

# MICHAEL T. BENSON



**President and Professor of Government**

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Michael T. Benson, D.Phil., is the 13th President of Eastern Kentucky University, a position he assumed on August 1, 2013. He also holds the rank of Professor of Government and teaches within the Department of History as well.

In his current role at EKU, Dr. Benson is responsible for more than 17,000 students on three campuses, nearly 2,300 full-time faculty and staff, sixteen Division I athletic teams, and an annual budget in excess of \$355 million. EKU enrolls more native Kentuckians than any other institution in the Commonwealth. In 2016, EKU had its highest enrollment ever, and, despite deep cuts to state appropriations, the university has achieved its four best fundraising years in the institution's history during Benson's tenure.

Since 2013, significant increases in retention and graduation rates have also been realized, and EKU welcomed its best-prepared and most diverse freshman class to campus in fall 2017. The University has doubled its four-year graduation rate in the past eight years and awarded 4,154 degrees this past academic year—the most in its 145-year history. EKU is nearing the end of an aggressive \$240 million campus revitalization which is being completed entirely with non-state-appropriated funds.

Prior to his chief executive post at Eastern Kentucky, Benson was the 15<sup>th</sup> president of Southern Utah University, where he helped secure the designation for SUU as the state's public liberal arts and sciences university; established the Hispanic Center for Academic Excellence; gained admission into the Big Sky Conference for all athletic teams; completed new residence halls, a teacher education facility, and a science and engineering center; and directed the development and implementation of SUU's largest and most ambitious comprehensive fundraising effort. This drive, named the "Future is Rising Campaign," raised a record \$105 million for SUU.

Central to this SUU campaign was an effort organized and launched by Dr. Benson which helped raise \$38 million for the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts. A classically-trained pianist, Dr. Benson was named the "Administrator of the Year" by the Utah Music Educators Association. He continues to perform in various venues and has played with, among others, the Snow College Jazz Ensemble and the EKU Stephen

Foster Music Camp Orchestra. Dr. Benson holds the distinction of being the only university president to make two different colleges or universities “All-Steinway Schools” by raising over \$1 million for each institution to purchase the instruments.

Before his tenure at Southern Utah, Benson served as the 14<sup>th</sup> president of Snow College, where he helped raise more private money for the institution during his tenure than had been secured in the previous 115 years of the college’s history combined. Appointed president of Snow College at age 36, Dr. Benson was the youngest college president in the history of the Utah System of Higher Education. He is also the former chair of the Executive Committee for Utah State Campus Compact, part of a national coalition of nearly 1,000 college and university presidents representing over five million students, committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education.

Benson began his career in public higher education at the University of Utah, where he worked as special assistant to the president and secretary to the university, one of eight executive officers of the institution. During his tenure at Utah, Benson was named co-principal investigator (P.I.) of a \$3.5 million grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts—the first such grant from Pew made to the University of Utah outside of the health sciences area—to study campaign finance reform. The research grant led to the establishment of the intermountain Center for Campaign and Media Legal Reforms at the Hinckley Institute of Politics.

Born in Utah and raised in Texas and Indiana, Benson has worked and studied abroad for seven years in Italy, England, and Israel. He is fluent in spoken and written Italian. Michael earned his B.A. *cum laude* from Brigham Young University in 1990 with a major in Political Science and double minors in English and History. He completed his doctorate in Modern History from the University of Oxford (St. Antony’s College) in 1995, where he was a Rotary Foundation Scholar and recipient of the Oxford Graduate Overseas Fellowship. He also earned a master’s degree *cum laude* in 2011 from the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame in Non-profit Administration, where he was the recipient of the prestigious Father Theodore Hesburgh Founder’s Award. Currently, Benson is pursuing a Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) at Johns Hopkins University and is on schedule to graduate in May 2021.

Michael was a regular contributor to the *Huffington Post* as a featured voice on higher education and other issues for six years and his articles have appeared in various publications including the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Louisville Courier Journal*, the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and *Inside Higher Ed*. His book, *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel* (Praeger 1997), has been hailed as a landmark work in the research of American foreign policy and the U.S. presidency. Together with co-author, Hal R. Boyd, Michael wrote *College for the Commonwealth: A Case for Higher Education in American Democracy* (University Press of Kentucky 2018). Their work was recently nominated for the University of Louisville 2020 Grawemeyer Award in Education. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and former Rhodes Professor of American history at the University of Oxford, Daniel Walker Howe, wrote this about *College for the Commonwealth*: “Benson and Boyd present a convincing case for why higher education needs and deserves public support. From practical examples they demonstrate how investment in higher education enables a society to rise to the opportunities presented by the future.”

Michael's next book, *"Every Epoch Requires a Fresh Start": Daniel Coit Gilman and the Birth of the Modern American Research University*, is under contract with Johns Hopkins University Press to be released in 2022.

Benson has worked as a consulting historian and essayist for both the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri. Governor Jon Huntsman appointed Benson to the Utah Appellate Court Nominating Commission in 2009 as one of two citizen members. He also fulfilled a two-year term on the Board of Advisors for the Center for Policy Analysis of the American Council on Education (ACE).

Currently, he serves on the Council of Presidents of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and on the Presidents' Trust for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Michael is also a member of the Task Force on University Partnerships of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and has served as the presidential representative on several Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation committees, recently chairing three substantive change committees for universities in Georgia, Texas, and Florida.

One of three higher education representatives on the Kentucky Rising Committee, Benson is former co-chair of the Higher Education Consortium for Bluegrass Tomorrow. At present, he serves as chair of the Advisory Conference of Presidents for all of Kentucky's public colleges and universities. Dr. Benson was recently appointed to the 18-person KentuckyWorks Collaborative by Governor Matt. He is also engaged in business and community affairs, having sat on the regional boards of Wells Fargo Bank and Zions Bank and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation Board of Directors. He has been an active member of the Rotary Club for twenty five years and is a Paul Harris Fellow.

Active in intercollegiate athletics on the national and conference level, Dr. Benson completed a four-year term as member of the nine-person NCAA Honors Committee, the group charged with awarding the NCAA's highest recognitions each year. He is also the past chair of the Presidents' Council for the Ohio Valley Conference and has served in leadership roles for both the Summit League and the Big Sky Conference. Recently, he was elected as representative for the Ohio Valley Conference on the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum.

Benson is an accomplished athlete and has completed several marathons, including the Boston Marathon, with his fastest time (2:41) winning his age division in the St. George Marathon and finishing just minutes shy of the qualifying time for the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials. As an undergraduate at Brigham Young, Benson was a member of the Junior Varsity Basketball Team. He has also participated in the world's oldest collegiate rivalry, leading the Oxford Blues Basketball Team as a player/head coach over Cambridge University in the celebrated Varsity Match. Michael is an Eagle Scout and is active in various volunteer, civic, and church activities. He is married to Debi Woods Benson and is the father of five children: Emma and Samuel, both pursuing degrees at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah; and Truman, Tatum, and Talmage, all students at EKU's Model Laboratory School.

## Education

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**Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.) in Modern History** **June 1995**

University of Oxford, St. Antony's College - Oxford, United Kingdom

Faculty of Modern History

Dissertation: "Sympathy or Strategy: President Harry S. Truman's Decision  
to Recognize the State of Israel, May 1948"

Dissertation committee: John Lewis Gaddis, Chair; Robert Dallek; Daniel Walker Howe

**Master of Liberal Arts (M.L.A.)** **In progress**

Johns Hopkins University - Baltimore, Maryland

**Master of Non-Profit Administration (M.N.A.) *cum laude*** **January 2011**

University of Notre Dame, Mendoza College of Business - Notre Dame, Indiana

**Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Political Science *cum laude*** **April 1990**

Brigham Young University - Provo, Utah

Minors: English and History

## Chief Executive Experience

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**President** **August 2013 - present**

Eastern Kentucky University - Richmond, Kentucky

Academic appointment: Professor of Government

▪ **Principal duties**

- Responsible for nearly 17,000 students, 2300 full-time faculty and staff, and an annual budget of over \$355 million on three campuses: Richmond (main campus), Corbin, and Manchester, offering 99 bachelor's programs, 43 masters, and 4 clinical doctorates
- EKU sponsors 16 Division I athletic teams and has won the Commissioner's Cup of the Ohio Valley Conference five of the last six years

▪ **Significant accomplishments in past five years**

- Largest enrollment ever (2015) with the best-prepared freshman class in the school's history (2017)
- Significant increases in retention and graduation rates (six-year graduation rate for 2008 cohort was 41.94%; graduation rate for 2012 cohort is 51.34%)
- Over \$240 million in non-state funded capital construction in last 36 months: two new residence halls, new dining facility, new recreation center and renovated student union
- Biggest state appropriation for a capital project, \$66.5 million, to complete Phase II of a 340,000 square foot Science Center

- Highest fundraising totals over a four-year period in University's history (2015-18); public launch of EKU's most ambitious capital campaign ever in Fall 2019 with over 70% of goal already raised
- One of two public Kentucky universities listed in *Chronicle of Higher Education* "Great Colleges to Work For 2016"

**President**

**December 2006 – July 2013**

Southern Utah University – Cedar City, Utah

Academic appointment: Professor of Political Science

▪ **Selected Academic and Institutional Accomplishments**

- Improved six-year graduation rate from 38.7% in 2007 to 52% in 2013
- Oversaw, together with the Office of the Provost, the implementation of the SUU Academic Roadmap, an aggressive four-year plan to increase resources for instruction and advising
- Garnered Utah State Board of Regents' support for SUU to receive official designation as state's public liberal arts and sciences university, as codified in the USHE's Higher Education 2020 Plan
- Landed SUU membership in the highly-selective COPLAC (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges), the first in Utah and the 27<sup>th</sup> member institution in the United States
- Helped SUU earn a place on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in recognition of its commitment to volunteering, service learning, and civic engagement; recognized three years in a row by the Corporation for National and Community Service
- Spearheaded efforts to secure recognition for SUU in the annual *U.S. News and World Report* college rankings; regularly listed among top 75 Regional Universities (West)
- Launched endeavor and allocated resources to gain Phi Beta Kappa (PBK) membership
- Secured a Phi Kappa Phi chapter for SUU; installation in November of 2012 with first graduating class in May 2013
- Established the first-ever Omicron Delta Kappa chapter in the State of Utah, April 2012
- Repositioned SUU within a new peer set and gained State Board of Regents' approval, thereby making institutional comparisons more compatible with the University's stated mission and focus
- Consolidated the operations of two colleges (new entity: College of Science and Engineering), thus diverting funds from administration and investing additional resources into academic instruction
- Procured "All-Steinway School" status for the College of Performing and Visual Arts, thus becoming the only person in history to make two different institutions All-Steinway Schools
- Revamped the University's Board of Fellows by renaming it The National Advisory Board, doubling its size, and dramatically increasing its role and involvement
- Instituted "Pizza with the Prez," a monthly lunch hour open to all students, faculty, and staff where any questions can be asked and any issue discussed

- **Faculty Accomplishments**

- Augmented full-time faculty ranks by 15 percent in an era of unprecedented decline in state support by adding 34 *new* faculty lines.
- Increased number of student advisors by 88 percent (7 new positions) in 5 years
- Utilized second-tier tuition to raise average salaries of 98 percent of *all* faculty and staff; the average salary increase was \$10,220 (a mean increase of 24 percent)
- Spearheaded effort to get all of faculty and staff to 95 percent of CUPA salary averages—an increase of 11 percent in just three years

- **Student Success Accomplishments**

- Established Hispanic Center for Academic Excellence, the first of its kind in Utah; secured additional resources for outreach into underrepresented populations
- Increased minority student population by 44 percent in 4 years
- Instituted aggressive student recruiting efforts which have resulted in a 312-percent increase in SUU's international student population in 4 years
- Raised admission index to 90, resulting in average ACT score of incoming freshmen increasing from 21.84 in Fall of 2009 to 23.12 in Fall of 2012

- **Facilities Accomplishments**

- Raised over \$5 million in non-state funds to complete the L.S. and Aline W. Skaggs Center for Health and Molecular Sciences; the \$19 million facility opened in September 2011 and was awarded LEED Gold certification—the first building to earn this designation in all of southern Utah
- Garnered more than \$55 million in six years from state, federal, and private sources (most in SUU history) to support new construction and capital improvements for classrooms, laboratories, office space, and student housing
- Constructed the Dahle Plaza and Carter Carillon Tower in the center of campus, thereby creating a gathering location in the heart of campus
- Conceived of and implemented the most ambitious capital project in the history of Southern Utah University: the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts; project opened in summer 2016
- Supported campus-wide “greening” that included completion of a new facilities management structure with solar power-generating capacity, an aggressive recycling program, and plans for a Center for Sustainability
- Led campus-wide efforts toward increased sustainability, landing SUU in the 96<sup>th</sup> slot (out of 215 worldwide) in the UI GreenMetric listing of the world's universities for “green” policies and practices
- Launched campaign to replace the Leavitt Building with new business facility; secured funding for programming and initial design
- Chaired committee that developed and implemented the 2008 SUU Campus Master Plan, thus finalizing a document that will direct facility expansion for the next two decades



▪ **Athletics Accomplishments**

- Earned entry into the Big Sky Conference for all sponsored sports in July 2012, thereby realizing a 20-year goal of SUU's 17 Division I athletic teams
- Increased athletic funding by more than 70 percent in four years
- Landed a \$500,000 gift for the men's basketball program three months after assuming presidency; largest gift in the history of SUU Athletics
- Funded major capital improvements, including:
  - New digital video board for Eccles Coliseum;
  - New football locker room;
  - New synthetic surface for the football field;
  - Improved baseball field;
  - New track;
  - Remodeled locker rooms for women's basketball and volleyball; and
  - New video boards within the Centrum Arena
- Added a women's volleyball program after a 22-year hiatus of the sport at SUU
- Added men's tennis as a Division I sport for the first time in SUU history
- Directed resources to focus on Academic Progress Rate (APR) and graduation rates for all athletic programs, resulting in the highest graduation rate of any Division I football team in Utah

▪ **Fundraising Accomplishments**

- Launched the most ambitious comprehensive campaign in SUU's history in 2007, *The Future is Rising*, with a goal of \$100 million; campaign concluded in March 2014 with \$105 million raised
- Landed, within the span of eighteen months, the three largest gifts in the history of SUU:
  - \$4 million from the family of Walter and Alice Gibson to establish an endowment for scholarships and research stipends within the College of Science and Engineering;
  - \$5 million for a new outdoor Shakespeare Theatre from the Ralph Engelstad Family Foundation; and \$6 million from the Sorenson Legacy Foundation for the completion of the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts
- Instituted "institutional enhancement fee" on all gifts coming to the University to fund SUU's development operations and divert E&G lines away from advancement activities
- Conceived and instituted the Thunderbird License Plate program, from which SUU receives over \$30,000 per year from the sale of collegiate license plates; when the program was launched in June 2007, only six SUU plates were in circulation—today, over 2,000 are on Utah vehicles and SUU is second only to the University of Utah in terms of popularity and sales

## President

Snow College – Ephraim, Utah

Academic appointment: Professor of History

December 2001 – December 2006

### ▪ Selected Academic and Institutional Accomplishments

- Orchestrated the first-ever visit to campus by a Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Elie Wiesel, in May 2006; raised the entire \$50,000 speaking fee with private contributions
- Lobbied for the successful passage of H.B. 161, which created Snow College-Richfield Campus, thus bringing the Ephraim and Richfield campuses under one organization, streamlining functions and administration, and providing additional instructional funds
- Reduced administrative salaries as a way to absorb budget cuts rather than cutting academic programs or laying off faculty; eliminated an entire athletic team (baseball) as a way to maintain primary focus on academics

### ▪ Faculty Accomplishments

- Gained Trustee and Regent approval for new and unique degree programs, such as an A.A.S. in Traditional Building Skills, thereby ensuring the College's unique niche in areas not addressed by other institutions
- Codified a partnership with the renowned Juilliard School of Music in New York to be the exclusive “western outpost” for summer music camps, featuring Juilliard faculty and students and allowing for future exchanges and collaboration

### ▪ Student Success Accomplishments

- Raised more than \$1 million for student scholarships over a four-year period—a 400-percent increase

### ▪ Facilities Accomplishments

- Designed, funded, and constructed the \$19 million Eccles Center for the Performing Arts, the finest facility of its kind in all of central Utah
- Developed a new campus master plan, which included razing five dilapidated structures, remodeling two others, creating a new east-west mall with a redesigned carillon tower as the focal point, and installing a new “College Lawn” in the center of campus
- Landed the largest gift in Snow College's history—\$2 million from Jon and Karen Huntsman—for a new College Library to be located on the southwest corner of campus; this new 75,000-square-foot facility was opened September 2010
- Garnered nearly \$25 million in five years in state funds for new facilities and campus improvements, additions, and remodels

### ▪ Athletics Accomplishments

- Founded and privately funded the first-ever junior college bowl game in Salt Lake City: the Zions Bank Top of the Mountains Bowl, held each December; all net proceeds go to scholarships at Snow College



- Secured “All Nike” status for Snow College as the first junior college in America to have exclusive sponsorship of all athletic teams by the world’s largest shoe company
- Addressed pressing athletic department needs by successfully completing the 2003 St. George Marathon and raising over \$50,000 in private donations
- **Fundraising Accomplishments**
  - Increased annual contributions by more than 500 percent: prior to 2002, yearly collections averaged \$260,000; from 2002–2005, Snow’s annual total jumped to nearly \$1.3 million
  - Raised more private money—over \$6.4 million in cash—in a five-year period than in the previous 118 years of Snow College’s existence combined; additional pledges brought total to more than \$9 million

## Other Selected Professional Experience

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**Professor of Non-Profit Administration (adjunct)** **November 2011 – November 2016**  
 University of Notre Dame, Mendoza College of Business – Notre Dame, Indiana

- Taught course on public policy within the Master of Non-profit Administration (M.N.A.) program

**Secretary to the University** **February 2000 – November 2001**  
**Special Assistant to the President** **June 1999 – January 2000**  
**Associate Director of Major Gifts** **December 1998 – May 1999**  
**Major Gifts Officer** **December 1995 – November 1998**  
 University of Utah – Salt Lake City, Utah  
 Academic appointment: Associate Professor of Political Science (adjunct)

- Began academic career working in major gifts and advanced to a position in the president’s office, serving as both special assistant to the president and secretary to the university, one of eight executive officers of the institution
- Served as primary liaison to the President’s Cabinet, the Utah State Board of Regents, major donors, state and other elected officials, with responsibility for federal lobbying efforts
- Taught a course every semester and was named co-principal investigator (P.I.) for the largest non-health sciences grant in the University’s history from the Pew Charitable Trusts to study campaign finance reform

**Consulting Historian** **August 1997 – December 1998**  
 Harry S. Truman Library – Independence, Missouri

**Academic Advisor and Essayist** **July 1997 – May 1998**  
 Skirball Cultural Center – Los Angeles, California

**Research Assistant** May 1990 – May 1991  
United States Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources – Washington, D.C.

## Service to Education

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<b>Member, NCAA Division I Presidential Forum</b>	<b>July 2019 – present</b>
<b>Chair, Advisory Conference of Presidents, Kentucky Public Universities/Colleges</b>	<b>July 2017 – present</b>
<b>Member, Council of Presidents</b> Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)	<b>June 2017 – present</b>
<b>Member, Task Force on University Partnerships</b> American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)	<b>April 2017 – present</b>
<b>Co-Chair, Teacher Preparation Task Force, Kentucky Rising</b>	<b>July 2015 – present</b>
<b>Member, Eastern Kentucky University Foundation Board of Trustees</b>	<b>August 2013 – present</b>
<b>Member, The Presidents' Trust</b> Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)	<b>November 2012 – present</b>
<b>Chair, Substantive Change Committee</b> On-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) substantive change committee Miami International University of Art and Design – Miami, Florida	<b>September 2019</b>
<b>Chair, Substantive Change Committee</b> On-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) substantive change committee Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi, Texas	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Chair, Substantive Change Committee</b> On-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) substantive change committee Georgia Southern University – Statesboro, Georgia	<b>September 2018</b>
<b>Co-Chair, Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium</b>	<b>July 2014 – August 2018</b>
<b>Chair, NCAA Honors Committee</b>	<b>January 2016 – January 2018</b>
<b>Member, NCAA Honors Committee</b>	<b>November 2014 – January 2018</b>
<b>Presidential Representative</b> On-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) substantive change committee Middle Tennessee State University – Murfreesboro, Tennessee	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Presidential Representative</b> On-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) reaffirmation committee College of Charleston – Charleston, South Carolina	<b>March 2017</b>
<b>Presidential Representative</b> Off-site Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) reaffirmation committee Three institutions – Atlanta, Georgia	<b>November 2015</b>
<b>Chair, Ohio Valley Conference Presidents' Council</b>	<b>June 2014 – June 2015</b>
<b>Member, University of Utah World Leaders Advisory Cabinet</b>	<b>June 2008 – July 2013</b>

Vice Chair, Big Sky Conference Presidents' Council	June 2012 – June 2013
Chair, Summit League Presidents' Council	June 2009 – June 2011
Member, Board of Advisors, Center for Policy Analysis American Council for Education (ACE)	January 2009 – January 2011
Chair, Executive Board, Utah State Campus Compact	April 2003 – April 2005
Chair, Mountain States Association of Community Colleges	August 2003 – August 2004
Member, University of Utah International Studies Advisory Board	1991 – 2001
Member <i>ex officio</i> , University of Utah Eccles School of Business Board of Advisors	1997 – 2001
Member <i>ex officio</i> , University of Utah College of Law Board of Trustees	1996 – 1999

## Service to Business and Community

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Member, KentuckyWorks Collaborative	January 2019 – present
Member, Bluegrass Tomorrow Board of Directors	January 2016 – present
Member, Kentucky Rising Steering Committee	January 2015 – present
Member, Richmond Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors	January 2014 – present
Member, Kentucky Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation Board of Directors	September 2013 – present
Member, Richmond Rotary Club (Paul Harris Fellow)	August 2013 – present
Member, Vincent's Club, Oxford, England	February 1994 – present
Member, Leadership Kentucky Class of 2015	June 2015 – December 2015
Member, Planning Committee, Shaping our Appalachian Region	September 2013 – December 2015
Member, Rocky Mountain Power Regional Board of Advisors	January 2011 – July 2013
Member, Utah Shakespeare Festival Board of Governors	June 2010 – July 2013
Member, Cedar City Airport Advisory Committee	April 2010 – July 2013
Member, Cedar City Music Arts Board of Advisors	April 2008 – July 2013
Member, Wells Fargo Bank, Southern Utah Board of Advisors	April 2007 – July 2013
Citizen Member, Utah State Appellate Court Nominating Commission Four-year term; appointed by Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.	May 2009 – May 2013
Member, Utah Humanities Council Board of Directors	June 2010 – June 2012
Member, Zions Bank, Central Utah Board of Advisors	January 2003 – March 2005

## Awards, Honors, Fellowships, and Grants

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Prepared for Life Leadership Award, Boy Scouts of America, Palisades District	May 2018
Honorary Member, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity	February 2017
Honoree, American Cancer Society Lexington KY Chapter “Belles & Beaus”	May 2016
Recent Alumni Service Award Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame	September 2013
Father Theodore Hesburgh Founder’s Award Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame	May 2011
Named one of Utah’s “100 Most Influential People” by <i>Utah Business</i> magazine	January 2011
Mendoza College of Business Master of Non-Profit Fellowship University of Notre Dame	2009 – 2010
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society	April 2009
Administrator of the Year, Utah Music Educators Association	May 2005
Named one of Utah’s “Rising Stars: 40 under 40” by <i>Utah Business</i> magazine	January 2003
The Pew Charitable Trusts (\$3.5 million grant) Awarded to the University of Utah to establish the Intermountain Center for Campaign and Media Legal Reforms in conjunction with the Hinckley Institute of Politics	November 2001
Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship University of Oxford and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem	1993 – 1994
University of Oxford Graduate Studies Research Grant	1992 – 1994
Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Institute Research Grant	1993
Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society	1990
Golden Key National Honor Society	1990
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and <i>Foreign Policy</i> Essay Contest Finalist	1990
Vice President, Beta Mu Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha (PSA) Political Science Honor Society	1990
Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies Scholarship	1989
Dean’s Scholarship, Brigham Young University	1986 – 1988
Leadership Scholarship, Brigham Young University	1984
Robert M. Hunsaker Memorial Award, East High School	1983

## Publications

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### Books

“Every Epoch Requires a Fresh Start”: *Daniel Coit Gilman and the Birth of the Modern American Research University*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Anticipated release date: fall 2022.

*College for the Commonwealth: A Case for Higher Education in American Democracy* (co-authored with Hal R. Boyd), Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2018.

*Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997.

### Book Chapter

“Recognizing Israel: A Little Touch of Harry in the Night,” in *Israel and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman*, Michael J. Devine, Robert P. Watson, Robert J. Wolz, editors, Volume 3 (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2008

### Monographs (selected list)

“Kentucky’s Higher Education Tradition and the Role of the University,” *Kentucky Humanities Magazine*, Fall 2019.

“Michael Bloomberg is Channeling his Inner Johns Hopkins,” *Inside Higher Ed*, January 17, 2019.

“We Can Do Hard Things,” *Trusteeship*, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Volume 26, Number 1, January/February 2018.

“Big Dreams,” *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, Volume 16, Fall/Winter 2015.

“The Public University: Recalling Higher Education’s Democratic Purposes,” with Hal R. Boyd, *Thought and Action: NEA Journal on Higher Education*, Volume 31, Summer 2015.

“Five Keys to Success,” *Global Study Magazine*, Fall 2004.

“The Puzzle of Palestine: Harry S. Truman and the American Recognition of Israel,” *Harry S. Truman and the Recognition of Israel*, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO, 1998.

“Harry S. Truman and the Modern State of Israel,” *Amit Magazine*, Summer 1998.

“The Modern-day Cyrus: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel, May 1948,” *On Moral Grounds: President Harry S. Truman and the Birth of the State of Israel*, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA, April 1998.

“Harry S. Truman as a Modern-day Cyrus,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 34 (Fall 1994).

### Opinion Pieces and Essays (non-peer reviewed; selected list)

“EKU grads power Kentucky communities,” *Richmond Register*, May 4, 2019.

“For EKU and others, legislature and governor must act quickly on sustainable pension reform.” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, April 23, 2019.

“Adding a Fourth P: Perspective,” *Richmond Register*, April 6, 2019.

“Higher education a key to the freedom to make your own choices,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, May 10, 2018.

“Roger Bannister broke the 4-minute mile and inspired the world,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, March 9, 2018.

“Pension costs threaten higher-ed affordability,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, January 2, 2018.

“The Great Equalizer,” *Huffington Post*, September 8, 2017.

“EKU’s ‘campus beautiful’ expanded, updated” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, July 25, 2017.

“The Magic of Enthusiasm,” *Huffington Post*, July 1, 2017.

“The March for Science and American Higher Education,” *Huffington Post*, April 25, 2017.

“The Meaning and Purpose of the University,” *Huffington Post*, February 7, 2017.

“How a Bucket of Ice Water Inspired the World,” *Huffington Post*, December 14, 2016.

“Alma Mater: The Nourishing Mother,” *Huffington Post*, September 6, 2016.

“Liberal-arts education essential to advance in tech age,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, February 8, 2016.

“Liberal Arts and Tomorrow’s Workforce,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, February 2, 2016.

“The Worst are Full of Passionate Intensity,” *Huffington Post*, November 19, 2015.

“A Transferrable Set of Skills,” *Inside Sources*, August 15, 2015.

“A Graduation Unlike Any Other,” *Huffington Post*, May 7, 2015.

“Lives of Curiosity and Consequence,” *Huffington Post*, August 22, 2014.

“Two Public Policies That Transformed Our Nation,” *Huffington Post*, June 21, 2014.

“Operation Overlord and the Norfolk House,” *Huffington Post*, June 9, 2014.

“A Redress of Grievances,” *Huffington Post*, March 10, 2014.

“Athletes pay more than fair share; university benefits from spotlight,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, December 16, 2013.

“The Meaning of Libraries,” *Huffington Post*, December 9, 2013.

“What Good is College?” *Huffington Post*, February 2, 2013.

“The British Empire, Olympic Games, and the Power of Sport,” *Huffington Post*, August 9, 2012.

“The Irreplaceable Value of the Liberal Arts,” *Huffington Post*, June 18, 2012.

“The Liberal Arts Degree is a Portal to Anywhere,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 8, 2011.

“A Road Less Traveled,” *Inside Higher Ed*, February 3, 2010.

“SUU Gymnastics team the Butler of the West,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 19, 2010.

“A Time to Bond,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 8, 2009.

“Junior Colleges a Great Start for Athletes,” *Deseret News*, December 2, 2005.

“What’s the Big Deal About College Football?” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 4, 2004.

“Reagan Proved that the Words of a President Matter,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 11, 2004.

“Palestine in 1948 Offers Cautionary Tale for Iraq,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 25, 2004.

“Utahans Should Invest in Higher Education,” *Deseret News*, December 29, 2003.

“Truman’s Actions Speaker Louder Than His Words,” *Deseret News*, July 20, 2003.

“Truman’s Support for Israel,” *Kansas City Star*, October 9, 2002.

“Snow College Sacrifices Ensure Continued Excellence,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 12, 2002.

“S.L. Council Shows Vision in West-East Light-rail Support,” *Deseret News*, December 26, 1999.

“Truman Helped Israel Survive its Infancy,” *Deseret News*, May 26, 1998.

“Let’s Not Bury Our Future in I-15 Rubble,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 20, 1997.

“Higher Education Drives Economic Growth,” *Deseret News*, March 24, 1997.

“Bill Clinton is no ‘Give ‘em Hell’ Harry Truman,” *Arizona Republic*, November 18, 1994.

“Moral Man,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 15, 1993.

## Invited Presentations (selected list)

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“*Every Epoch Requires a Fresh Start: Daniel Coit Gilman and the Birth of the Modern American Research University*,” presenter, Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs, Washington, D.C., October 11, 2019.

“*Your Time to Lead is Now*,” keynote speaker, Leadership Kentucky Class of 2019 Opening Session, Richmond, Kentucky, June 20, 2019.

“*Higher Education Leadership: Issues and Challenges*,” morning keynote speaker, Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium, Academic Leadership Academy, Richmond, Kentucky, April 26, 2019.

“*The Innovative American University and Updates on EKV*,” keynote speaker, Rotary Club of Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky, April 4, 2019.

“*Strategies for Kentucky’s Postsecondary Education Institutions*,” moderator, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Symposium, Louisville, Kentucky, December 18, 2018.

“*College for the Commonwealth: Making a Case for Higher Education in American Democracy*,” presenter, Kentucky Book Fair, Lexington, Kentucky, November 17, 2018.

“*Heirs of the Founders: The Epic Rivalry of Henry Clay, John Calhoun and Daniel Webster, the Second Generation of American Giants*,” discussion moderator with author H.W. Brands, Kentucky Book Fair, Lexington, Kentucky, November 17, 2018.



*"Building a Truly Diverse Governing Board,"* panel discussant, Council of Presidents Annual Meeting, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), Washington, D.C., October 22, 2018.

*"Presidential Perspectives on Higher Education,"* panel discussant, Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SASFAA) Annual Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee, October 8, 2018.

*"The Wright Brothers, EKU Aviation, and the Magic of Flight,"* co-keynote speaker, 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kentucky Aviation Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, September 27, 2018.

*"A World of Opportunity,"* keynote speaker, Belfry High School Graduation, Belfry, Kentucky, June 5, 2018.

*"There is Nothing New in the World Except the History You Do Not Know: Leadership Lessons from the Past,"* keynote speaker, Leadership Central Kentucky, 2018 Graduation Ceremony, Versailles, Kentucky, May 16, 2018.

*"Education: The Key to Unlock the Golden Door of Freedom,"* keynote speaker, Scholarship Tea, Larry A. Ryle High School, Union, Kentucky, May 7, 2018.

*"Higher Education Trends in 2018: A View from the Experts,"* panel discussant, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), 2018 National Conference on Trusteeship, San Francisco, California, April 24, 2018.

*"If You Dislike Change, You're Going to Dislike Irrelevance Even More,"* keynote speaker, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Embracing Change Conference, Eastern Kentucky University College of Education, Richmond, Kentucky, March 29, 2018.

*"Why I Picked Kentucky,"* plenary speaker, Governor's 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Local Issues Conference, Commonwealth of Kentucky Department for Local Government, Louisville, Kentucky, August 25, 2017.

*"Lessons in Leadership,"* featured speaker, Rogers Scholars Class of 2017, Lindsey Wilson College, Columbia, Kentucky, June 20, 2017.

*"Partnership Profile: Eastern Kentucky University and How We Have Accomplished Our P3 Projects,"* featured presenter, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), Partnership Meeting, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2017.

*"Characteristics of Strategic Doers,"* keynote speaker, Leadership Kentucky, Elevate Kentucky Class of 2017, Campton, Kentucky, April 10, 2017.

*"@CollegePresident - Becoming a Social Media Leader the Campus Community Will Follow,"* workshop presenter, Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE Region III Kentucky Annual Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, December 8, 2016.

*"Change, Challenge, Opportunity,"* keynote speaker, Women Leading Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, January 4, 2016.

*“Principles of Effective Leadership,”* keynote speaker, Kentucky State Police Academy, Carrollton, Kentucky, November 8, 2015.

*“Current Issues Facing Higher Education,”* keynote speaker, Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium Academic Leadership Academy, Lexington, Kentucky, May 15, 2015.

*“Student Success Strategies at Eastern Kentucky University,”* keynote speaker, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Student Success Summit, Louisville, Kentucky, March 31, 2015.

*“Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel,”* keynote speaker, Eliezer Society of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, November 14, 2014.

*“The Role of the Morrill Land Grant Act and G.I. Bill in Shaping American Higher Education,”* featured speaker, Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut, November 14, 2014.

*“Empowering EKU Students for the Challenges of Today,”* keynote speaker, Urban League of Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky, October 20, 2014.

*“Why Plans are Important Even if You **Are** Punched in the Mouth,”* inaugural speaker, Chautauqua, Lecture 2014-15 series at Eastern Kentucky University entitled *Strategy*, Richmond, Kentucky, August 26, 2014.

*“Where There is No Vision, There is No Hope,”* Commencement speaker, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, December 14, 2013.

*“Good Morning Bluegrass: Higher Education Issues,”* panel discussant, Commerce Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky, December 13, 2013.

*“The Role of Presidents in Fund Raising,”* panel discussant, Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE Region III Kentucky Annual Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, December 12, 2013.

*“Truman and the Recognition of Israel,”* featured speaker, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, U.S. Presidents and the Middle East: Truman to Obama, Summer Teachers Conference, Independence, Missouri, July 15, 2013.

*“The Thunderbard Project: Embedding the Utah Shakespeare Festival Into the First-Year SUU Orientation Experience,”* workshop presenter, American Association of Colleges and Universities, AAC&U Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, January 25, 2013.

*“Reframing Education,”* panel discussant, Festival of Thinkers, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, November 14, 2011.

*“The History of Higher Education in the West,”* featured speaker, Utah Rural Summit, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah, August 11, 2011.

*“The Importance of Learning,”* keynote speaker, Mormon History Association, LDS Tabernacle, St. George, Utah, May 29, 2011.

*“Transitions Through Trio,”* keynote speaker, Utah Statewide TRIO Conference, Moab, Utah, April 4, 2011.

*“Higher Education in the New Millennium,”* panel discussant, Education Without Borders, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, March 31, 2009.

*“The American Cyrus: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel,”* inaugural speaker, Jewish Federation of Utah, Israel: 60 Years Photographic Exhibit sponsored by Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 22, 2008.

*“Truman and the Recognition of Israel,”* featured speaker, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, 1948: Year of Decisions, Summer Teachers Conference, Independence, Missouri, July 14, 2008.

*“The Evolution of the United States Presidency,”* featured speaker, Huntsman Teachers Seminar, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 13, 2006.

*“Recognizing Israel: A Little Touch of Harry in the Night,”* featured speaker, Harry S. Truman Legacy Symposium: Truman and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East Conference, Key West, Florida, May 14, 2005.

*“Strategies for Student Success Utilized at Snow College,”* keynote speaker, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), “Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 24, 2004.

*“The Impact of Innovation: The Modern American Research University,”* featured presenter, Oxford Roundtable, University of Oxford, England, July 5, 2004.

*“The President’s Role in Closing the Major Gift,”* featured presenter, Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE Region VII Utah Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 25, 2004.

*“The Positive Impacts of the Utah Campus Compact,”* featured speaker, Utah Conference on Volunteers, Salt Lake City, Utah, April 7, 2004.

*“The Snow College/Ephraim City Library: An Example of Collaborative Partnership,”* workshop presenter, American Council on Education, ACE Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., March 10, 2003.

*“The Power of Education,”* featured speaker, Utah Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 30, 2002.

*“Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel,”* featured speaker, Harry S. Truman Library Institute Board of Directors, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri, September 18, 1998.

*“The Founding of Israel,”* keynote speaker, Jewish Federation of Kansas City, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri, September 9, 1998.

*“On Moral Grounds: President Harry S. Truman and the Birth of the State of Israel,”* keynote speaker, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California, April 23, 1998.

*“Sympathy or Strategy: Harry S. Truman’s Recognition of Israel, May 1948,”* featured presenter, Hinckley Institute of Politics, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, simulcast on KCPW (FM 88.3), February 17, 1998.

*“Harry S. Truman: The Modern-day Cyrus,”* featured speaker, Education Week, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994.

“American Foreign Policy in the Middle East and Truman’s Decision to Recognize the State of Israel,” keynote speaker, Rotary Club of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel, May 1993 & 1994.

## Courses Taught

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“Only the Dead Have Seen the End of War” <i>A Century of Living with World War One and its Consequences</i>	Eastern Kentucky University
<i>Checks and Balances: The U.S. Congress and the Evolution of the U.S. Presidency</i>	Eastern Kentucky University
<i>Public Policy in the Non-profit Sector</i> , Mendoza College of Business	University of Notre Dame
<i>The President, Congress, the Constitution, and Foreign Policy</i>	Southern Utah University
<i>Capstone Course in Public Administration</i>	Southern Utah University
<i>International Conflict: The Middle East</i>	Southern Utah University
<i>International Relations</i>	Southern Utah University
<i>American National Government</i>	Snow College
<i>Introduction to International Relations</i>	Snow College
<i>Campaigns and the American Presidency</i>	University of Utah
<i>Introduction to International Politics</i>	University of Utah
<i>The U.S. Presidency</i>	University of Utah
<i>Theories of International Relations</i>	Brigham Young University
<i>Introduction to American History</i>	Utah Valley State College

## Additional Skills and Experience

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### Athletic Accomplishments

- **Head Coach and Full Blue, University of Oxford Basketball Team** 1993 – 1994
- **Member, University of Oxford Basketball Team** 1992 – 1993
- **Member, Brigham Young University Basketball Team (JV)** 1987 – 1988
- **Competitive distance runner**
  - Deseret News Marathon (fourth in age division)
  - St. George Marathon (first in age division)
  - Boston Marathon (finished in top 15% of all registered runners)
  - Personal best: 2:41

## Religious Service

- **Voluntary Representative:** Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints      **May 1984 – May 1986**  
Rome, Italy

**Languages:** Fluent in spoken and written Italian

## Family and Personal Interests

- Enjoy golf (10 handicap), travel, skiing, and music; trained as a classical pianist
- Eagle Scout and Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America
- Married to Debi Woods Benson; five children: Emma, Samuel, Truman, Tatum, and Talmage

*Updated October 2019*