA addressed ways in which we can bring students to CC who are welcoming of all types of diversity among their classmates and who work to build an inclusive community at CC. In its considerations, the admissions office actively looks for students who indicate in their application materials (both in their essays and in letter of recommendation and other materials) that they have a commitment to building community. These markers may include involvement in cultural clubs or a sense of cultural fluency, championing diversity (such as involvement in LGBTQAI+ clubs or issues), an indication that the applicant has worked to build bridges with others.

The CAFA recognizes, though, that part of the mission of the College is to educate our students about issues of diversity and community. We cannot hope to bring in an ideologically perfect class; instead, we hope to graduate a class that is more thoughtful, more educated, and more sensitive to these issues.

Mark Hatch and Kathy Giuffre met with President Tiefenthaler in the fall and the entire committee met with her in the spring. At both meetings the topic of discussion focused on our commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus.

2016-17: We should continue to focus on our commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus. We have focused this year (as discussed below) especially on socio-economic diversity. The full CAFA met with President Tiefenthaler on April 18, 2017, and focused our discussion on socio-economic diversity.

Affirmative Action: The committee reviewed how the current case before the US Supreme Court may affect our ability to craft the kind of class that we would like to admit at CC. Affirmative Action allows us to take a holistic approach into consideration in building a diverse class. Should the Supreme Court strike down Affirmative Action, the CC admissions office will need to develop a contingency plan to minimize the effect on our institutional goals. The College may need to direct significant resources to the Admissions Office. We recommend that the college begin thinking strategically about how we would respond to an end of Affirmative Action. This will be our agenda action item for next year.

2016-17: the Supreme Court decision in Summer 2016 upheld the constitutionality of Affirmative Action. We are nevertheless cognizant of the possibility that this issue may re-emerge in the near future. We recommend that

1.) the college continue to plan for the possibility of an end to Affirmative Action and have a plan in place to keep a diverse student body.

Financial Aid: Committee members attended admissions meetings to see files and discussions of those files in December and January 2015-16. At these meetings, it became clear that the availability of financial aid is an important consideration for the types of students whom we admit. The financial aid pool is a limited resource and there are very good students whom we turn away because we cannot provide the level of financial support for all of them that we would like. The availability of more financial aid would allow the Admissions Office greater freedom in crafting the incoming class.

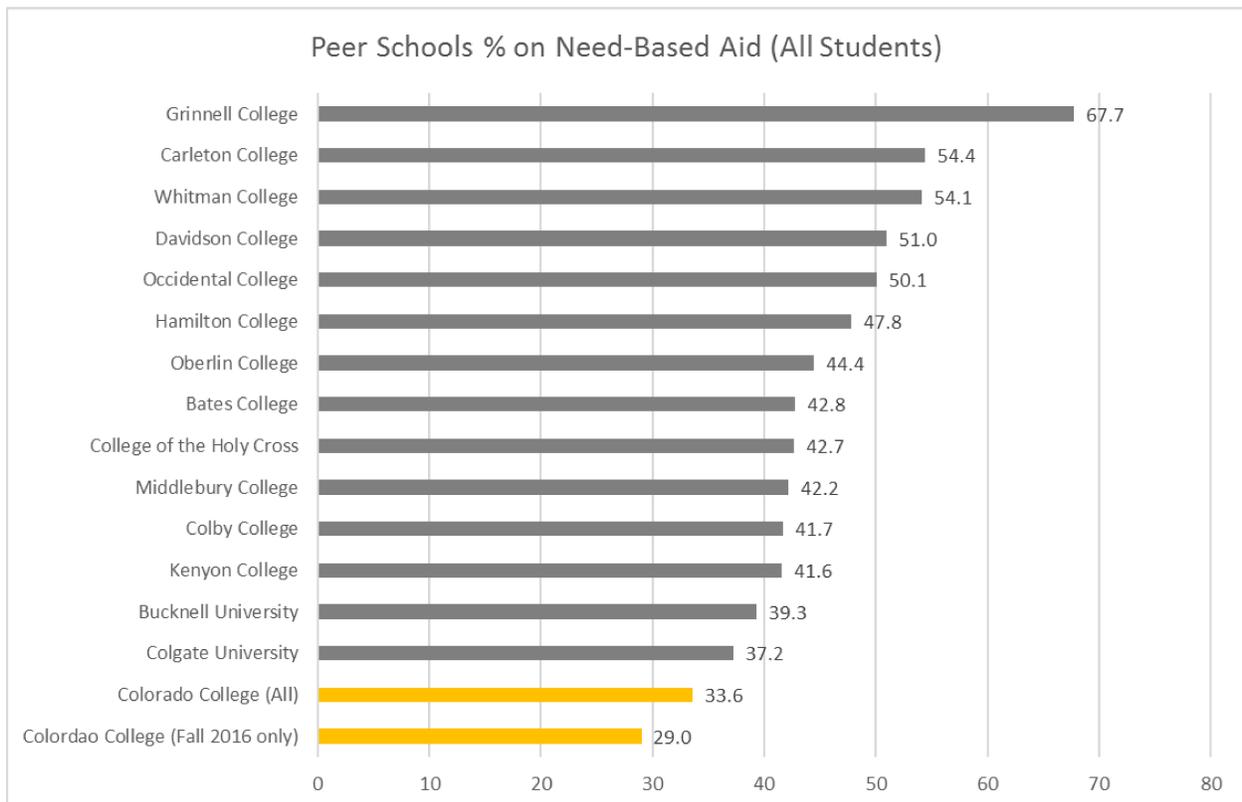
In the past few years, CC has doubled our diversity with regard to domestic ethnic diversity and tripled our diversity with regard to international diversity. Compared to our peer schools, CC stands third highest in percent students of color (out of 16 schools) and 9th in percent international students. With regard to students receiving need-based aid, however, we are last. President Tiefenthaler tells us that our goal for the Capital Campaign is \$80 million for financial aid. We recommend that Colorado College sets a goal of moving into at least 8th position compared to our peer institutions in percent students receiving need-based aid. This would put us at the median of our peer institutions.

2016-17: The Equality of Opportunity Project report released in early 2017, as reported in *The New York Times*, placed Colorado College as number 2 in the nation in the Affluence Gap among our students. The CAFA continues to be concerned with the issue of economic diversity among our students. In our 2015-16 report, we noted that while CC has made enormous strides with regard to domestic ethnic diversity and to international diversity, we lag far behind where we hope to be with regard to students receiving need-based financial aid. We are currently in last place among our peer institutions with regard to the percentage of our students receiving need-based financial aid. Our Strategic Plan states goals

of “Enrolling more talented students with diverse perspectives, particularly from lower- and middle-income families”, “Moving CC 1/3 of the way toward becoming a need-blind institution”, “Creating 160 new endowed scholarships”, and “awarding 42% of CC students need-based financial aid.” The primary concerns of the committee are:

- 1.) We are not able to enroll many of the excellent students who apply to CC because we cannot provide the financial assistance they need to matriculate here. The excellence of the student body depends on our ability to bring the best students here.
- 2.) We are ranked last among our peer schools in the percentage of students receiving need-based financial aid, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1.



3.) Our student body is missing students from the middle income bracket because those students cannot afford to come to CC. This polarization of the student body into students from the upper-income and lower-income brackets only leads to

lower-income students feeling that they do not belong on our campus and to divisiveness among the students.

In our previous report, we recommended a capital campaign goal of \$80 million for financial aid. Given the severity of the problem and the fact that Colorado College is now a subject of national scrutiny, we further recommend:

1.) that we set a 5-year goal, beginning with the entering class of 2018 and culminating with the entering class of 2023, of moving towards a 37% discount rate from our current 32%. This should be a step-wise process with regard to the discount rate as outlined in the grid shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

Incoming Class/Cohort	Discount rate
Fall 17	32%
Fall 18	33%
Fall 19	34%
Fall 20	35%
Fall 21	36%
Fall 22	37%
Fall 23	37%
Fall 24	37%
Fall 25	37%

2. During that same period, that we move from 37% of the student body receiving need-based financial aid to 42% of the student body receiving need-based financial aid, which would put us closer to the median of our peer group.

3.) That we increase the Pell Grant student population from approximately 250 students to 325 students. We are also aware the White House has recently opened discussions about ending the Pell Grant program.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/03/29/white-house-calls-more-cuts-pell>

As with Affirmative Action, we recommend that

3a.) the college begin planning so as to be prepared should Pell Grants be discontinued.

The committee members found the measure of “moving one-third of the way toward becoming a need-blind institution” to be too amorphous, lacking clear benchmarks to measure progress. We recommend, therefore, that the three measures listed above be used to measure progress over the next five years.

An all-faculty meeting was held on April 25th to discuss issues of faculty concern and to set the agenda for 2016-17. The items in this report were discussed, along with additional concerns about Winter Start integration into the college, divisional enrollment disparities, marketing of the college to prospective students, as well as the possible ramifications of the Affirmative Action case decision currently in front of the US Supreme Court.

2016-17: An all-faculty meeting was held on May 2nd. The faculty present affirmed that they value increasing the socio-economic diversity of our students, especially with regard to solving the “bar-bell” problem of the missing middle – those students who do not necessarily qualify for Pell Grants, but who nevertheless cannot participate in activities such as blocks abroad because of financial limitations. Faculty members also commented on the many ways in which having a range of students with a diversity of life experiences in their classrooms was beneficial to the educational environment at CC.

When asked what things the faculty felt they would be willing to sacrifice in order to increase the budget for financial aid, faculty members suggested that the answer to that should be part of a much larger discussion (perhaps led by the FEC) over campus priorities. This discussion should be tied to a larger philosophical question about what we see as the educational mission of the college – what do we want to do and for whom?

Faculty also voiced support for increasing the numbers of multi-lingual students we admit (especially students from the United States whose first language is not English), students from public schools that are not necessarily elite public schools, and students from Colorado and, especially, Colorado Springs. Faculty members

pointed out that our resources may have a greater impact on students from the middle and lower income brackets than on those in the higher income brackets.

Further, faculty requested that the Advancement Office make it easier for faculty wishing to contribute to the capital campaign to be able to specially earmark their contributions to go towards financial aid. We discussed a variety of metrics to measure progress in increasing the socio-economic diversity of the student body, including increasing the number of Pell grant students on campus, increasing the discount rate, increasing the percentage of students receiving need-based financial and moving one third of the way towards need-blind admissions. All of these proposals had support.

Finally, there was a suggestion that faculty inform the Admissions Office about students whom they particularly feel make valuable contributions to the classroom environment and why; this feedback gives the Admissions Office important information for making choices among the applicant pool.