



University of Colorado

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A Message from the President

January 2017

Dear eComm:

I sometimes ask people what percentage of CU's \$3.8 billion annual budget comes from state funding. Guesses typically range from 30 to 60 percent. The actual figure is less than 6 percent.

As the Colorado General Assembly begins its legislative session next week, some of our friends urge us to lobby harder, tell our story better, and make a stronger case to legislators for more funding. The reality is our lawmakers understand and appreciate what CU and all higher education do for our students, citizens, communities and state and they support us. They know our university and its four campuses are a powerful economic engine for Colorado, that we prepare the highly skilled workforce our state demands, and that the nearly \$1 billion in largely federal research funds we attract improves lives, drives innovation and has a substantial economic impact.

The trouble is their hands are tied. While the state budget is limited by competing measures in the state constitution (including Amendment 23, TABOR and the Gallagher Amendment), revenues are also not adequate enough to maintain programs over time, including higher education. The result is Colorado ranks an abysmal 48th nationally in state funding for higher education. Forecasts show the future will be equally challenging, perhaps more so.

While state higher education funding was flat last year, CU got a 3 percent increase because enrollment increased and we received funding to reward our strong performance. The governor's budget request for the coming year calls for a modest



increase for higher education, although it is a long road between request and reality. Still, we appreciate this support – it demonstrates that state leadership values higher education.

But it doesn't change how far we are behind the curve. When I started almost nine years ago, our state funding was \$227 million. This year it's \$202 million. It dipped as low as \$158 million in 2013. All the while, our enrollment has steadily increased, so we serve more students with less funding. We estimate that our state funding should be \$385 million to have the same funding per resident student as we did in 2001.

A snapshot of where we stand nationally shows CU Boulder's peers in the prestigious Association of American Universities receive an average of three times more state funding per resident student than we do. This hurts us in the competitive market for top students, faculty and researchers, not to mention its effects on tuition costs and quality. It is imperative that the state of Colorado grows the funding pie. The continual decline throughout the years will haunt us if we don't reverse the trend, particularly when forecasts show more rough waters ahead.

CU certainly will continue to do what it can. We have found efficiencies, fostered public-private partnerships, increased research funding and bolstered fundraising. Yet the last two, while adding significant value to our university, are earmarked for specific use by either the donors or federal funding agencies and cannot be diverted. State funding is critical. Along with tuition, it pays mandatory costs (such as utilities and insurance) and our stellar faculty, who are at the heart of academic quality.

We also have had a great partnership with lawmakers the past nine years, during which they have passed legislation that allows us to operate more efficiently, cut red tape and increase revenue. The result has been nine years of savings and revenue enhancements. To give some recent examples, we saw \$32 million in savings and cost avoidance last year and \$40 million the year before. While we are never finished looking for efficiencies – internally and with the help of legislation – there aren't many obvious targets left to pursue.

There is simply no substitute for state funding, so we intend to continue to engage with legislators and others to address the issue. Beginning next week, lawmakers will consider modest fixes, and we have ideas as well. It's a start to tackling a complex issue, one that looms large for Colorado and beyond.

For feedback, contact officeofthepresident@cu.edu

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Benson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Bruce Benson
President

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IN THE NEWS



[Welcome to our new regents; thank you to those who have served](#)

Today, we welcomed two new members to the CU Board of Regents, Heidi Ganahl and Jack Kroll. Congratulations to both for being elected to the board and to Regent Sue Sharkey, who was elected to her second term. We are also grateful to outgoing members Steve Bosley and Michael Carrigan, both CU alumni, for their outstanding, dedicated service these past 12 years.



[Leaders in science, medicine named Distinguished Professors](#)

Four individuals, each with decades of



[UCCS Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak to retire effective Feb. 15](#)

A heartfelt thank you to Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak, who has been an exceptional leader in her 15 years at the helm of the campus and has served 40 years total in various capacities. She has led UCCS from a commuter campus with 6,500 students to a residential academic and research mainstay in southern Colorado with more than 12,000 students.



[Congratulations to CU Buffs football](#)

The CU Buffaloes football team, coaches and staff had a fantastic 2016 with a 10-4

service to CU, have been named Distinguished Professors, the highest honor awarded to faculty across the CU system's four campuses. Bernard Amadei of CU Boulder, Zbigniew Celinski of UCCS, and John Hobbins and Ernest E. Moore, both of CU Anschutz, are the newest designees.

season, winning the Pac-12 South title and earning a bowl bid for the first time since 2007. We are proud of their accomplishments and the positive recognition that the team's success brings to our university and our state. Well done, Buffs.

ALL FOUR:COLORADO



[CU Anschutz scientist finds inspiration to help homeless from her daily commute](#)

As a scientist, [Shawna Matthews](#) was used to spotting problems and searching for solutions. But when she became concerned about the people experiencing homelessness in her community, the last place she expected to find a solution was in her daily commute to the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

ALL FOUR:VIDEO



[Learning how to think at CU](#) [ALL FOUR: Opportunity](#)

When Allen Lim applied to CU, he did not get in--at first. The founder of Skrtch



[CU prepares students to make a difference](#) [ALL FOUR: Progress](#)

The University of Colorado offers

Labs, one of America's fastest growing food and beverage companies, reflects on the value of learning how to learn while pursuing his master's and Ph.D. at CU.

hundreds of programs throughout Colorado, including pre-collegiate programs that inspire students to pursue college degrees and careers in STEM fields.

SPOTLIGHT ON **ALUMNI**



[CU alumna is guiding the Grand Canyon](#)

The Grand Canyon and much of the surrounding landscape – more than a million acres in all – are CU Boulder alumna Chris Lehnertz's to care for. This past August, Lehnertz became the 19th superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, one of the most famous and visited spots in the National Park system.

BECOME A **CU ADVOCATE**

Colorado needs healthy research universities that produce a highly educated workforce, grow our economy, attract business and industry, and engage in research that generates jobs, creates companies and improves lives. With your help we can keep CU – and Colorado – strong.

[Become an advocate for CU](#)



NEWS FROM OUR **CAMPUSES**

CU BOULDER

[Ancient Chaco Canyon population likely relied on imported food](#): Ancient inhabitants of New Mexico's Chaco Canyon likely had to import corn to feed the multitudes residing there

CU COLORADO SPRINGS

[UCCS librarian chosen for national public service honor](#): Tabatha "Tabby" Farney, associate professor in the Kraemer Family Library, was named a winner of the I Love My Librarian Award

CU DENVER

[Researcher finds 'identity loan' common in undocumented workers](#): New study challenges portrayals of identity theft in workplaces dominated by undocumented immigrants

CU ANSCHUTZ

[C-PAWW to study veterans and shelter dogs walking together](#): Initiative based at the CU College of Nursing is evaluating how shelter dogs physically and psychologically impact vets with PTSD



Make a difference. Support CU today!

[GIVE TO CU](#)
