



Benson Center for the Study
of Western Civilization

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Board of Advisors Fall 2023 Agenda

October 24, 2023

4:00 - 6:30 p.m.

UMC Aspen Rooms 285-287-289 or over Zoom

Board members in attendance: Bruce Benson, Michael Dino, Brian Domitrovic, David Pyle, Kevin Reidy, Ted Trimpa, Tina Snider

Absent: David Grohne, David Hoover, Jennifer Schubert-Akin

Others in attendance: Todd Saliman, Marcy Benson, David Carpenter, Kathryn Davis, Daniel Jacobson, Taylor Jaworski, Cheryl Kisling, Glen Krutz, Alexandra Roberts, AJ Shively, Brandon Warmke, Todd Zywicki

4:07 p.m. President Emeritus Bruce Benson begins the meeting with opening remarks.

- New board member Michael Dino is introduced.
- The Center received a new \$5 million endowment this year. Thank you to Cheryl Kisling and David Carpenter for their efforts.
- Bruce Benson introduces Todd Zywicki (VSCTP, fall 2023). Todd's wife is a CU alum and has enjoyed his time at the university.
- New chairwoman, Tina Snider, is welcomed. Bruce Benson expresses his support for her appointment as chair.

Chairwoman Tina Snider gives remarks, thanking Bruce for his vision and support of the Center.

- The Center is setting a national example for other institutions interested in the mission of the Center. Bruce is a pioneer to see the potential of the Center years ago.
- The Center has a strong team and expects to grow the Center's reach across campus and nationally.

President Todd Saliman gives remarks.

- Todd Saliman thanks Bruce for his time as chair and continued support of the Center. Todd looks forward to seeing how the Center will expand in the future under Tina Snider's leadership.

- Todd discusses the importance for CU students to have an opportunity to think for themselves and to develop ways to listen and engage in dialogue with others with opposing views. The Center fulfills this need.
- Todd notes that free speech can sometimes involve uncomfortable topics and notes recent examples of that on the CU Boulder campus. It is important the campus continues to protect freedom of speech.

College of Arts & Sciences Dean Krutz provides remarks.

- Dean Krutz considers the Benson Center the crown jewel of the College of A&S. The Center brings tough questions and rigorous standards. The Center has an ethic to bring quality discussion and quality speakers to campus.

Daniel Jacobson, Benson Center Director, provides program updates and new initiatives.

- The mission of the Benson Center is to promote the study of Western Civilization and to increase the intellectual and political diversity on campus. We are an interdisciplinary center, which has no party line and supports scholars with a variety of heterodox approaches and perspectives, including an annual Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy. We offer undergraduate and faculty fellowships within the CU community, and we sponsor public lectures and events that highlight underrepresented points of view while adhering to rigorous academic standards.
- Daniel introduces Benson Center visiting faculty, including Todd Zywicki (VSCTP, George Mason University), Brandon Warmke (sabbatical scholar, Bowling Green University), and Kathryn Davis (Roubos sabbatical scholar, University of Dallas).
- The faculty fellows program expanded to 6 faculty members from the following departments: HERBST Engineering, Environmental Science, Music and International Affairs, Leeds School of Business, and Spanish and Portuguese. Faculty fellows host student events, participate in lectures, and promote the Center's mission on campus.
- The Benson Center Library has expanded to include books from scholars past and present, as well as books by guest speakers.
- The Undergraduate Fellows Program aims to attract strong scholars interested in the mission of the Center. The long-term goal is to increase student enrollment in VSCTP and CWCV courses, as well as increase student attendance at events. Students are required to participate in two events each semester. We hope to grow the program next year.
- The Heterodoxy Workshop will run again in April. The goal is to mentor junior scholars and nurture them to tenure. We had about 16 participants last year from about 14 institutions.

Taylor Jaworski, Associate Director presents Undergraduate program & curriculum proposal.

- Taylor presented goal of reviving the dormant certificate program. The goal is to have the undergraduate fellows interact beyond just events, and participate in a curriculum of the Center.
- The Center is exploring a PPE program, which is a new growth industry and may attract students who aren't interested in economics otherwise, and serve as an introduction to the Center.

David Carpenter, Assistant Dean provides a fundraising update.

- David Carpenter is at the meeting on behalf of the Advancement Office and the College of A&S. Thank you to the fundraisers, as it is vital to the success of the Center.
- The Advancement mission for the Center has been clear and consistent, which has paid dividends for fundraising efforts. Donor time and generosity enables the Center to function.
- Special thanks to Todd and Jerri, who have been gracious with their fundraising time and efforts.

Alexandra Roberts, Assistant Director, provides an overview of the budget.

- Alexandra Roberts presented the budget for FY23, including the new format of the budget document, which now shows the total budget for the Center (not just new sources of funding).

AJ Shively, External Media Relations, provides updates on events and social media outreach.

- AJ Shively highlighted the increase in in-person attendance at events in the fall.
- AJ previewed spring events (Chris Rufo; Voices of Liberty; Mark Lilla; Steamboat Institute debate; Nietzsche Panel; and the Heterodoxy Workshop.
- Faculty fellows have hosted numerous student-focused events, including Alex Priou and Paul Diduch's Lunchtime Discussion Series, and Matt Burgess' Reducing Polarization Dialogue series. This fall, Burgess' series is jointly hosted by four Colorado universities: CU Boulder, CU Denver, University of Denver, and Colorado Mesa University.
- Social media metrics are presented. The Center continues to maintain a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. The Center is now sending out reminders for events two weeks before, one week before, and three days before the event to engage audience members. The Free Mind Podcast continues to have a strong listening audience, and is reaching a larger audience than the events.

Items not on the agenda

- The Board suggested increasing engagement on social media to reach more students and community members. The Center hired a new student intern to focus on social media and better tell the Center's story.
- Todd Zywicki reminds board members the university is training the future elites. Students today are singularly focused on careers; the Center provides intellectual content that is not *just* career oriented.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:15 p.m.