

For many students entering CU, the transition to college life is a significant one. A robust residential curriculum is presented for students to navigate their experiences intentionally through the lens of connection: to self, to the community around them, to academics and to larger social justice opportunities. A big part of the residential experience is meaningfully with each other to students' resident advisor (RA). RAs play a very important role in the lives of students living on campus. They act as mentors, event planners, problem solvers, relationship builders and so much more. To model and prioritize the importance of connection, RAs engage one on one with each student living on their floor/in the wing of their hall six times during the academic year in conversations called Buff Chats.

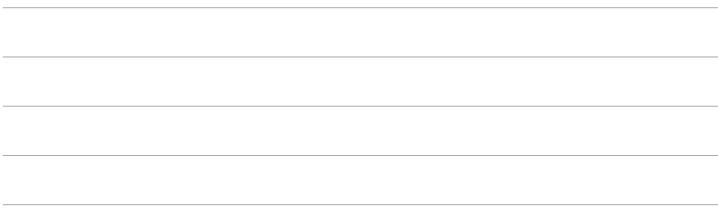
The purpose of Buff Chats is to help residents feel valued and connected at CU and in the residence halls that have had an impact on students' experiences. There are six periods overall that occur during the course of an academic year.

Finally, we will share thoughts from RAs about how they observe connections happening for and among their residents

is to focus on various themes that may relate to the resident's development, CU experience and their overall journey as a Buff. Generally, residents experience milestones that may occur at specific times throughout the year, these are called cornerstone periods.

Cornerstone conversations allow RAs to engage with residents during a pivotal time on their CU journey as many students are transitioning to living alone for the first time away from family, and finding a new sense of independence and personal responsibility. Additionally, each Buff Chat period has learning outcomes that guide the conversation between RA and resident. RAs must engage in a cornerstone conversation with each resident during specified periods. For example, the cornerstone topic for period 2, transition, and the cornerstone for period 3, self-care and wellness, occurred in the fall semester.

FIGURE 8



Pre-arrival programs at the University of Colorado Boulder are the first opportunities for first-year and transfer students to get involved on campus. Stemming from the mission to enhance student retention and success, pre-arrival programs focus on helping students build early relationships with their peers, university departments and staff and 'fast track' their involvement at CU. Pre-arrival programs have historically included Stampede Leadership Camp, EcoReps: Sustainability Leadership Program, Outdoor Pursuits: CU Bound – Camping and Adventure, Outdoor Pursuits: CU in the Rockies, First-Year Service Experience

and Mind and Body Buffs. Students in the pre-arrival programs receive advanced move-in, earlier access to campus resources and closer relationships with faculty and campus leaders. (u)4.26 pa

Coming out of a year of social distancing and reports of students feeling high levels of isolation, Stampede Leadership Camp committed to helping students build connections within our largest pre-arrival program of 102 participants. Stampede Leadership Camp featured eight small group breakout sessions with a cohort of 13-21 students led by their peer mentor, three breakout sessions focused on students living in the same residential neighborhoods and four socials that brought together all pre-arrival programs. After the