

# THE CHRONICLE

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## NSF Raises Alarm Over Falling State Support for Research Universities

By Paul Basken

### NO MU MENTION

All but seven states cut their per-student support for major public research universities over the past decade, the National Science Board said Tuesday in a report depicting the cutbacks as a threat to the country's long-term economic health.

In 10 states, per-student support fell at least 30 percent from 2002 to 2010, according to data compiled by the board, which is the governing body of the National Science Foundation.

The NSF regularly tracks and publishes broad statistics on government spending on university research. It produced Tuesday's report, however, as the start of a regular series intended to focus attention on the growing threat to leading public research universities.

Bruce D. Benson, a businessman brought in as president of the U. of Colorado system in 2008, has adopted a "let's get lean and mean" approach to budget pressures.

"Our clear message here," said one member of the NSF board, Ray M. Bowen, a former president of Texas A&M University, "is these institutions are important to the economic strength of our nation long-term, and the funding for them at the current time is diminishing, and we want policy makers to understand that."

For its analysis, the National Science Board tallied data involving the nation's top 101 public research universities, as measured by research financing levels. By state, Colorado, which had two universities in the compilation, saw its per-student state support for the institutions decline by 48 percent over the nine-year period.

Other states where per-student spending dropped by 30 percent or more over that period were (in descending order, with the steepest drop first) Rhode Island, South Carolina, Illinois, Georgia, Virginia, Oregon, Michigan, West Virginia, and California.

Only six states showed increases. They were (in descending order, with the largest gain first) New York, Wyoming, Alaska, North Dakota, Louisiana, and Delaware. One state, North Carolina, showed no change.

For the period 1992 to 2001, only six states had registered a drop in per-student state support at those universities, the report says.

### *Looking for Private Support*

Although the report reflects a new commitment by the National Science Foundation to highlight and help tackle the problem, analysts agreed the general trend seen in the figures was well recognized by now.

Major public universities simply need to find private financing, said Gary C. Fethke, a professor of management sciences and economics at the University of Iowa and a co-author of a new book from Stanford University Press, *Public No More: A New Path to Excellence for America's Public Universities*.

"State support for public higher education, both in total and especially on a per-student basis, is declining permanently, and no amount of lobbying is going to return funding to the levels realized a decade ago," Mr. Fethke said.

Universities also recognize that. Colorado, at the top of the NSF list of states cutting per-student support for its top research universities, turned in 2008 to Bruce D. Benson, a businessman with interests in fields that include oil, banking, real estate, and cable television, to serve as president of its state-university system.

Even with the cuts in state support documented by the National Science Board, Mr. Benson said he had been able to largely preserve educational quality at the universities by making a series of operational changes.

He cited \$8-million in savings by opting out of state procurement systems, \$4-million in savings by adopting self-insurance, and \$2.3-million from an insurance audit. The system also winnowed 209 procedural policies down to 89, making changes such as raising to \$500 from \$100 the threshold at which an event on a campus requires authorization paperwork.

"I just told everybody when I got here, All right, let's get through this place, and let's clean it out, and let's get rid of the stuff that doesn't make sense, let's get lean and mean," Mr. Benson said.

Budget pressures have had some effects on students, said Diane M. McKnight, a professor of civil, environmental, and architectural engineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The changes include a reduction in the number of teaching assistants for larger classes, she said.

But over all, Ms. McKnight said, many of the changes, such as reduced janitorial services, have had limited effects on education. "I give the university credit for adjusting," she said. "But it's been an adjustment."

More is coming, Mr. Benson said. The University of Colorado at Boulder is proud of its role as a nationwide innovator in the use of electronic "clicker" devices that encourage students to rely

more on one another for learning. It's now looking hard at other changes that could produce better education for less money, Mr. Benson said.

The university is especially intrigued by options for the greatly expanded use of online courses, and it's pressing to expand relationships with businesses and to increase other forms of private fund raising, Mr. Benson said. The shift of the Boulder campus to the Pac-12 athletic conference was a result of courting an alumni base that is about five times bigger in Pac-12 regions than it was in the Big 12 states, he said.

"I'm not a professional educator," Mr. Benson said, "so I just look at this stuff and say, OK, Plan B: How are we going to make it work?"

### *Changes Coming*

The largest increases in per-student support at major research universities were registered in New York, with a 72-percent increase, and Wyoming, with a 62-percent gain, the National Science Board report says.

Small states such as Wyoming that are highly dependent on energy resources have largely managed to escape some of the recent budget turmoil seen in other states. But even Wyoming, which relies on natural gas as its largest income source, expects conditions to change.

The president of the University of Wyoming, Tom Buchanan, said this month that state officials had cited lower energy revenue in warning the institution to plan for an 8-percent budget cut in the coming fiscal year.

And a spokesman for the State University of New York said he could not confirm the 72-percent figure for his state, saying the National Science Board's calculations could have been thrown off by the fact that tuition in New York is counted as income through the state budget process. An NSF spokesman said he could not address the reasons for the large spending increase attributed to New York State.

On a nationwide basis, however, the downward trend is clear, Mr. Bowen said. And for all the push to privatization seen in Colorado and other states, Mr. Bowen said he and other members of the National Science Board were convinced that public universities would remain essential to the nation's economic prosperity.

Some states may realize they "simply can't support their aspirations" in terms of major public research universities, Mr. Bowen said. But the private universities simply aren't big enough to meet the nationwide demand for qualified graduates, and the current rate of state budget cutting does not appear to be sustainable for the country as a whole, he said.

"Maybe not near-term, but long-term, this is going to be a problem," he said, "and so we want our policy makers to know about it."

The report, "Diminishing Funding and Rising Expectations: Trends and Challenges for Public Research Universities," is available on the National Science Board's [Web site](#).



# 'Memorable' lecture lands MU professor on TV

By Janese Silvey

**University of Missouri professor's yearly lecture on an unsuccessful British attempt to tax colonists will air on cable television this fall.**

History Professor John Bullion's talk on the Stamp Act of 1765 will run as part of C-SPAN's American History TV series. He expects it to air the first week of November.

In August, a producer contacted Bullion asking him whether he would be open to allowing cameras in his classroom to record the lecture. He's not sure who pitched the idea to C-SPAN.

The producer "informed me at that time that I had been recommended by a former student," Bullion said. "The student had said that my lecture on the Stamp Act was the most memorable one, the best one she'd had in four years at Mizzou. I was extremely flattered."

Bullion believes the talk, which he gives in two of his classes, interests students because the subject of national debt and taxation is relevant today.

"It deals with fiscal responsibility, it deals with the role of debt and maintaining credit ratings — those are enough in the news now, I think there is interest in it," he said.

The Stamp Act was an attempt by the British to tax Americans by requiring all printed materials — legal documents, newspapers, business records and even playing cards — to have a stamp, which Bullion compares to a notary public seal today.

It was also a self-imposed tax: People didn't have to pay it as long as they avoided life's normal dealings such as purchasing land, getting married or receiving a degree.

"What it amounts to is that you could choose not to pay the tax in the sense that you don't have to pay sales tax — you could live in the woods," he said.

Colonists feared that if they accepted it, the British would attempt to enforce additional taxes. The only way to stop it was by resisting — and ultimately, colonists united over it, better preparing them to go up against the British in the Revolutionary War.

It's a lecture Bullion has given for more than three decades, although he has tweaked it over the years to align with current events. This year, he was planning to compare it to the tobacco tax increase Missourians will be voting on in November, but he decided against that when the lecture was chosen for a national audience.

C-SPAN's film crew received permission from Bullion's students — all but one signed permission slips to be on television — and showed up in his class Sept. 12. Bullion said he tried to give the lecture as naturally as he could with bright lights and cameras in the room.

"One glitch — and this amused me — was the producer found a student in the audience who looked like he was intensely following it and really into it," he said. When the camera zoomed in on the man, "he gave a great yawn."

Although MU generates plenty of attention with research and athletics, the C-SPAN program is a rare opportunity to showcase the teaching mission at the university, said Michael O'Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science.

"Excellent teaching is something the College of Arts and Science does every day of the week, and it's nice to have it recognized," he said. That the C-SPAN producers "thought enough of one of our professors to feature him for an hour on their series, that says a lot."

# Undecided voters wait for more information to make presidential decisions

By [Antony Lee](#)

September 24, 2012 | 6:26 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — According to a recent [ABC/Washington Post](#) poll, only 4 percent of surveyed American voters, who already support a presidential candidate, said there was a "good chance" they would change their minds about who would get their vote.

The 2012 presidential election race between President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney largely will be decided by voters who remain undecided during the last seven weeks before the election. Voters who currently support a candidate aren't likely to change their minds and alter the election results.

**"As you get closer to the election, change is less likely," MU political science professor Marvin Overby said. "People don't like changing their minds. People are somewhat reluctant to change their minds unless some new information comes along to nudge them off the point they're on."**

Undecided voters in Columbia who spoke to the Missouriian said they are looking for new information that will help them make a final decision when they go to the polls Nov. 6.

In Missouri, Romney is projected to receive 50.3 percent of the presidential votes while Obama is projected to receive 43 percent, Overby said, citing statistics from [RealClearPolitics](#). The 7 percent of Missouri voters unaccounted for in that poll might or might not have made decisions, he added. The projection comes from an average of three surveys conducted separately by Public Policy Polling, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Rasmussen Reports. They had an average margin of error of just more than 4 percent.

"It doesn't matter how many Missouriians are undecided; it matters how many people who are going to turn out and vote are undecided," Overby said, adding that polls often have difficulty gauging who actually will vote.

For Kyle Buck, a 22-year-old MU senior studying biological sciences, this year's presidential election boils down to two issues: lowering the debt and supporting gay rights. He changes his mind "day to day" on which is more important to him, he said.

"I consider myself a social liberal but an economic conservative," Buck said, adding that he prefers Obama on social issues and Romney on the economy.

Buck voted for Republican John McCain in the 2008 presidential race but said he might vote for Obama this year. He said Obama is more likable and has a good air about him while Romney "feels very pompous."

Buck didn't pay much attention to either party's convention but said he plans to catch highlights of upcoming debates. He gets most of his presidential election information from social media and Internet links sent to him by friends, he said.

"We've been given the right to vote. Why waste it?" Buck said.

Undecided voters such as Buck have three presidential and one vice presidential debate to look forward to in October. The first debate between Obama and Romney is scheduled for 8 p.m. Oct. 3 and will focus on domestic policy.

The next debate will be between Vice President Joe Biden and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., Romney's running mate, on Oct. 11.

The remaining debates between Obama and Romney are Oct. 16 and Oct. 22.

Deb Wende, 54, said she hopes the debates will help her decide for whom she should vote. Wende voted for Obama in 2008 but said he would have to "do something that shows he really does care about the economy and about people getting jobs" to earn her vote this time around.

"I'm not pleased with what he's done, yet I'm not pleased with what Romney represents, so it's like you have to pick the lesser of the two evils," Wende said.

Social Security and Medicare are the two issues Wende is most concerned about. She is enrolled in both programs. She plans to read the newspapers and watch television news to keep up with each candidate's stance, but she said she'll be careful about which publications and channels she chooses.

"The media sometimes has a tendency to slant the view to one candidate or the other, so you have to shift to other articles and newspapers to find out what's really real," Wende said.

Overby, the MU professor, said Missouri still is historically considered a battleground state, though it is not deemed as a swing state in this year's presidential election.

"Since 1904, Missouri has voted with the winner in all but two elections — in 2008 and 1956," he said. "It has this reputation of being a bellwether state."

A bellwether state tends to indicate where the rest of the nation stands on the presidential election.

"But this year, Missouri seems to be off a little bit," Overby said, pointing to the state's slower Hispanic growth compared to the rest of the nation as a possible reason for the projected Republican edge. "Hispanics tend to vote Democrat."

In 2008, McCain won Missouri with 49.4 percent of the vote to Obama's 49.3 percent. McCain earned just 3,903 more votes than Obama after 2,925,205 Missouri votes were counted, according to the Missouri secretary of state's website. It was the closest contest in the nation.

## Food science students create an MU-themed chocolate bar

By [Tess Malone](#)

September 24, 2012 | 4:49 p.m. CDT



Mizzou Crunch, a chocolate bar designed by a team of MU food science students, is available at retail sites. It was developed in collaboration with Patric Chocolate. The bar is a custom dark and milk chocolate blend sprinkled with peanuts, cocoa nibs and sea salt. | [Kile Brewer](#)

COLUMBIA — A blend of dark and milk chocolate studded with peanuts, sea salt and bits of cocoa is the new flavor of MU.

**Mizzou Crunch, an artisan chocolate bar created by MU students and Patric Chocolate, went on sale last week.**

The 2.3-ounce bar costs \$7.99 and is available at all Patric Chocolate retailers, including Hy-Vee, World Harvest, Hoss's Market & Rotisserie and the Root Cellar.

**A team of five juniors and seniors studying food science at MU developed the bar from branding to flavor profiling. Each batch of 1,000 is handcrafted, said Patric Chocolate owner Alan "Patric" McClure.**

At least 10 batches were tested before landing on the final product, said Azlin Mustapha, associate professor of food sciences and director of graduate studies at MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

Although the team didn't make the chocolate, they collaborated with Patric Chocolate on the "sophisticated layering of the flavor profile" of dark and milk chocolate and texture, Mustapha said.

Patric Chocolate uses just three ingredients as the foundation of a basic chocolate bar — cacao, cocoa butter and organic cane sugar, McClure said. Accessorizing is done through the addition of nuts and other flavors.

In Mizzou Crunch, the cocoa nibs and peanut chunks add texture, and the bittersweet flavor comes from pairing both dark and milk chocolate with sea salt.

The peanuts play off the chocolate to match the MU colors, Mustapha said.

Chocolate connoisseurs get a taste of Europe when they bite into the bar because of its combination of bitter and milk chocolates, said Randy Mertens, media relations coordinator with the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. .

"It's analogous to tasting a very fine dry wine over a sweet wine that's maybe more popular," he said.

Independent research is usually conducted by graduate students, but this was a special opportunity for undergraduates, Mustapha said.

"This project is really unique because they are working with a real live business owner and making a product that will actually be sold worldwide," she said.

Mustapha assembled a team of five motivated juniors and seniors who were available last summer. The students volunteered and didn't receive any compensation or credit hours but will have a sweet addition to their resumes.

Mustapha also said she appreciated that the company is located in Columbia and founded by McClure, a Missouri alumnus.

"We had no idea how to make chocolate to begin with. He educated us, including me, on the science of chocolate making," she said.

Team member Kayla Hauck, a junior, said she learned about tempering (regulating the temperature of the chocolate to ensure it has the right appearance and texture) and handling process of making chocolate.

"It's got to be the highest quality chocolate bar I've ever had," Hauck said. "It was so great to be involved in the process."