

2016 Annual Financial Report and Illustrated Guide: CU's Numbers and What They Mean ^[1]

February 5, 2017 by [normandy.roden](#) ^[2]

The 2016 Annual Financial Report and Illustrated Guide are now available on the [Office of University Controller website](#). ^[3]

We encourage you to review how the University has fared financially over the past year.

Accountants: Check out the numbers.

The Annual Financial Report is available as both a website and a PDF document.

- The [website version](#) ^[4] provides improved searchability and accessibility, mobile-friendly design, and easy access to related Notes.
- The [PDF version](#) ^[5] provides a more traditional format and can be easily conveyed to sponsors as part of a grant application process. (Note: Both the HTML and PDF versions are printer-friendly.)

Non-accountants: What do all of these numbers mean?

The audited financial statements are complicated! The Illustrated Guide takes that complexity and makes it understandable to users no matter their level of financial background.

- As indicated by its header ("CU Financials Explained"), the [Illustrated Guide](#) ^[6] is an example of the Office of University Controller's commitment to fiscal transparency and education. We want to make it easy for interested individuals to understand the University's financial position. So we explain – in plain English and using straightforward charts and interactions – where CU holds its resources, what the claims against those resources are, and what's left over in the end.

We continue to receive accolades on our radical redesign of annual financial report information. A number of institutions have contacted us because they want to “do what CU did” – and we’re beginning to see website presentations of audited financial statements for colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada. Similarly, many institutions have asked for information on the tools we used to create the various years’ versions of the Illustrated Guide. However – to the best of our knowledge – our Guide remains unique as a website designed to translate the complex concepts of an annual report, putting them in plain English and providing a mechanism for comments and questions.

And we're proud that NACUBO (the National Association of College and University Business Officers) honored our accomplishments with an Innovation Award ^[7] and highlighted them in an extensive article in the NACUBO Business Officer magazine. ^[8]

Let us know what you think!

- For questions or comments on the Illustrated Guide, we encourage you to take advantage of the feedback mechanism ^[6] on the Illustrated Guide website.
- For questions on the Annual Financial Report, please contact Robert.Kuehler@cu.edu ^[9].

Happy reading!

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