



Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Board of Advisors Meeting – Spring 2023

April 23, 2023, 4 - 6:30 p.m.

UMC Aspen Rooms 285-287-289 or over Zoom

Board members in attendance: Bruce Benson, Brian Domitrovic, David Hoover, Kevin Reidy, Jennifer Schubert-Akin, Ted Trimpa, Tina Snider

Absent: David Grohne, David Pyle

Others in attendance: Phil DiStefano, Marcy Benson, Margot Neufeld, Graeme Hundley, David Carpender, Cheryl Kisling, Daniel Jacobson, Taylor Jaworski, Katie Davis, Jennifer Smith, Alex Roberts, AJ Shively, Alisa Johnson, Jeff Steele, Matthew Ruiz-Diaz.

- 4:05 p.m. Chairwoman Marcy Benson begins the meeting on behalf of Bruce Benson, who is attendance virtually.
 - Expresses how much she and Bruce appreciates the Center and its work.
 - Mentioned new donor that is in the works.
- Remarks by Chancellor Phil DiStefano
 - Acknowledge sabbatical scholars Jennifer Smith and Kathryn Davis's contribution to the Center. As well as Alan Kahan who contributed deeply to the intellectual diversity here at the University.
 - Thanked Jennifer Smith for her efforts to work with faculty across A&S and Engineering.
 - Thanked Taylor Jaworski for being on the panel for the Chancellor's summit.
 - Thanked Jennifer Schubert-Akin for the Steamboat Institute's contribution to the campus.
 - Reflected on the students who will graduate; "how to think, not what to think." Thank you all for what you do to the success of our students and the Center's role in this ethos.
- Program updates and new initiatives – Daniel Jacobson, Director
 - Happy about the results of VSCTP search. 3 candidates interviewed; successful in getting verbal agreements from 2 of them to come: Todd Zywicki, Brandon Warmke
 - Thank you to Marcy and Bruce for making it possible to get someone like Todd. T Expectation is that Todd Zywicki will raise the VSCTP position to a level of prominence.
 - Alexandra Roberts has a new title, Assistant Director. She has reorganized staff positions to clarify division of labor. AJ Shively is the new media relations position.

- Jennifer Smith has been invaluable to the Center. The peacock event attracted new departments to the center. Ted and Courtney Balaker introduction, which brought Coddling of the American Mind to campus for the Center to screen. Jennifer ran reading groups with Alan Kahan, Katie Davis, Taylor Jaworski, and Paul Diduch.
- Kathryn Davis's appointment will be with us through next calendar year.
- Both Jennifer Smith and Katie Davis said brief thanks to the Center for the opportunity, and expressed how their time so far has been productive and engaging.
- Dan thanks Tina Snider for funding the heterodoxy workshop. The point of the workshop is to have senior figures in PHIL mentor and advise junior scholars with heterodox, independent ideas. They present work in progress, feedback on it, network with similarly heterodox thinking from major players in the profession. The point is to tenure more independent thinkers in PHIL. George Sher suggested we expand the workshop. That's Dan's goal as well.
- Dan will contact members of the board individually to get private thoughts to see if we should have 2 BOA meetings of the year or just 1.
- Outreach update – Taylor Jaworski, Associate Faculty Director
 - Todd Zywicki is an important person – you could look up Vernon L. Smith's 2002 Nobel Prize econ lecture – footnote 22, he cites Todd Zywicki as part of his Nobel prize address.
 - Thank you to the Chancellor for inviting Taylor to the Chancellor's Summit.
 - Thank you to Jennifer Schubert-Akin for the Steamboat event.
 - Some events this year were targeted to undergraduates – this was meant to be events outside the classroom where they're not working to get a grade. Two events in the fall – one on education and one on effective altruism. Found that students were opening up in great ways.
 - Next year, we would like to launch the undergraduate fellows program. We would like it to be an academic benefit and long-term benefit. We will start the process this summer.
- Fundraising update – David Carpenter, Assistant Dean
 - The Center remains a good target for fundraising at the University. David has met with people across campus who are interested in the Center.
 - Endowment fund distributions. There's a nice jump there with the Endowment funds. The increase is due to new gifts and payments on pledges, but also these funds are growing due to the careful financial stewardship of these funds.
- Financial update – Alexandra Roberts, Assistant Director
 - Financial presentation. Mention staff engagement & attempting to build bridges across departments.
- Student Intern Presentation – Jeffrey Steele, Alisa Johnson, and Matthew Ruiz-Diaz
 - Students gave a summary of their time at the Center this AY.
- Events AY 2022/23 wrap up and update – AJ Shively, External Media Relations
 - Reviewed the course enrollment documents, noting Alan Kahan and Ben Teitelbaum were teaching only one semester.
 - Reviewed events and the emphasis on the undergraduate population attending.
 - Noted we hit 10,000 listens at the end of season 5 for the Free Mind Podcast.

5 p.m. Meeting concludes.