

PRELIMINARY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2006

Action Requested: Adopt the proposed Regent priorities for the 2006 legislative session, with the understanding that more details will be developed and reported to the Board before to the session begins.

Executive Summary: While the Board will have future opportunities to expand the topics for its legislative agenda, the current proposed Regent priorities for the 2006 legislative session include:

1. **Build on the Success of the Regent Partnership for Transformation and Excellence Plan**
Last year, the Board focused its legislative program around a four-year initiative that began the state's reinvestment in the universities and provided incentives and opportunities for university-wide reprioritization and reallocation of resources to areas of most strategic importance to the Board and to the state of Iowa. This four-year partnership plan represents a simple, ambitious, and highly focused legislative agenda to enhance the Regent strategic priorities of educational quality and public accountability. FY 2007 represents year two of this initiative.
2. **Create Opportunities for Best Practices**
The Board has determined that the Regent enterprise be a key example of an efficiently managed governmental entity in the state of Iowa. The Board will work to provide flexibility for its institutions by working to eliminate statutory obstacles that impede the utilization of best practices and hinder continual improvement.
3. **Enhance Special Schools Funding**
The proposal for additional FY 2007 state funding for the two special schools would continue to be aligned with state funding increases for other public K-12 schools. The FY 2007 allowable growth percentage has been statutorily set at 4%.
4. **Maintain and Improve Building and Facilities**
Deferred maintenance as well as fire and environmental safety deficiencies continue to be significant issues at the Regent institutions and Lakeside Laboratory. During the summer and fall, the Board and staff will partner with public officials to develop a long-term strategy and funding mechanism to best begin addressing these concerns.

Background:

Regent Partnership for Transformation and Excellence

This partnership is between Iowa students, their parents, Iowa taxpayers, public policy makers, and the Board of Regents. It consists of three key elements:

- Moderate tuition increases for Iowa students and their families.
- New incremental state funding for each of the next three years.
- Reallocated funds for strategic institutional transformation.

The objectives of this partnership plan are to:

1. Assist in reaching nationally competitive salary levels to recruit and retain top faculty members in areas that are important to Iowa's future
2. Increase class offerings in areas of high student demand and of great importance to the state of Iowa

3. Strengthen academic areas negatively impacted by appropriation cuts over the past five years
4. Provide new academic programs vital to Iowa's economic needs and growth potential
5. Further enrich the educational experience for students
6. Improve student progress toward graduation
7. Effectively manage appropriate class sizes
8. Continue statewide public service to Iowans inherent in the missions of the three Regent universities

The Board has strengthened its resolve to ensure public accountability by mandating that audits be specifically conducted, by both internal Regent auditors and the State Auditor, to verify the multiple aspects of this plan.

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