

Angwin land-use battle topped election spending

February 12, 2013 • [PETER JENSEN](#)

Pacific Union College was Napa County's biggest spender in the 2012 election cycle, as it pumped in almost \$500,000 of its own money to defeat a land-use initiative that targeted three of the college's parcels in Angwin.

The college funded the opposition campaign to Measure U with \$472,702, which paid for television commercials, advertisements, lawyers, consultants, polling and survey research, and campaign signs and literature, according to campaign financial records.

The final batch of campaign financial reports from the Nov. 6 election was filed in late January and early February.

The college's campaign was successful, as voters rejected Measure U 60 percent to 40 percent. But that success came at a price — the college spent \$15.36 per “no” vote.

Had Measure U passed, it would have downzoned three parcels of land in Angwin that surround PUC's campus. The initiative's goal was to keep these parcels free of residential developments. The college argued the measure was unfair and infringed on PUC's property rights.

PUC was the only donor listed in campaign financial records. College President Heather Knight did not return a phone call Monday seeking comment on the college's spending in the election.

By contrast, Save Rural Angwin, a group that supported Measure U, spent \$109,988 that funded advertisements, campaign literature and signs, legal services, and a consultant for signature-gathering. That broke down to \$5.47 per “yes” vote.

Save Rural Angwin largely relied on individual donations of \$1,000 to \$10,000 from Napa Valley wineries and residents.

Drawing a total of 11,196 voters, the race for the Napa County Board of Supervisors' District 2 seat was responsible for the highest per-vote costs in 2012.

Incumbent Supervisor Mark Luce won re-election with \$97,778 in total campaign spending, which comes out to \$16.77 per vote.

Luce's opponent, former Napa City Councilman Mark van Gorder, spent \$88,972 total or \$16.57 per vote.

Backers of Measure T, the half-cent sales tax measure for road repairs, spent \$94,529 in a successful campaign. That breaks down to \$2.39 per vote. But supporters were still paying off campaign costs more than a month after the measure sailed to victory with almost 75 percent approval.

Between Nov. 6 and the end of the year, the campaign committee reported donations of \$5,000 from Syar Industries, \$1,000 from DKS Associates, \$1,000 from CH2M Hill, \$10,000 from the California Alliance for Jobs, \$1,000 from Mark Thomas & Company, and \$1,000 from Napa Mayor Jill Techel. The campaign got \$500 each from Supervisor Keith Caldwell's campaign committee and American Canyon City Councilwoman Joan Bennett.

The Yes on Measure T committee got \$15,000 from the California Alliance for Jobs and \$5,000 from Syar Industries in the two weeks prior to Election Day.

The donations helped cover a \$51,941 payment to consulting firm TBWB that helped pay for \$10,000 in campaign literature and \$15,000 in postage to the U.S. Postal Service, according to the campaign records.