

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 4:13 PM
To: Carroll, Nicole; Craig Lang (calangfarm@gmail.com); Dave Miles; Downer, Robert; Bruce Rastetter (brastetter@summitag.com); Hannah Walsh; Harkin, Ruth; Jack Evans; Mulholland, Katie
Cc: Donley, Robert [BOARD] (bdonley@iastate.edu); Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Subject: FW: CCI letter to Transparency Taskforce

Regents,

Bob Donley asked that I share the attached letter with you. As you know, the first public hearing of the Transparency Task Force is this Wednesday, April 17 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Information regarding Wednesday's public hearing can be found on our web site at:
<http://www.regents.iowa.gov/TransparencyTaskForce/PressRelease0417PublicHearing.pdf>

Thank you,

Ann

From: David Goodner [<mailto:david@iowacci.org>]
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 3:31 PM
To: 'regentcarroll@gmail.com'; 'mark-braun@uiowa.edu'; 'psayre@iastate.edu'; 'mlackey@iastate.edu'; 'peter.cownie@legis.iowa.gov'; 'jeff.danielson@legis.state.ia.us'; 'kathleen.richardson@drake.edu'; 'john.johnson@uni.edu'; 'jack@iowahallofpride.com'; 'Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]'; 'akclayton@iastate.edu'; 'amccart@iastate.edu'
Subject: CCI letter to Transparency Taskforce

Members of the Iowa Board of Regents Transparency Taskforce.

Please find enclosed a letter from Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement members in all 99 Iowa counties outlining our list of issues we believe your taskforce needs to "knock out of the park".

For an Iowa that puts communities before corporations and people before profits,

David Goodner
Community Organizer
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
515.282.0484 (office)
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david@iowacci.org

www.iowacci.org

We talk. We act. We get it done.



We talk. We act. We get it done.

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April 12, 2013

Board of Regents Transparency Taskforce
State of Iowa
11260 Aurora Avenue
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

Members of the Regents Transparency Taskforce:

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI) members submit this letter as an official organizational comment with our demands for what the transparency taskforce must, at a minimum, recommend in order to bring basic accountability and credibility back to the Iowa Board of Regents.

The Regents has faced enormous public criticism over the past year because of a series of controversial decisions by regents leadership that have put the interests of big-moneyed corporate agribusiness groups ahead of the interests of everyday Iowans.

Governor Branstad, Regent President Craig Lang, and Regent Pro-Tem Bruce Rastetter have twisted the role of Iowa's public universities to serve corporate greed rather than the common good, and have repeatedly refused to involve the public in the decision-making process. This is not acceptable and must change.

Issue #1 – Attempted Landgrab in Tanzania, the lack of ethics policy enforcement, and the denial of public comment at board meetings

Regent Rastetter attempted to leverage the international reputation of Iowa State University (ISU) to back a corporate landgrab in Tanzania by his own company, AgriSol. When concerned citizens sought redress by appealing to the Regents own published ethics policy, and requested public comment at a board meeting weeks ahead of time, we were denied an opportunity to address the board and were physically removed from the meeting rather than be allowed to voice our concerns.

Issue #2 – Revolving-door lobbying between the corporate and public sectors

Several months later, the Regents also hired Rastetter's personal public relations director, Joe Murphy, to be the new lobbyist at ISU without conducting a public job search or following the regents own diversity-in-hiring guidelines. This kind of "revolving-door" lobbying should not be allowed.

Issue #3 – Closing the University of Northern Iowa's (UNI's) Price Laboratory without adequate public input

The regents' decision to close UNI's Price Lab was done behind closed doors and without allowing adequate time and space for students, faculty, and the general public to make their views known or to have a meaningful role in the process.

Issue # 4 – Infringement of academic freedom at ISU

The current regents leadership infringed on academic freedom at ISU by preventing the fledging Tom Harkin Institute of Public Policy from conducting free and open agricultural research independent of the corporate ag groups that dominate so much university research now. This corporate protectionism resulted in Senator Harkin pulling nearly 40 years of priceless congressional papers from one of our public institutions, an incredible and incalculable loss to the state of Iowa.

Issue # 5 – Infringement of academic freedom at the University of Iowa (UI)

Regent Rastetter is a former board member of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association and recently worked with their top lobbyist in an attempt to silence a UI professor from publicly speaking out against industry practices that could threaten Iowa's already polluted water quality.

These kinds of actions by sitting regents are not acceptable, and Iowa CCI members refuse to sit idly by while corporate power takes over what few public institutions remain accessible to everyday people in this state. Our universities are meant to serve the public interest and the common good. They are not meant to serve corporate power or the interests of the rich and powerful at the expense of hardworking families.

Therefore, we demand that the Regents Transparency Taskforce adopt the following recommendations:

- 1) The Board of Regents must develop, vet with the public, and then publish in writing a clear conflict of interest and ethics complaint process that citizens can appeal to when evidence suggests a sitting regent may have violated board policy. After this policy has been established, the Board of Regents must open a formal investigation into Rastetter's real or perceived conflict of interest violations last year during the ISU/AgriSol landgrab scandal.
- 2) The Board of Regents must mandate significant public comment time at the beginning of all Regents meetings so that members of the public may make their views known on relevant topics in a timely manner.
- 3) The Board of Regents must hold additional public hearings four times a year in all four congressional districts outside of traditional university corridors.
- 4) The Board of Regents must adopt a clear policy prohibiting "revolving door" lobbying between current and former employees of corporations owned by a sitting regent and any regent institution, including the board.
- 5) The Board of Regents must also consider additional measures to curb the influence of corporate power on board decision-making, including, but not limited to, prohibiting political activity by a sitting regent, full financial disclosure that goes above and beyond what is required by Iowa law, and allowing university students and faculty to pick an additional member of the regents.

Thousands of Iowans from all walks of life and every corner of the state support common-sense reforms to make the Iowa Board of Regents more transparent and accountable to the general public. The time for change is now.

For a more just and democratic Iowa,

Adam Mason 
State Policy Organizing Director
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement