

To the Editor of the Silver & Gold Record:  
May 7, 2009

## WHY WE DECIDED TO ELIMINATE THE SILVER & GOLD

We need effective communication at CU. So it is understandable that some are concerned about eliminating the Silver & Gold Record, which has been a source of information for the CU community for nearly 40 years.

It obviously holds a special place for many faculty and staff. Eliminating it was a difficult decision, and one we did not reach lightly. However, I am committed to ensuring that the CU community gets good information through effective communication for our entire work force.

While the review and restructuring of system administration was the catalyst for the changes in system administration announced last week, budget difficulties were also a driving factor. While the S&GR is perhaps the most visible of the many hard decisions we had to make in reducing our budget by \$6.2 million, it was by no means the only one.

The process began last fall, when I engaged the chancellors and the administrative leadership in discussions about ways system administration could be more efficient and effective in how it delivers essential services to the campuses such as information technology and IT security, payroll and benefits, procurement and communications. A worsening budget situation led us to prioritize essential services and set budget reduction targets that changed as our funding situation changed. S&GR's budget is part of system administration.

We determined we cannot afford to operate a newspaper with 6.5 staff positions and a total budget of nearly \$600,000. Even reducing Silver & Gold's budget, as first proposed, would have meant deeper cuts to vital services in areas already stretched thin, including payroll and benefits, information technology and security, and procurement.

CU is the only university among our national peers that financially supports a newspaper operation. Additionally, the paper's print run is 8,500, and it has a limited online presence. CU has approximately 14,000 full- and part-

time employees, and some 10,000 research associates, temporary employees and student workers... .

Our information needs have changed significantly since S&GR was established in 1970, as have the ways we communicate. The paper's readership survey showed that the top sources of faculty and staff information about their campuses are e-mail newsletters and direct e-mail from their campus, college or unit.

We know the community needs good, timely information and we intend to provide it. We also know we need perspective beyond our own departments, campuses and the broader CU community. We will move quickly to develop an online communication vehicle that will meet the needs of the CU community in an efficient and effective way. You will hear more about it in the coming weeks, and we will seek your input in its development.

I understand the concern that comes with eliminating S&GR. Part of that comes from the fact that more than 90 percent of the paper's expense is in people, whose work brings them in contact with many across the university.

When we examine the cost of budget reductions in an enterprise like ours, with more than three-quarters of the operating budget in personnel, it is a human cost. This is as true with reductions in other areas of system administration as it is with S&GR. It is difficult to lose colleagues and in some cases, friends.

However, our obligation is to sustain CU through this difficult period and to ensure we continue our academic and research missions. There will be more challenges ahead, and more hard decisions. I am confident we will be able to meet those challenges. You can provide feedback to [officeofthepresident@cu.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@cu.edu).

Bruce Benson, CU president

[Note: the original location of this letter is at <https://web.archive.org/web/20100604110027/https://www.cu.edu/sg/messages/6823.html>]