

OFFICIAL APPEAL TO THE CLOSURE OF THE LEADERSHIP RESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC PROGRAM (LDSP RAP)

Editor's note: the following official appeal has been reformatted and condensed.

On November 1, 2016, Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost Mary and Provost Russell Moore decided to discontinue the LDSP RAP. They stated their decision was based on cost of the program. The RAP program administration and stakeholders were not in agreement with this decision for the following reasons:

The decision was made without stakeholder consultation or consent.

- ...Administration did not include students, especially current Leadership RAP (CLSP and ELLC) students and alumni, in any level of decision-making...

The decision was made without considering, or even understanding, the disproportionate impact closing the RAP would have for students, particularly marginalized and under-represented students at CU Boulder.

- ...Both marginalized and mainstream students have stated that they rely on the Leadership RAP community, curriculum and people to support their development and their ability to find a home on campus...closing the RAP is more than a micro-aggression; it is a macro-aggression...
- ...Students are losing diverse mentoring and instruction from faculty and the multicultural voice that accompany them. Quantitatively, in addition to straight, white men who have presented curriculum material on multicultural social justice leadership, the CU Boulder community is losing: 8 faculty of color, 8 women in leadership instruction, gay, lesbian and bisexual faculty and staff and 6 First-Generation college staff and faculty...

The decision was made without utilizing in-house expertise or providing supporting data.

- ...The RAP, and the ELLC in particular, is nationally recognized for best practices by the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE). The RAP has high retention and graduation data for 10 years. This data was never referred to in the decision by administration...

Communication from the University was impersonal, inaccurate and misleading.

- ...Instead of allowing a personal approach to delivering the news of the closure, a mass email was sent out to first-year leadership RAP students without adequate warning to the students' community leaders...
- ...The announcement stated that the ELLC will be preserved was inaccurate and misleading...

Requested Next Steps

The decision to close the Leadership RAP should be put on hold and revisited. A just, inclusive and equitable process must be initiated. Stakeholders, particularly Leadership RAP students, must be an integral part of recommended changes.

The Leadership RAP has provided an unparalleled experience for students at the University. Preservation of the program intact is in the best interest of all students, both marginalized and dominant culture. Although an inclusive process should find that it is essential to keep the Leadership Studies Programs of the CLSP and the ELLC, authentic alternatives could be also be developed that allow for the strengths, assets and effectiveness of the LDSP program elements to be retained – particularly the power of the combined student/staff/faculty community with the robust social justice leadership curriculum.