

From: Diana Kelly <Diana.Kelly@uchsc.edu>  
Date: Mon, May 12, 2008 at 3:08 PM  
Subject: Message from President Benson  
To: CU-System@lists.uchsc.edu

The logo for "FACE THE STATE" is displayed in white text on a dark blue rectangular background. The word "FACE" is on the left, "THE" is in the center with a vertical line through it, and "STATE" is on the right. There are horizontal lines under "FACE" and "STATE".

May 12, 2008

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

As we approach the end of the semester and have completed the 2008 Colorado legislative session, I would like to update you on some of the activities I have been involved with and some of the success CU has seen recently. My focus has been on attracting increased public and private funding to our university.

First, in my nine weeks on the job, I have had many opportunities to meet with members of the university community during campus visits and at various meetings, and I continue to be impressed by the quality, dedication and engagement of our faculty, staff and students.

I have been making campus visits to meet with governance groups, our fundraising staff, chancellors and other members of the university community. I have had briefings on some of our major research initiatives so that I can effectively advocate for them with donors and funding agencies. I appreciate the welcome I have received on campuses and the willingness of the university community to come together to move CU forward.

The Colorado General Assembly finished this year's session and we feel it has been a successful one for CU. Our General Fund appropriation is slated to increase by \$14.1 million and the College Opportunity Fund will increase by \$90 per student, to \$2,760/FTE.

Our capital construction appropriation in the Long Bill was a healthy \$47.2 million for all CU's campuses. Projects funded include \$7 million for the new Science and Engineering Building at UCCS; \$7.1 million for the new Visual Arts Complex at UCB, as well as \$8.4 million for renovation of Ketchum and \$11.6 million for renovation of Ekeley. At UCD, we will receive \$13.1 million for certificates of participation (bond funding) for the Anschutz Medical Campus. We also will receive \$5.2 million for controlled maintenance across the system.

In addition, the Federal Mineral Lease legislation will provide an additional \$63 million for the completion of the Science Building on the Auraria Campus; CU, which will share space in the building with Metro State College and Community College of Denver, will use about 40 percent of the building. It also provides \$17 million for renovation of the Science Building at UCCS.

The Legislature capped tuition increases at 9.5 percent and as you may know, the CU Board of Regents recently approved increases for resident undergraduates of 9.3 percent at the Boulder campus, 8.5 percent at the Downtown Denver campus and 7.5 percent at the Colorado Springs campus. One of the reasons for the increase is that the state imposed mandated costs that the university has no choice but to meet. They include classified salary increases (which we match for faculty and exempt staff in the interests of fairness), increases in the insurance contribution, higher utility costs, and more funding directed to financial aid.

While I understand increased costs are difficult, it is imperative that we maintain and build on the quality of our educational offerings. Colorado is 50th in the nation in the amount of per-student funding the state provides. At the same time, CU's tuition is still below the national average of our peers (88 percent of peer average at UCD, 89 percent at UCB, and 97 percent at UCCS).

Many ballot initiatives were proposed or introduced at the end of the legislative session. Most notable is Governor Ritter's proposal for a severance tax increase on oil and gas production that would fund new scholarships. While I support scholarships and the Governor's proposal, we must also work to ensure we can operate our university. That means securing new operating revenue, which is a primary focus for Governor Ritter and me. We have had several talks on the issue and will continue to push for more funding. As ballot proposals become clearer, we will determine CU's role in any advocacy, within parameters of the Fair Campaign Practices Act.

We were in Washington, D.C. recently, meeting with each member of Colorado's Congressional delegation, as well as Veterans' Affairs Secretary James Peake. The VA announced it wants to partner with CU to add a tower at University Hospital on the Anschutz Medical Campus, as well as team with us on research endeavors.

We also went to the White House to meet with administration officials to push for projects important to our university, including extending Medicaid funding (a potential impact of more than \$40 million on the School of Medicine and University Hospital), an interchange at I-225 by the Anschutz Medical Campus, and the Farm Bill, which could bring \$25 million to the Colorado Renewable Energy Collaboratory, of which CU is a member. In addition, we met with Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the head of NOAA, to discuss future projects.

There have been several exciting developments recently at CU. As you may have seen in media reports, our first Nobel laureate, Professor Tom Cech, has resigned as president of the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute to return to his teaching and research at the Boulder campus. Adding one of the world's top scientific minds to an already strong group of teachers and researchers will boost our biosciences initiatives.

At UCCS, redevelopment along the Nevada Street corridor is proceeding, which will have a significant impact as the campus grows to the west. The news that the Olympic Training Center will remain in Colorado Springs creates opportunities for the campus,

which we are pursuing. Colorado Springs will be branded "Home of the Olympics," and our campus is exploring partnerships with various Olympic sport governing bodies. UCCS has also launched the Barbara Swaby Endowment Fund drive to honor the longtime professor of Education whose inspiring work in reading education has had a significant impact on thousands of students and children.

The Downtown Denver campus acquired some much-needed space with the recent purchase of the building at 1475 Lawrence St. It will likely be the new home of our Business School. Thanks to the CU Foundation for its help on the project.

At UC Denver's Anschutz Medical Campus, three notable gifts will continue its transformation into a world-class medical facility. On Thursday, Philip Anschutz and the Anschutz Foundation donated \$15 million to establish a new Health and Wellness Center. Businessman George Wieggers provided \$5 million to allow us to open the nation's second Depression Center, in the School of Medicine. A \$10 million gift from the ALSAM Foundation will allow us to break ground on a new School of Pharmacy building.

Overall, our private fundraising for the year is well over \$100 million. We are on pace to break last year's record of \$133.5 million.

I look forward, as I know many of you do, to our commencement ceremonies on each campus. I wish our graduates the best in all their endeavors.

I will keep you apprised of my activities with periodic communiqués such as this. In the meantime, thank you for all you do to make the University of Colorado great.

Sincerely,

Bruce D. Benson  
President