



BENSON CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



Benson Center for the Study
of Western Civilization

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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ABOUT THE CENTER

In summer 2019, the Center for Western Civilization, Thought & Policy, long championed by outgoing CU president Bruce Benson, changed its name in honor of his support. The renamed Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization promotes critical reflection on the distinctive traditions and political perspectives that characterize Western civilization. It encourages residents of Colorado and the United States to more fully understand and appreciate their past, their future and a free, creative American society within an international environment.

Integral to this mission is the Center's commitment to fostering research, debate and dialogue about the fundamental ideals of our time. Our efforts are grounded in academic research and study that foster an understanding of the historical context of Western civilization. The Center focuses on and explores the values that grow out of historical Western traditions and traces their influence on the world — in particular, to study their role in the foundations and ongoing institutions of the United States.

In addition to this, the Center provides a forum for free and open discourse, study and research. It seeks to promote a lively and balanced conversation, encompassing both conservative and liberal ideals, and to maintain the full diversity of political, economic and philosophical perspectives on the CU Boulder campus. By stressing intellectual rigor and the highest academic standards, the Center offers a venue for students, scholars and citizens of Colorado to fully understand our nation's political and cultural traditions. By focusing on the Western values of individual liberty and independence, both political and economic, the Center provides members of the CU community — and residents of our state more generally — a place to understand the ideals that shape our understanding of an important aspect of American cultural heritage.

Thanks in part to the newly created Bruce D. Benson Legacy Endowment Fund, the Center plans to continue growing in its mission over the coming years. The most enduring part of President Benson's legacy, however, may be in fostering the intellectual diversity essential for higher education's role in this country. As President Benson wrote in his June 2019 farewell message, this program is "the centerpiece of our efforts to teach students how to think, not what to think, and to ensure that CU is a place where debate and discussion on all sides of an issue are alive and well."

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- President Bruce D. Benson

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been eight years since I began as director of what was then called the Center for Western Civilization. Little did I know where this journey would take me. What I agreed to direct back in 2011 was an obscure little program with a tiny bit of money, which I figured I might be able to use to give a little life to the university's chronically underfunded humanities programs. This was a time when we had a resident of the White House whose constant injunction was to avoid drama rather than seek it out, and when one could watch cable news and think that one was getting, more or less, simply the news.

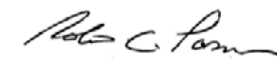
It was also not long after the start of what, in retrospect, already looks like something of a golden era at the University of Colorado, under the tenure of President Bruce Benson. I hadn't served for very long as Center director when I was summoned to lunch with the president at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. This struck me as surprising, given the modesty of my program as I saw it, but it turned out that the president did not have modest ambitions. Although one of his central working principles was to leave academic affairs to the campus level, he had already become concerned with whether students in Boulder and on the other CU campuses were getting a liberal education in the proper sense of the term: an education that, as the president became fond of putting it, teaches you not what to think but how to think. He saw the Center for Western Civ as an important vehicle for achieving this end.

My colleagues might have preferred it if I had tried to assure President Benson that CU Boulder does provide just this sort of education. As it happened, however, I was sympathetic to his concerns. Although the vast majority of professors and instructors work conscientiously to create a classroom environment that is open to multiple points of view, the overwhelmingly liberal perspective of the faculty, staff and graduate students cannot help but create an environment that breeds a certain intolerance to heterodox perspectives. As one of the Benson Center's undergraduate fellows put it to me this past year, many classroom discussions, even if they are officially open to multiple points of view at the start, inevitably tend to end up in one place, with the instructor carefully shepherding the class toward the preordained, progressive conclusion.

I have never hid the fact that I myself am one of those Boulder progressives, but it has always seemed to me that we do our students no service if we fail to expose them to the very best arguments on both sides. To be sure, if you do that, then some of these students will certainly become less liberal than they might have been, inasmuch as there are powerful arguments on both sides of the great questions that divide us today. But other students will become better liberals, because they will understand why other people may disagree with their point of view, and how such disagreements are not simply a product of ignorance and bigotry.

As President Benson and I got to know each other better, it became clear that we shared these concerns, and over the last eight years we have built a program that aims to combat the illiberal tendencies that cause universities to give their students a one-sided education. It is a pleasure now, on the occasion of President Benson's retirement, to be able to dedicate this Center in his name.

Robert Pasnau



Professor of Philosophy
Director, Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization



2018-19

CENTER

FELLOWS

Each year, the Center hosts several faculty fellows and graduate student fellows. These scholars and fellows contribute to the Center's mission, working in an area connected to the Center's annual theme. Fellows demonstrate an enthusiasm for fostering intellectual diversity and dialogue, both on campus and in the broader community. By leading and participating in events and conversations, among other important work, fellows are an essential part of the mission and outreach of the Center.



2018–19 Visiting Scholars in Conservative Thought and Policy

William B. Allen and **Stephen Presser** were the 2018–19 Visiting Scholars in Conservative Thought and Policy.

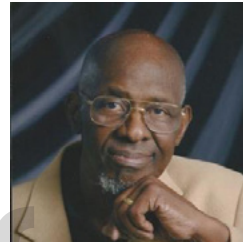
Professor Allen is a professor emeritus of political philosophy at Michigan State University and dean emeritus at MSU's James Madison College. Professor Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History, emeritus, at the Northwestern University School of Law, professor of strategy at the Kellogg School of Management and a member of the history faculty at Northwestern.

Allen, a Fulbright senior fellow, has served in many capacities, including as director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, professor of government at Harvey Mudd College, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

Allen's research interests include the "national character," an idea propounded by George Washington. Such scholarly inquiry probes the sources of "fragmentation" among American citizens and strives to "articulate the practices and principles that can reunite them as one people," he stated.

Presser praised the Conservative Thought and Policy program, which he termed "unique and part of a uniquely well-run university." After four decades in the academy, he concluded that "real diversity of opinion is increasingly rare in higher education."

"Those in charge in Boulder, whom I met when I interviewed for this position, have understood that bringing through a series of scholars committed to the search for timeless truths, and a deeper understanding of human nature, is a partial antidote to some of the difficulties now confronting our divided society," Presser said. "It is an honor to follow those distinguished teachers who have held this position in the past, a privilege to be asked



We love to move our students toward a capstone experience to complete their learning. It may fairly be said, similarly, that the Center provides academics with a capstone experience in their teaching. It certainly has been that for me. Moreover, inasmuch as my career has been packed with stellar moments, it means all the more to have been able to open still new horizons and opportunities for service.

– William B. Allen

to participate in encouraging the conservation of what is best in our culture, and a joy to be invited to spend a year in a wonderful setting implementing Socrates' adage that the unexamined life is not worth living."

Presser is a recognized expert in the history of the law and the U.S. Constitution in the 18th century, when the "founding principles of the United States took shape." His published works emphasize the grounding of the Constitution and the American legal system in what he described as "the timeless principles of justice, philosophy and law, which made up what the authors of the Federalist described as the emerging 'science of politics.'"

The visiting scholars were selected by a faculty search committee in consultation with an advisory board composed of prominent community members. The committee has sought highly visible scholars who are deeply engaged in either the analytical scholarship or practice of conservative thinking and policymaking — or both.

In fall 2018, Professor Allen taught "Politics and Literature" to 11 students and "Liberalism and Its Critics" to 47 students. In spring 2019, Allen taught "The Western Tradition" to 13 students and "Liberalism and Its Critics" to 28 students.

In fall 2018, Professor Presser taught "Issues in U.S. Society and Culture" to 56 students and "Corporations" to 46 students. In spring 2019, Presser taught "The Western Tradition" to 20 students and "Issues in U.S. Society and Culture" to 60 students.

Professor Allen will return to the Benson Center as a senior scholar in residence for 2019–20.



It was an academic year in paradise to be a Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy, made even better by the privilege of working with William Allen. We both did what we could to bring a bit of academic diversity and some deep historical perspective to Boulder.

– Stephen Presser

Scholars in Residence

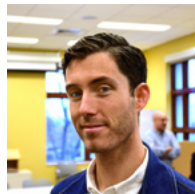


Jessica Wise, *Snider Scholar*

Jessica Wise received her BA in classics from Kenyon College and her PhD from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Her research focuses on the

Augustan age with special interest in women and the intersections of gender, class and politics. In the classroom, she enjoys pairing her work with modern topics for comparative analysis. In 2018–19, she worked on a book manuscript on gender, rhetoric and power in the poetry of Ovid. In fall 2018, Professor Wise taught “Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Rome” to 25 students. In spring 2019, Wise taught “Special Topics in Classics: Combat Trauma in Antiquity” to 19 students.



Colin Kielty

Colin Kielty is a political theorist working at the intersection of democratic theory and digital technologies, focusing on efforts by politically marginal movements

and thinkers to understand and demand participation. After completing his PhD at the University of Virginia in 2018, Kielty is now working on a book project that traces the legal, conceptual and rhetorical history of the complaint of disenfranchisement, especially when made in non-electoral contexts. He is also interested in the implications of the critique of digital capitalism for how citizens use digital technologies as avenues of political participation and voice. In spring 2019, Professor Kielty taught “Capitalism and its Critics” to 38 students and “Free Speech and Dangerous Ideas” to 39 students.

Center Fellows



Peter Simonson, PhD (College of Media, Communication and Information), *Faculty Fellow*

Peter Simonson is broadly interested in the intersections of rhetoric with history, philosophy, political and social theory, media

studies, anthropology and religious studies. His primary research centers on rhetorical theory, the intellectual and cultural history of communication, the global history of communication studies (with special interest in transnational and feminist approaches), and the history and continued relevance of pragmatism. He is the author of *Refiguring Mass Communication: A History* and lead editor of *The International History of Communication Study* and *The Handbook of Communication History*. In fall 2018, Professor Simonson taught “Concepts and Creativity 1: Media, Communication, Information.”



Masano Yamashita, PhD (French and Italian), *Faculty Fellow*

Masano Yamashita’s research focuses on 18th-century French literature, philosophy and political thought, with emphasis on the rise of the public sphere and inequalities

between speech communities. Her first book, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau face au public: problèmes d’identité* (Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, 2017) studies the communicative, social and literary issues that accompany the development of early modern information societies. She received a Center for the Humanities & the Arts Faculty Fellowship in 2016 and is a member of the Modern Language Association French Eighteenth-Century Division Executive Committee (2018–23). In fall 2018, Professor Yamashita taught “French Special Topics” and a first-year seminar, “Human Rights, Rites of Passage.”



Jillian Bjerke, doctoral candidate (History), *Harper Graduate Fellow*

Jillian Bjerke is a fifth-year doctoral candidate in history and a 2017–18 Fulbright France alumna. She earned a BS and MS in physics from

Wake Forest University and an MA in medieval studies from Western Michigan University. Her dissertation is entitled “Both King and Count: Joint Lordship in Thirteenth-Century Navarre and Champagne.” Professor Bjerke taught “Greeks, Romans, Kings, and Crusaders: European History to 1600.”



Samuel Director, doctoral student (Philosophy), *Harper Graduate Fellow*

Samuel Director is a third-year PhD student in philosophy and received his bachelor’s degree in

philosophy from Whitworth University. A PhD fellow of the Institute for Humane Studies, Director is also an Adam Smith Fellow at the Mercatus Institute at George Mason University and a Second Leg Summer Research Fellow through the CU Boulder Center for Humanities & the Arts. Director’s research focuses on issues related to consent in applied ethics. Other areas of interest include political philosophy and philosophy of religion. His research has been published (or is forthcoming) in the *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, the *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, *Disputatio* and *Think*.

OUTREACH + EVENTS

Providing a forum for intellectually diverse and academically rigorous events is the heart of what we do at the Benson Center. We accomplish our mission through the Western Civ Dialogue Series, which features a diverse panel of expert speakers and Conservative Thought and Policy guest speakers, who bring a unique perspective as guests of the Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy program, and through organizing and sponsoring other unique visitors who bring different perspectives to the application of Western Civ in the public sphere. We also hold pop-up events on timely issues as they arise; these often don't fit into any of these categories, but they give us a degree of flexibility to address issues of public concern as they happen.



The Western Civ Dialogue Series

Our flagship event series is the Western Civ Dialogue Series. These discussions typically feature an intellectually diverse panel of expert speakers addressing a topic of political, social or economic importance. This year, the Western Civ Dialogue Series held 11 events with an attendance of over 760 individuals.

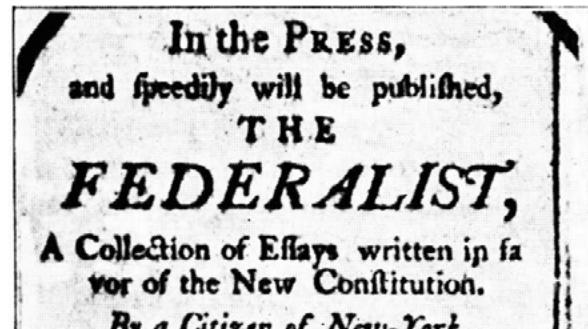


Rulers, Religion and Riches: Why the West Got Rich and the Middle East Did Not

Nov. 29, 2018 | Attendance: 60

For centuries following the spread of Islam, the Middle East was far ahead of Europe. And yet, the modern economy was born in Europe. Why was it not born in the Middle East? In this talk, Dr. Jared Rubin examined the role that Islam played in this reversal of fortunes. He argued that religion itself was not to blame; the importance of religious legitimacy in Middle Eastern politics was the primary culprit.

Featuring: Jared Rubin, associate professor, George L. Argyros School of Business and Economics and co-director, Institute for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Society, Chapman University



Trump and the Founders on the Meaning of National Greatness

Jan. 16, 2019 | Attendance: 65

Over the past three years, President Trump has returned the phrase “national greatness” to our political lexicon and has thereby compelled Americans to reflect on its meaning. Perhaps the best source for understanding the meaning of national greatness is *The Federalist Papers*. Its authors accurately laid out the logic by which a small, backwater confederation of states would become the world’s most powerful nation. Our task today is to understand the logic by which we became great and in what our greatness consists.

Featuring: Arthur Milikh, associate director and research fellow, B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, The Heritage Foundation



The Theater of War: What Ancient Greek Tragedies Can Teach Us Today

Jan. 31, 2019 | Attendance: 65

Translator and director Bryan Doerries presented his work with the Theater of War project. A self-described evangelist for classical literature and its relevance to our lives today, Doerries uses age-old approaches to help individuals and communities heal from trauma and loss.

Featuring: Brian Doerries, artistic director of Theater of War Productions and public artist in residence, city of New York



Truth, Politics and the Press: A Panel Discussion

Feb. 7, 2019 | Attendance: 75

Does truth matter in contemporary U.S. politics? What's wrong with our civic discourse? Is the press part of the problem or the solution? What needs to change? Panelists discussed these and related questions in a moderated public conversation.

Featuring: Kelsey Harkness, senior news producer, *The Daily Signal* (Heritage Foundation)

Roderick Hart, Shivers Chair in Communication and Professor of Government, University of Texas at Austin

Amy Westfeldt, managing editor, *NewsGuard* and former Associated Press New York City bureau chief

The Western Civ Dialogue Series



The Diversity Delusion

Feb. 13, 2019 | Attendance: 98

American Identities Program - In this provocative lecture, Heather Mac Donald argued that toxic ideas first spread by higher education have undermined humanistic values, fueled intolerance and widened divisions in our larger culture. Students emerge into the working world convinced that human beings are defined by their skin color, gender and sexual preference, and that oppression based on these characteristics is the American norm. Speech that challenges these campus orthodoxies is silenced with brute force. Mac Donald argued that a belief in America's endemic racism and sexism drives these problems. A metastasizing diversity bureaucracy in academia and the workplace denounces meritocratic standards as discriminatory, enforces hiring quotas and teaches students and adults alike to think of themselves as perpetual victims. The solution is a return to the classical liberal pursuits of open-minded inquiry and expression, by which everyone can discover a common humanity.

Featuring: Heather Mac Donald, Thomas W. Smith Fellow at the Manhattan Institute and contributing editor, *City Journal*



Fear of White Demographic Suicide

Feb. 15, 2019 | Attendance: 86

American Identities Program - Tukufu Zuberi is dedicated to bringing a fresh view of culture and society to the public through various platforms such as guest lecturing at universities, television programs and interactive social media. Currently, he works on human rights initiatives by participating in public speaking engagements, as well as international collaborations with transnational organizations and individuals dedicated to human equality.

Featuring:

Tukufu Zuberi, professor of sociology, Lasry Family Professor of Race Relations and professor of Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania

National Conservatives and Traditional Conservatives: A Call for Unity

Feb. 25, 2019 | Attendance: 58

Across Europe and throughout the West, two brands of conservatives are considering whether — and to what extent — they can collaborate: traditional conservative advocates of small government and robust free markets on one hand, and national conservative champions of

border security and cultural preservation on the other. In his presentation, Mattias Karlsson argued that these conservative camps are natural allies and must unite.

Featuring:

Mattias Karlsson, Sweden Democrats Chief Ideologue, former party leader and member of Parliament



Shattered Consensus

Mar. 7, 2019 | Attendance: 64

American Identities Program - The challenges of public debt, the retirement of the baby boomer generation and slow economic growth have reached a point where they require profound changes in the role of government in American life. At the same time, the widening gulf between the two political parties and the entrenched power of interest groups will make it difficult to negotiate the changes needed to renew the system. While others claim that the United States is in decline, James Piereson argued that Americans will rise to the challenge of forming a new governing coalition that can guide the nation on a path of dynamism and prosperity.

Featuring:

James Piereson, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and president and trustee of the William E. Simon Foundation



The First Weaponization of the First Amendment

Mar. 20, 2019 | Attendance: 66

In spring 2018, Justice Elena Kagan charged the Supreme Court's conservative justices with "weaponizing the First Amendment." In this talk, Professor Laura Weinrib explained how radical labor activists first "weaponized" the First Amendment during the 1930s. Their unlikely coalition with business leaders made judicial enforcement of free speech a central feature of American constitutional democracy. Weinrib explored why their forgotten bargain backfired, with important implications for the contest over constitutional rights today.

Featuring: Laura Weinrib, professor of law and associate member, Department of History, University of Chicago Law School

The Western Civ Dialogue Series



Why Not Capitalism?

Apr. 9, 2019 | Attendance: 100

What's good and bad about capitalism as we actually find it operating in the real world? Markets have liberated many from poverty; at the same time, many markets are rigged in unfair and unproductive ways. What, if anything, should we — and can we — do about it? Leading libertarian philosopher Jason Brennan discussed capitalism and the free enterprise system as it exists in our country today, arguing that capitalism would remain the best system even if we were morally perfect.

Featuring: Jason Brennan, Robert J. and Elizabeth Flanagan Family Professor of Strategy, Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy at the McDonough School of Business and professor of philosophy, Georgetown University

Last Moments: Death and our Animal Companions

May 2, 2019 | Attendance: 27

Losing a pet is a somber and intense experience shared by scores of people each year. In this discussion, panelists examined the many issues that caretakers face when confronted with the passing of their animal companions. What medical actions are the most appropriate and compassionate at the end of an animal's life? What moral and spiritual implications do people wrestle with when making these important decisions for their beloved companions? Presented in collaboration with St. Aidan's Episcopal Church and Canterbury Campus Ministry.

Featuring:

Cheryl Abbate, PhD candidate, University of Colorado Boulder and visiting teaching professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Fr. Dan Edwards, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, former Episcopal bishop of Nevada

Jessica Pierce, bioethicist, Center for Bioethics and Humanities, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Ross Taylor, assistant professor, University of Colorado Boulder

Conservative Thought and Policy Guest Speakers

In the interest of increasing intellectual diversity on campus, the Visiting Scholars in Conservative Thought and Policy invite guests throughout the academic year to give public lectures. In 2018–19, the scholars invited six speakers and welcomed an attendance of more than 214 individuals.



Conservatism in the Age of Trump

Sept. 25, 2018 | Attendance: 57

With good reason, many of America's most prominent conservatives opposed Trump's nomination in 2016 and his subsequent

candidacy for the presidency. They sensed, correctly, that he represented a new kind of conservatism, one he called the "Republican Workers Party." Buckley described how this scenario differed from America's political past.

Featuring:

Francis Buckley, foundation professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School, George Mason University



Civic Friendship in America

Oct. 4, 2018 | Attendance: 26

Conflict rather than concord seems to be the norm in American politics today, but one of the main architects of the Constitution, James Madison, envisioned the United States as a nation of friends. What was Madison's design to promote a harmony of sentiments, interests and views among the citizens of the nation? Is Madison's blueprint for civic friendship in America still relevant today?

Featuring:

Colleen Sheehan, professor of political science, Villanova University, director of the Ryan Center for Free Institutions and the Public Good, and 2019–20 Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy

Conservative Thought and Policy Guest Speakers



Imagination Rules the World: Russell Kirk and Conservatism

Oct. 11, 2018 | Attendance: 30

One of America's most important conservative thinkers, Russell Kirk, rejected big government and big business, placing him at odds with much of the conservative political movement. Instead, Kirk sought to revive what he called the moral imagination: those enduring principles by which individuals and societies can structure their lives. He did this through a narrative method sympathetic to postmodernism, which continues to make him one of the right's more interesting figures.

Featuring:

Gerald Russello, editor, *The University Bookman*



Why Culture Matters Most

Jan. 17, 2019 | Attendance: 25

While human flourishing requires the general prosperity that comes from a free market system and the freedom that depends upon democratic institutions, there is a danger of redistributive and regulatory favoritism that undermines general trust in the system. This can lead to political tribalism, which has been shown to reduce trust in the democratic system. This tension has implications for social, political and economic development. How can cultural beliefs build trust in institutions? What are the implications for family, religion, government and the stability of Western free-market democracies?

Featuring:

David C. Rose, professor of economics, University of Missouri-St. Louis



The Exploitation of Labor and Other Myths

Mar. 14, 2019 | Attendance: 32

Attorney Mark Pulliam presented a high-level and non-technical overview of common misconceptions about labor unions, drawing on labor economics, political philosophy, labor history and the law governing labor relations in America.

Featuring:

Mark Pulliam, attorney and commentator

Identity and Citizenship

Apr. 11, 2019 | Attendance: 44

American Identities Program - The clashes of identity politics, on the left and right, have contributed to the degradation of our national discourse. Can a renewed focus on our shared citizenship move us beyond this polarizing situation?

Featuring:

Mark Lilla, professor of humanities, Columbia University

Conservative Thought and Policy Outreach

In addition to inviting guest speakers to give public lectures on campus, our Visiting Scholars in Conservative Thought and Policy, William B. Allen and Stephen Presser, gave two lectures to more than 244 attendees. This outreach helped expand the Benson Center's audience and interest.



President Trump: A Danger to the Republic?

Sept. 13, 2018 | Attendance: 64

In his first address to the CU Boulder campus as a Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy, Professor Stephen B. Presser examined the origins of President Trump's judicial philosophy and the judicial views of his Supreme Court appointees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. Is President Trump making American law and the Constitution great again, or is he a danger to the republic? Who gets the law and the Constitution right — the President or his critics? Presser also touched upon Robert Mueller's Special Counsel investigation and the possibility of impeachment.

Featuring: Stephen Presser, Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy



Impeachment: A Panel Discussion

Oct. 18, 2018 | Attendance: 180

Should President Trump be impeached? What do the Constitution and its historical precedents tell us about impeachment? The Visiting Scholars in Conservative Thought and Policy and a CU faculty member discussed the possibility of impeachment and its potential political ramifications.

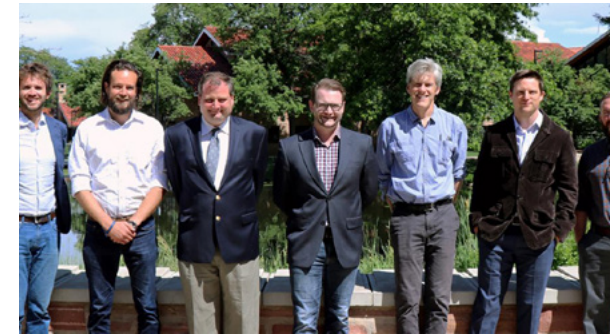
Featuring: William B. Allen, 2018–19 Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy

Stephen B. Presser, 2018–19 Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy

Michaele Ferguson, associate professor of political science, University of Colorado Boulder

Benson Center Summer Institute

In June 2019, the Benson Center held its first Summer Institute, a four-week program for scholars from other universities intended to provide a forum for research and the exchange of ideas. This past summer's institute was organized around the Center's 2019–20 theme, American Identities. Led by Center Director Robert Pasnau and CU Boulder professor Shilo Brooks, the program included collaborative seminars and reading groups, interactions with CU faculty and local policy makers, and other events, culminating in contributions to a forthcoming collaborative essay, "Does America Have a Distinctive Identity?"



2019 Benson Center Summer Institute Participants

Ian Bernhoft is a visiting faculty professor of English at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island. Bernhoft received his PhD in English from Boston University. His areas of expertise are American literature, 20th/21st-century literature and academic writing.

Nathan Dinneen is chair of the political science department and a professor of political science at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. Dinneen received his PhD from Northern Illinois University.

Ryan Dawkins is an assistant professor of political science at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Dawkins earned his PhD in political science at the University of Colorado Boulder. His primary research focus is in political behavior, political psychology and urban politics.

Russell Fehr was awarded a PhD in history in the spring of 2016 from the University of California Riverside. His dissertation, "Anxious Electorate: City Politics in Mid-1920s America," is a comparative study of Chicago, Detroit and Boston local politics in the mid-1920s. Fehr's area of expertise is 20th-century U.S. history.

Josh Vandiver is an assistant professor of political science at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Vandiver earned his PhD in politics from Princeton University. His teaching focuses on courses involving classical Greek and Roman political thought and its modern reception, political aesthetics and propaganda, conservative and radical political thought, fascism and neo-fascism, and the identity politics of race, ethnicity, indigeneity, sex, gender and sexuality.

"The Summer Institute's exploration of American identities was both intellectually invigorating and eye-opening. In an era of hyper-partisan debate about what it means to be American, it was enlightening to see how scholars from a variety of academic disciplines and political backgrounds are taking the temperature of the American experiment. The institute showcased the many ways in which interdisciplinary discourse enriches our understanding of American ideals."

– **Shilo Brooks**, Summer Institute faculty director

STUDENT + FACULTY GRANTS



Student Grants

The Benson Center offers two types of grants for students: language and internship grants. Language grants support students studying one of the many languages connected to the field of Western civilization. Internship grants help support internships that relate to Western civilization, including in law, government, public policy and education. The Benson Center awarded 11 student grants totaling \$19,000 to undergraduate and graduate students in disciplines such as history, philosophy, classics, Spanish and international affairs.

“ *This time in Washington, D.C., allowed me to contemplate my career aspirations and opened doors for a future in politics and beyond. As a young, politically driven and patriotic American, living in the heart of our nation’s highly charged political climate was a dream come true.*

Lindsey Nichols, Benson Center student grantee

“ *I used my grant to work on my Italian and do research at the Central Archives of the Italian State in Rome. This grant has allowed me to return and do several weeks of research in the Italian language archives, making my dissertation one that examines both the United States and Italy. This multinational research would not have been possible without the CWC Summer Grant.*

Alexander Langer, Benson Center student grantee

Student Grantee	Grant Type
Katiana Hutchinson	Internship - CU in DC
Lindsey Nichols	Internship - CU in DC
Bailey McCue	Internship - CU in DC
Lauren Kennedy	Internship - State of Colorado Air Quality Control Division
Sierra Standish	Language Grant
Sam Hahn	Language Grant
Samuel Kindick	Language Grant
Dawn Jacob	Language Grant
Alexander Langer	Language Grant
Micaela Cruce	Language Grant
Philip Choi	Language Grant
Cristian Larroulet Philippi	CTP Graduate Assistant

Faculty Grants

In addition to student grants, the Benson Center funds research and educational initiatives that contribute to critical reflection on the development of Western civilization to all CU Boulder faculty. We are particularly interested in funding research initiatives of scholarly lectures, public lectures, conferences, educational initiatives and outreach visits to local schools, retirement communities, etc. During the 2018–19 academic year, the Benson Center awarded 20 faculty grants totaling \$27,600. These grants enabled faculty to bring expert visitors in Western Civ to campus and pursue new outreach initiatives.

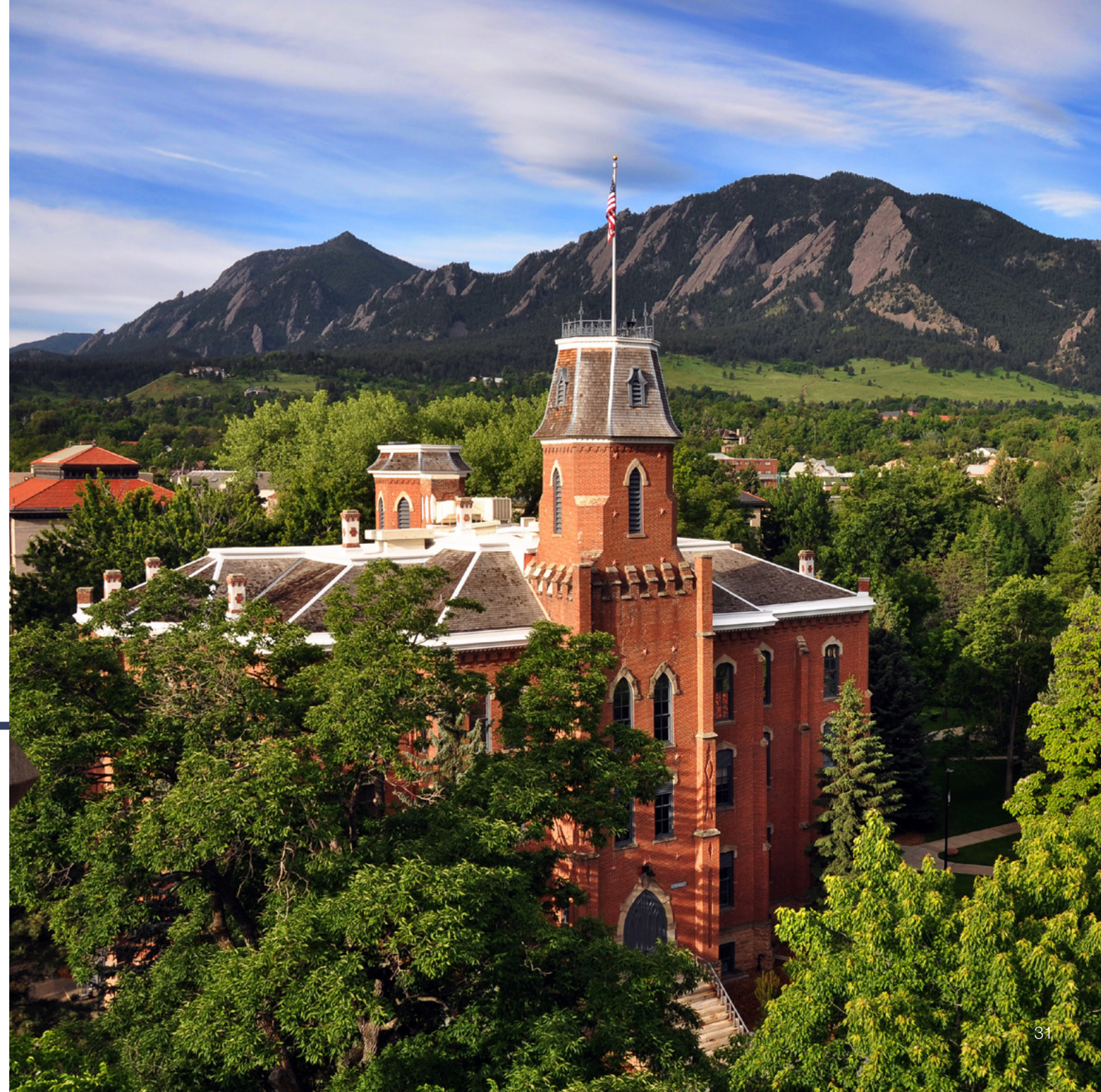
I was teaching 'Roman Law' this semester, and the [Gender of Roman Banking] talk was required for my class We had talked extensively about gender and Roman law in class, but the intersection of gender, law and Roman economics was a new dimension for students... Since a Roman law class is by nature interdisciplinary, I was grateful to not only have the content of Professor Riggsby's lecture to share with students, but also to have the opportunity to provide them with a real model for interdisciplinary work in the humanities.

Isabel K. Köster, Benson Center faculty grantee

Faculty Grantee	Dept/Group	Amount	Description
Mediterranean Studies Group	Religious Studies	\$5,000	Annual Event Support
Tamara Meneghini	Theatre & Dance	\$2,500	Galt MacDermot Tribute, "Let the Sunshine In," Apr. 19, 2019
Céline Dauverd	History	\$1,500	In support of visiting faculty Pierre Savy, Apr. 28–May 1, 2019
David Boonin	Philosophy	\$950	Ethics Bowl
Mi-Kyoung Lee	Philosophy	\$400	In support of visiting faculty Rachel Barney, Apr. 11–12, 2019
David Shneer	History/Religious Studies/Jewish Studies	\$3,000	Archive Transformed Collaborative Residency, May 2019

Mark Leiderman	Germanic & Slavic Languages	\$900	In support of visiting faculty Stanislav Lvovsky, Feb. 17–20, 2019
Scott Powell	Aquinas Institute for Catholic Thought	\$1,000	12th annual "Great Debate," Aquinas Institute, Feb. 8, 2019
Carole Newlands	Classics	\$750	In support of visiting faculty Emily Gowers, Feb. 18–20, 2019
Cheryl Higashida	English	\$3,000	Symposium: "Development and Underdevelopment in the Global South: Histories, Forms, Alternatives," Apr. 5, 2019
Lauren Stone	Germanic & Slavic Languages	\$400	Critical Theory Event with Martin Shuster, Feb. 20–22, 2019
Isabel K. Köster	Classics	\$700	Andrew Riggsby, "The Gender of Roman Banking," Apr. 1, 2019
Núria Silleras-Fernández	Spanish & Portuguese	\$1,000	Sol Miguel-Prendes, "Orpheus in Hell: Moral Consolation and Sentimental Fiction," Oct. 17, 2018
Atreyee Bhattacharya	Environmental Studies	\$1,000	Global Environmental Affairs Symposium
Jerry K. Jacka	Anthropology	\$1,000	Sarah Vaughn, "What about Expertise? Climate Change, Territory, and the Global South," Sept. 28, 2018
David Shneer	Religious Studies	\$800	Kecia Ali, "Contesting Muhammed: Contemporary Controversies in Historical Perspective," Sept. 13, 2018
Jackie Elliott	Classics	\$1,000	John Marincola, "Writing Contemporary History in the Ancient World," Mar. 14, 2019
Sue Zemka	English	\$1,000	In support of visiting faculty Colin Dayan, Oct. 12, 2018
Hope Clark Saska	CU Art Museum	\$1,000	Symposium: "Anthropocene Resonance: Interdisciplinary Approaches," Feb. 8, 2019
Elsbeth R. M. Dusinberre	Classics	\$700	In support of visiting faculty Stephen Harrison, May 1–7, 2019

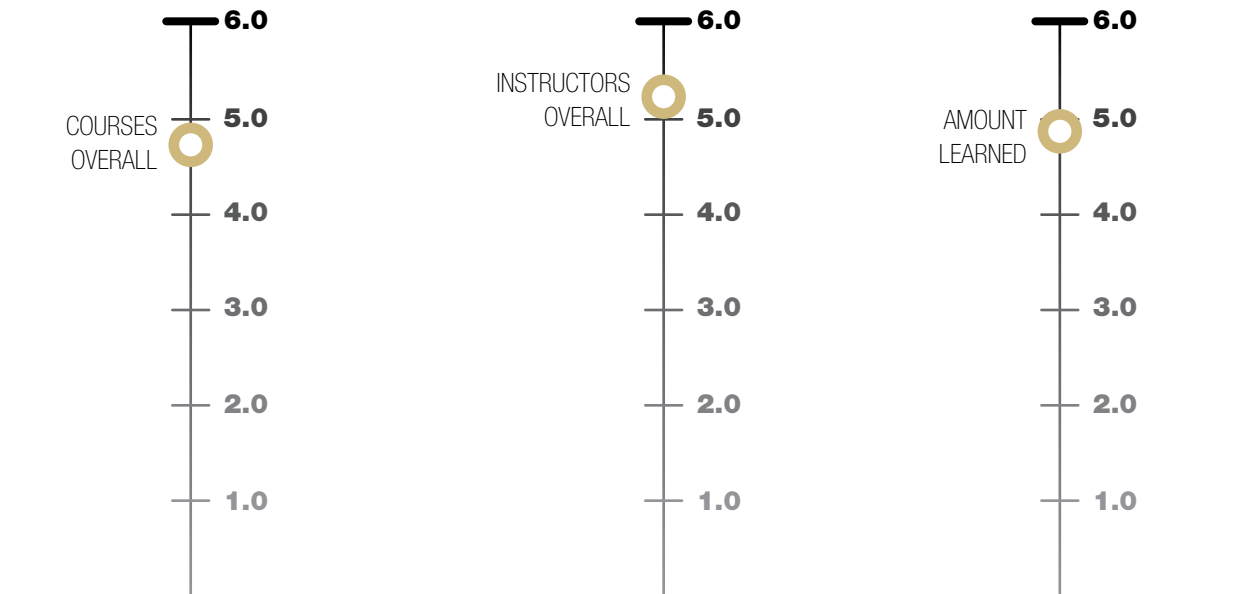
COURSE DATA
+ PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT



Course Data

During the 2018–19 academic year, **388 students** were enrolled in one of **12 Benson Center-offered courses**. On a scale of 1 to 6, “Courses Overall” averaged a 4.86 student rating, “Instructors Overall” averaged a 5.19 student rating and “Amount Learned” averaged a 4.91 student rating.

By offering courses in five distinct disciplines, the Benson Center was highly successful again this year at educating a broad range of CU Boulder students. Notably, four courses were taught at full capacity: “Liberalism and Its Critics,” “The Western Tradition” (spring) and “Issues in U.S. Society and Culture” (both fall and spring sections).

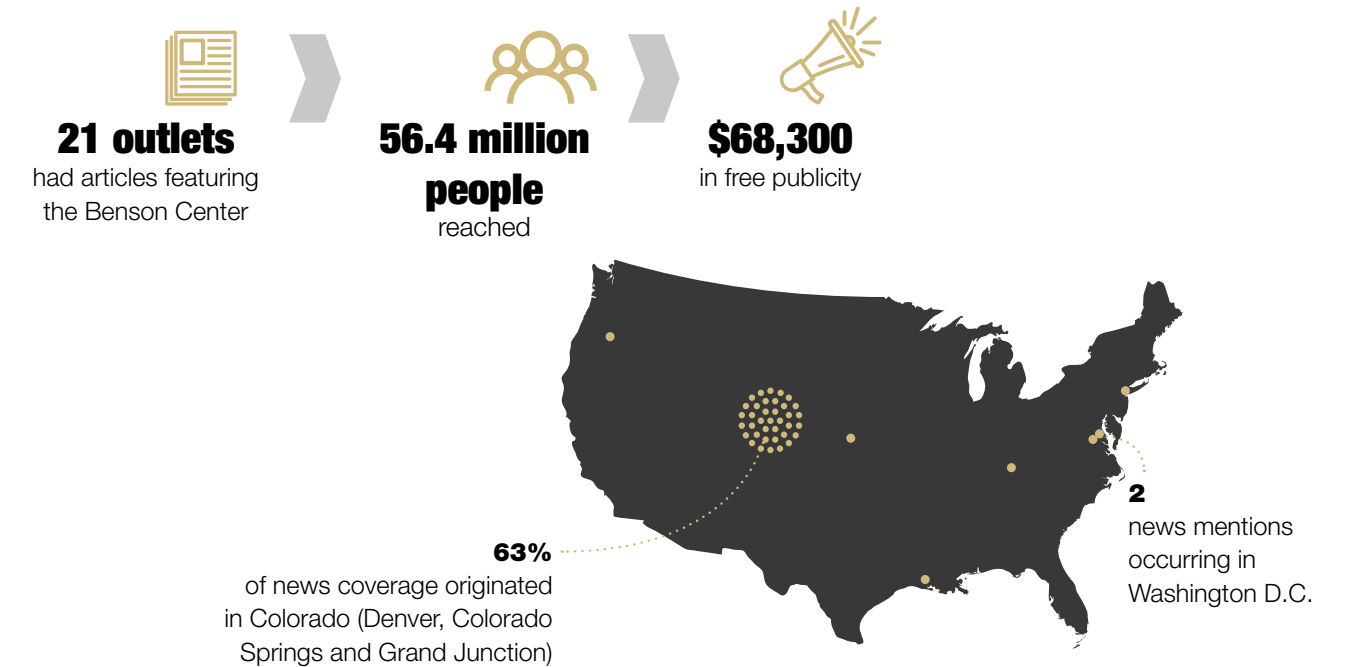


Media Coverage

The Benson Center earned **35 quality news mentions** during the 2018–19 academic year **across 21 outlets**, 16 of which were unique mentions (other articles were republished). Articles and news clips mentioning the Center appeared in print outlets with a combined possible reach of **56.4 million people**. News mentions generated **\$68,300** in free publicity value for the Benson Center.

Approximately **63% of news coverage originated in Colorado** (Denver, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction). There were five mentions in national outlets, and two more in Washington, D.C. Clips also appeared in Seattle, Charlotte, Raleigh, Fresno, Albuquerque and Boise.

Of note were multiple articles about the Center in conjunction with President Bruce Benson’s retirement, including a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece, “A Campus Welcomes Conservatives,” by 2013–14 Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy Steven F. Hayward, and a *Colorado Springs Gazette* editorial, “CU Doubles Emphasis on Western Civilization.”



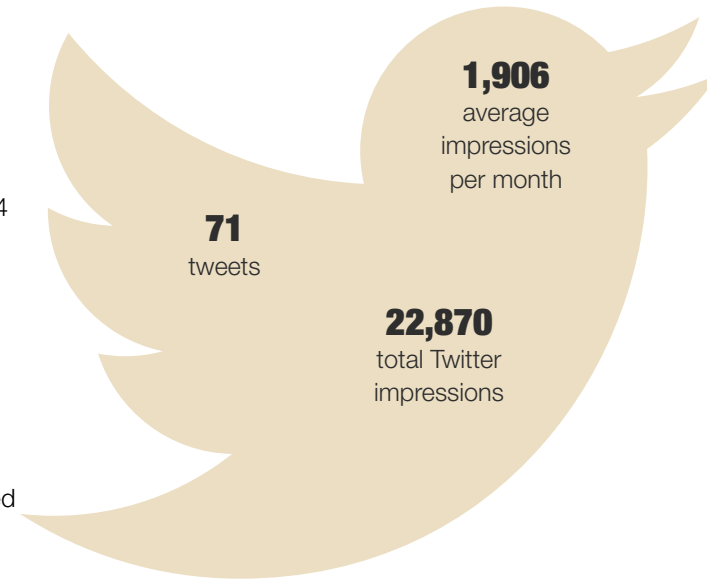
Social Media Analytics

The Benson Center runs three social media platforms: YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. All three have seen a steady increase in activity and viewership over the past academic year.

In 2018–19, the Benson Center posted 19 videos of lectures hosted by the Center or featuring Benson Center-affiliated speakers. The Center's YouTube page had 152,667 views across all videos and a subscriber base of 1,094 individuals. Notably, the Center's February 2019 panel video "Truth, Politics, and the Press: A Panel Discussion" received 1,174 views. Patrick Deneen's 2016 lecture, "The End of Liberalism," has received 5,100 views to date.

The Benson Center Facebook page has grown from 237 likes in September 2018 to 287 likes at the end of the 2018–19 academic year. According to its Facebook marketing strategy, the Center posted consistently throughout the academic year regarding Center news and events, generating 7,805 organic post views. The Center engaged in paid advertising event promotion as well. Paid ads in 2018–19 generated a reach of 70,519. Overall, the Center's Facebook platform generated a total reach of 78,324 individuals in organic and paid advertising.

The Center's Twitter page followers have increased to 74, up 20 from the beginning of the academic year. This increase is substantial, as Twitter page followers remained steady at about 50 individuals during 2017–18. The Benson Center received a total of 22,870 impressions on 71 tweets. The Center's tweets averaged around 1,906 impressions per month, with October 2018 garnering 7,462 impressions alone, due to the high number of events and promotions.



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19
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2018–19 Expenses

	2018–19 Expenses	2017–18 Expenses	2016–17 Expenses
Salary Expense Total (Wages + Benefits)	\$ 781,496	\$ 521,453	\$ 367,552
Faculty	\$ 516,413	\$ 336,808	\$ 218,530
Officer/Exempt	\$ 72,447	\$ 61,067	\$ 53,981
Classified Staff	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,181
Student Wages	\$ 12,804	\$ 9,544	\$ 6,051
Benefits	\$ 179,832	\$ 114,034	\$ 87,808
Operating Costs Total	\$ 165,537	\$ 191,264	\$ 157,665
Operating Expenses	\$ 125,894	\$ 94,546	\$ 92,692
Travel	\$ 27,748	\$ 40,124	\$ 25,545
Transfers Out (Faculty & Student Grants)	\$ 11,895	\$ 56,594	\$ 39,428
Total Expense	\$ 947,033	\$ 712,717	\$ 525,217



“Thank you so much for all that you do. As one of the few conservative students at CU Boulder (or so I thought when I initially came), it has been so heartening to know that there is a community of those that can actually civilly engage in a dialogue and that I am not alone. I think [the Benson Center’s] presence on campus is incredibly important and pivotal in the development of the students who attend and also a great way to bring the wider community together.”

– CU Boulder student

Bruce Benson, 22nd president of the University of Colorado /
2008–19 / Fostering Intellectual Diversity



Benson Center for the Study
of Western Civilization

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER