

Students protest UI, Deloitte town hall (CBS2/KGAN)

See newscast video at following link – <http://www.cbs2iowa.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/students-protest-ui-deloitte-town-hall-27710.shtml>

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IOWA CITY, IA (CBS2/FOX28) - Iowa's three public universities stand to stand \$30 to \$80 million annually, if they start collaborating, simplifying, and acting more efficiently.

The areas where they could improve are laid out in a report by the consulting firm Deloitte, and presented in a [97-page document on the Board of Regents website](#).

The Board of Regents is paying Deloitte \$3.5 million to conduct the analysis, which is stirring up controversy among some University of Iowa students.

COGS, the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students, protested a town hall meeting held to address the efficiency study at the University of Iowa on Tuesday, handing out fliers and holding up signs saying "Dump Deloitte".

COGS members said Deloitte has not been transparent enough about the process, and the members don't think a private firm should have sway over public universities. They are worried the plan could cost them and other students their education -- and their futures.

"We think this audit should stop. We think this audit should be defunded immediately. We think this is a waste of money to the public university," said COGS president Jeannette Gabriel.

Among their worries, Gabriel is concerned that classes will be cut, class sizes will increase, and educational quality will drop off.

In response, Deloitte consultants said that is a natural reaction.

"It shows that they're concerned about their future of their interest in the success of the institutions. I think that's a great thing," said Rick Ferraro, with Deloitte.

Deloitte and the Board of Regents laid out a plan for moving forward with this current and second phase of the efficiency study during the town hall. Regent Larry McKibben doesn't want people to confuse this plan with the regent's recent performance-based funding decision.

The UI stands to lose the most from that choice -- but McKibben, a law school alum -- hopes the savings in efficiency will help backfill some of the loss in performance.

"I see it as an opportunity to re-purpose and save funds," McKibben said.

UI President Sally Mason is hoping those dollars can make up for money lost during the recession and the flood.

"It would be really nice on this campus to actually be able to say, 'OK, we're going right at the academic mission at the core of academics, and make reinvestments in ways that will matter to our students and our faculty and our staff," Mason said.

Along with cutting costs, Deloitte staff say the universities can also build revenue, partly through increasing academic programming. Deloitte is building working groups to study how to increase distance learning and research opportunities.

COGS members are concerned because Deloitte has yet to present any research to the effectiveness of distance learning, while still proposing the expansion.