

Why should all faculty, students and staff be worried about the near certainty that Bruce Benson will be anointed the next President of the University of Colorado? Why should all faculty, students and staff mobilize to defeat his candidacy? Because he will transform CU into the WalMart of higher education. Because Bruce Benson is the wrong candidate, now, and forever. Because CU can do much, much better.

Read the information below. Check out its accuracy if you wish. Decide what you think. Then Please:

- **Send this email to every CU faculty and staff member or CU you know.**
- **Email or call the Regents.**
- **Email or call your state representatives.**
- **Email or call David Skaggs, the Colorado Commissioner of Higher Education. David Skaggs, the Colorado Commissioner of Higher Education.**
- **Email or call Governor Ritter.**

ACT IMMEDIATELY.

THE REGENTS ARE SCHEDULED TO VOTE ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, THE SAME DAY THAT BENSON WILL BE VISITING THE CU-BOULDER CAMPUS. WE CANNOT WAIT TO HEAR HIM AGAIN. ACTING THEN WILL BE TOO LATE.

1. **BENSON HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF ACTA, AN ORGANIZATION ON RECORD IN OPPOSITION TO SHARED GOVERNANCE AND FACULTY RIGHTS.** Bruce Benson is a member of ACTA's Trustee's Council; he served as an ACTA (American College Trustees and Alumni) Trustee at Smith College. ACTA (Check out http://www.goacta.org/about_acta/advisory.html) wants to create more “flexible” and “responsive” administrative structures by reducing the status (and even eliminate the requirement of a PhD) of top academic officers such as Deans, Department heads, and even, perhaps, Provosts. This already has happened at CU-Boulder; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Diversity, a post previously held by two tenured faculty members, was filled by a non-academic without faculty rank. The job description only required a BA degree. This “flattened” hierarchical structure already is being implemented Adams State and CSU, and it destroys the link between faculty and their academic leaders. No credible academic would take such a position without such protection. It’s more or less how WalMart operates. CU could be next.
2. **BENSON HAS VIOLATED THE CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OF TENURED FACULTY.** Upon his installation as President of Metropolitan State University’s Board of Trustees, he had the Faculty Handbook completely re-written without discussion or consultation with the faculty. (The person rumored to have done the job had previously re-written the management guide for Quizno's). In the new Faculty Handbook, the RIF

(Reduction in Force) policy was changed so that in case of a financial shortfall (not exigency), rank or tenure no longer need be considered in decisions about elimination of teaching positions. He then fired tenured faculty. Metro faculty sued, and the case still is in the courts. What would Benson do to further weaken faculty rights and due process at CU?

3. **BENSON COULD FURTHER DESTROY DUE PROCESS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF:** Already seriously under attack, due process for faculty at CU has only a tenuous and unenforceable toehold in the Faculty Handbook. That Handbook is only “advisory” to the administration, which does not have to abide by its policies. Benson already has re-written at least one Faculty Handbook. Hank Brown’s administration made major changes in it as well—all to the detriment of faculty rights. What steps would a President Benson take at CU?
4. **BENSON HAS NO VISION.** Benson’s ideas about CU’s mission are more appropriate for a public school system, a vocational school or a community college. It isn’t just that Benson has only a BA degree, a lack of qualifications entirely rare among University Presidents. It’s that he has no intellectual or scholarly appreciation for what scientists and scholars do and the conditions needed for them to do their work effectively.
5. **BENSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITIES OF CU’S MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH INITIATIVES.** Benson is either woefully unaware or refuses to acknowledge the impact of the carbon cycle on Earth's living systems. It was embarrassing to hear Benson cite the National Geographic and the local newspapers as authoritative sources on climate change, and express skepticism about the human role (now indisputable among environmental sciences from all disciplines) in global warming. How can he lead an institution that is striving to be climate neutral when, at both the student and faculty meetings, he claimed that humans and plants emit CO₂ into the atmosphere too? Does he really think that, when it comes to carbon, humans and plants are no different than cars and power plants? How can he preside credibly over CU when he doesn’t appear to believe in scientific initiatives for which CU faculty shared a Nobel Prize this very year????
6. **BENSON HAS NO APPROPRIATE EXPERIENCE.** Benson knows how to run an oil and gas exploration company. Not a university. He understands corporate culture. He is utterly uninformed about the culture and complexities of how to run a Tier One University. His actions at Metro were strictly corporate: Fire expensive (full-time and tenured) employees with benefits and replace them with cheap (part-time and contingent) employees without benefits. It’s WalMart all over again. We can expect the same kinds of “cost saving” actions if he becomes CU President.

7. **BENSON’S CLAIM THAT HE WOULD LEAVE ACADEMIC MATTERS TO THE CAMPUS CHANCELLORS IS NOT COMFORTING.** Not given ACTA’s agenda for reorganizing universities. Chancellors are appointed by the University President; nothing would stop Benson from firing the current administrators and replacing them with people sympathetic to ACTA’s agenda.
8. **BENSON’S STATEMENTS ABOUT ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE CLASSROOM AND RESEARCH ARE NOT CREDIBLE.** When he says—as he did at we need “sensible” research and professors who teach “what they are supposed to teach” in their classes) too closely resembles David Horowitz’s rhetoric about “balance” in teaching. For ACTA and Horowitz, those words are simply cover terms for conservative hegemony.
9. **BENSON HAS A RECORD OF DIVISIVE PARTISANSHIP.** His Trailhead Organization spent \$200,000 on negative and false attack campaigning against rancher Wes McKinley, state representative from SE Colorado and leader of opposition to the US Military takeover of the Pinon Canyon area. Despite his promises to abandon Republican party activity, it’s unlikely that his modus operandi in dealing with opposition and dissent will change.
10. **BENSON’S RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IS POOR.** He contributed at least \$1000 to the defense fund of Senator Robert Packwood, who was accused—and convicted—of harassing and assaulting more than 20 women while in office. At meetings on campus, his only comment was that “everyone is entitled to a defense.” True enough, but given CU’s egregious record for protecting sexual harassers in the past, it doesn’t need another President who covers up and stonewalls for predators.
11. **BENSON DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPORT AMONG FACULTY, STUDENTS, STAFF AND THE REGENTS.** A firestorm of protest already has erupted against both the process by which Benson was chosen, and his candidacy itself. Three current and one former (Jim Martin) Regent have openly opposed Benson for President of CU. The Benson Presidency is being forced upon a University system that seems dead set against him, and humiliated not only by the fact that the Regents didn’t want to support anyone more qualified, but by being ignored.

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