

Efficiency study shifts to new phase (DI)

BY ERIN MARSHALL | JUNE 19, 2014 5:00 AM

By the end of the year, the three regent universities may be presented a plan to save a total of \$80 million annually.

The Transparent, Inclusive Efficiency Review, led by Deloitte Consulting, developed 17 business cases, or specific improvements the universities can make, for the second phase of the study.

“We went into this with a highly comprehensive plan,” said Regent Larry McKibben.

Although most of the 17 developments for the second phase are for all three regent universities, not every plan will be implemented the same way, said Virginia Fraser, the efficiency project manager.

Some improvements being developed include adjusting the student scheduling and developing a common application that students can use to apply for all the regent universities.

The state Board of Regents estimates the eight-month study could produce plans that will save \$30 million to \$80 million annually by the regent universities.

All the money saved will be reinvested at the universities, said Regent President Bruce Rastetter.

During the second phase, Deloitte will develop a detailed plan through the suggested improvements. The improvements will be implemented in the third phase.

The three-phase study, which has conducted research at Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa, was able to identify eight different areas of analysis, or areas in which changes can be made to help the regent universities find ways to save money.

The eight areas being analyzed include sourcing and procurement, finance, human resources, academic programs, facilities management, strategic space utilization, information technology, and student services.

The eight areas were narrowed down from the initial 12 reviewed in the first phase.

Phase one ended earlier this month after starting in March, and the second phase began Monday.

The first phase identified key strengths and challenges of each university, as well as compiling research in order to figure out what changes need to be made.

“The work is important and valuable,” President Sally Mason said about Deloitte, an auditing and financial advisory firm. “The University of Iowa places a high priority on efficiency and effectiveness.”

The information for the first phase summary was compiled from interviews with individuals from the universities and the regents' office, as well as feedback from town-hall meetings held by Deloitte.

The research was then narrowed down and categorized.

"We've had a lot of interaction with people along the way," Fraser said.

However, the study has seen backlash from several individuals in the area.

Jeannette Gabriel, a UI graduate student in education and a representative of the Dump Deloitte initiative, said she found the forum "incredibly insulting."

Deloitte is not proposing any changes specific to Iowa and uses generic ideas for changes, she said.

"These are not people who understand education," Gabriel said. "The audit should be done by people who are experts in education."