



Benson Center for the Study  
of Western Civilization

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
November 10, 2021

**Present:** Daniel Jacobson, Robert Pasnau, Benjamin Slater Hale, Kenneth Bickers, Shilo Brooks, Scott Savage, Michael Huemer, Patricia Limerick, Carole Newlands, Alan Kahan

**Absent:** None **Staff Present:** Lily Welch, Betty Kilsdonk

Chair Jacobson called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

**Chair opening comments:** Focus of the meeting is proposed changes to the bylaws for committee review and consideration; new initiatives will also be discussed. Current VSCTP Alan Kahan, a historian of political thought whose current project is *Liberalism – An Incomplete History*, has joined the committee for this year.

**Bylaws amendments:** The Chair gave an overview of the amendment process and provided background on the proposed changes. The overarching purpose of amending the bylaws is to incorporate and supersede earlier, inconsistent and outdated documents related to the VSCTP hiring procedure and bring the procedure in line with new rules passed by the faculty assembly. In addition, a mission statement update, and a few other minor updates were proposed. The Chair presented the proposed seven bylaws amendments as an information item at the Oct. 6, 2021 Board of Advisors meeting. The CUB Chancellor and the Dean of A&S have reviewed, provided feedback on, and endorsed the proposed amendments. Two-thirds of members present or represented by proxy must vote in the affirmative for a motion to pass.

**1. Article I, Section 2**

**Discussion:** Proposed changes to the mission statement incorporated language used previously but is more concise and better connects the dual focus of the Center's mission: to promote the study of Western civilization, and support diversity of perspective. Some committee members expressed a desire to retain specific phrases in the current statement which call out the importance of exposing students and community to the full range of intellectual discourse, fostering open dialogue, providing a home for thoughtful reflection rather than partisan rhetoric, and adhering to the university's Colorado Creed. The committee decided to retain the status quo; therefore, no motion was made.

**2. Article II, Section 2**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read: *The work of the Center is overseen by the Center's Director. The Director is responsible for the operation, management, and administration of the Center and its activities. The Center may also have an Associate Faculty Director who will organize and administer some of its scholarly activities, and*

*an Associate Director who advises the Director and assists in carrying out the Center's mission.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** The amendment acknowledges changes which have already been made to the organizational structure and asserts the ongoing need for an associate faculty director position.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### 3. **Article II, Section 5**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read: *Section 5. The Center shall have an advisory committee, known as the Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy Search Committee, whose members provide advice and assistance with respect to the selection of the Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** The change incorporates and supersedes outdated and inconsistent documents related to the hiring procedure and clarifies the Search Committee's role.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. **Article IV, Sections 3 and 4**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read: *Section 3. Members of the Executive Committee shall represent a wide range of philosophical and political views. Committee members shall be appointed by the Director, in consultation with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and with current and former Committee members. Executive Committee members serve three-year terms. Appointments to the Executive Committee are renewable.*

*Section 4. The Executive Committee will advise the Center's Director, promoting the interests and advancing the projects and programs of the Center in pursuit of its mission. Examples of Committee's activity include suggesting programs and activities for the Center, reviewing and providing comments on proposals brought to the Committee by the Director, helping to publicize Center events, and serving as a conduit between the Center and the rest of the University.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** Minor changes which correct the type of entity described and improve readability.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### 5. **Article V, Section 2**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read: *Section 2. The Board of Advisors shall be responsible for maintaining the Center's role and mission as described in its founding document. The Board will provide guidance to the Center in the area of programming and contribute to the advancement of the Center through its knowledge, experience, leadership, and assistance in raising funds.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** Minor changes for readability.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

### 6. **Addition of Article VI**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read:  
*Article VI, Section 1. The Benson Center is home to the University of Colorado’s Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy (VSCTP) program.*

*Section 2. The VSCTP Search Committee (henceforth “Search Committee”) shall consist of no more than ten members. The Search Committee is chaired by the Benson Center Director.*

*Section 3. The Benson Center Director serves as one of five voting faculty members on the Search Committee. At least four of the five faculty members must either be tenured or tenure-track, or have senior instructional rank. These faculty members must have an interest in the principles underlying conservative political and social thought and policy, and they shall be drawn from relevant departments such as Political Science, Economics, Philosophy, History, and Classics. A&S policy requires that only the faculty members of search committees for faculty positions have voting privileges.*

*Section 4. The Search Committee shall include five external members drawn from the donor, political and business communities. The purpose of the external members is to provide input to the faculty and the dean on the selection of the finalist. The faculty Search Committee members and the Dean will take advice from all interested parties, including the non-voting members of the Search Committee, and share information received with the Provost and the Chancellor. The Dean, as the appointing authority, will make the final decision.*

*Section 5. With the advice of the Director, the Dean of the College shall appoint members to the Search Committee for terms of three years, renewable.*

*Section 6. Committee recommendations shall always follow a nationally advertised call for nominations. The successful candidate shall be a recognized leader or scholar of the concepts of conservative thought and policy. A majority vote of the Search Committee’s faculty members shall be necessary to forward the appointment to the dean.*

*Section 7. The initial appointment of the VSCTP shall be for one year (or the equivalent). If recommended by the Search Committee, the Dean at his or her discretion may consider the appointment for renewal for up to a second year. The total period of appointment shall be for not more than two academic years or the equivalent of four academic semesters in cases where the residency of the VSCTP is not continuous.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** The addition of this section consolidates and supersedes earlier, inconsistent governing documents listed under Article VII. The section brings the hiring procedure in line with new rules passed by the faculty assembly and current A&S practice and is endorsed by the Chancellor and the A&S Dean.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. Article VII**

**Motion:** Daniel Jacobson moved to amend the bylaws previously adopted to now read:  
*These bylaws incorporate, amend, and update previous versions of the Center’s bylaws; the 2017 revised Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Center’s Visiting Chair in*

*Conservative Thought and Policy, the May 2015 CWCTP Memoranda (revised on Sept. 1, 2015); the Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy bylaws; and relevant sections of related memoranda. These bylaws may be amended at any time with the approval of a two-thirds majority of those present or represented by proxy at a meeting of the Executive Committee, provided that members receive at least seven days written notice of any proposed amendments.*

**Second:** Michael Huemer.

**Discussion:** Language was added to indicate that these amended bylaws consolidate and supersede all earlier versions and related existing governing documents, providing transparency, consistency and clarity.

**Vote:** The motion passed unanimously.

**Visiting faculty search:** Bylaws require a nationally advertised call for nominations each year. From the candidate pool, the Search Committee has recommended two external candidates for campus visits this month. The current VSCTP's appointment may also be considered for renewal.

**Current and new initiatives:** A workshop in heterodox moral and political philosophy is planned for April. The workshop gives junior philosophers an opportunity for mentoring by senior scholars. *The Free Mind* podcast launched in September and more than 1300 people have accessed the first seven episodes. Planning for the third annual Summer Institute is underway. The Liberty Fund is gifting their entire catalog of 400+ titles exploring the ideal of liberty across many disciplines. The Center is creating a lending library for CU students, faculty and staff.

**Activities and upcoming events:** A robust lecture schedule is planned for November, including a partnership with the NAS entitled, "Liberalism and the Role of Virtue." Alan Kahan organized a "Capitalism and Ethics" series which is interdisciplinary, international, and includes both senior and junior scholars. Total views of Center events on YouTube have surpassed 950,000 and the subscriber list exceeds 2000. News coverage was up 522%, primarily driven by the 2020 election and related matters.

**Other business:** The Committee discussed pros and cons of employing a targeted social media search for hiring in addition to the standard background check. Pros: more proactive with hiring decisions; reduces likelihood of surprises; provides a broader picture of candidates. Cons: likelihood is low that social media searches will reveal crimes that a background check would not. Difficulty of establishing "key words" criteria. May be less effective than asking questions of the candidate's network.

Chair Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 5 p.m.