

**Governing Iowa's public  
universities and special schools**

University of Iowa  
Iowa State University  
University of Northern Iowa  
Iowa School for the Deaf  
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School  
Lakeside Laboratory Regents Resource Center  
Northwest Iowa Regents Resource Center  
Quad-Cities Graduate Center  
Southwest Iowa Regents Resource Center



**BOARD OF  
REGENTS**  
STATE OF IOWA

Bruce L. Rastetter, President, *Alden*  
Katie S. Mulholland, President Pro Tem, *Marion*  
Nicole C. Carroll, *Carroll*  
Milt J. Dakovich, *Waterloo*  
Robert N. Downer, *Iowa City*  
Ruth R. Harkin, *Cumming*  
Larry E. McKibben, *Marshalltown*  
Subhash C. Sahai, *Webster City*  
Hannah M. Walsh, *Spirit Lake*

Robert Donley, Executive Director

July 29, 2014

Regents Executive Director Clarifies Regent Admission Index (RAI)

On June 15, 2014, *The Cedar Rapids Gazette* published a guest opinion from Mr. Len Hadley, a member of the Board of Regents Performance-Based Funding Task Force. In his piece, Mr. Hadley addressed the Regents Admission Index (RAI), a calculation used by prospective students at Iowa's public universities to prepare for and predict successful admission to Iowa's public universities.

Mr. Hadley explained that university admissions offices grant exceptions to the RAI admission policy. He then compared the universities' admission rates for students with scores below the required RAI score of 245. He reported that ISU and UNI admit many more students with an RAI below 245 than does the University of Iowa, suggesting that the University of Iowa admits higher-caliber students than the other two schools. However, this is not an appropriate comparison since the RAI numbers are not calculated in the same manner at each university.

The explanation for the difference in the universities' practices lies with the high school rank of prospective students, one of the components of the RAI calculation. Since the RAI was established, a number of large high schools in the state no longer provide a high school rank for their students. To compensate for this measure for these students, the state's two AAU research universities – the University of Iowa and Iowa State University – approach the issue in much different ways.

The University of Iowa conducts individual student reviews to determine admissibility and does not calculate an RAI for all of its applicants. As former University of Iowa Associate Provost Beth Ingram indicated in an email, "these students are excluded from the RAI count."

On the other hand, Iowa State University applies a statistical formula to calculate an RAI for all applicants. The sophisticated statistical methodology used by ISU effectively ensures that all students are included in the RAI count. The ISU model has been refined over time to ensure it works well as a predictor of success and it provides, in my opinion, the most objective method of determining student admissibility.

As stated in the Board of Regents Strategic Plan, the Regent universities transform lives by providing effective and quality public education for the citizens of Iowa. The number one priority for the Board of Regents is to provide access, affordability and student success for Iowa residents. To that end, the Board Office monitors not only student enrollment, but equally important, the retention and graduation of all undergraduate students.

For example, the one-year retention rates of Iowa undergraduate students in ISU's last two freshmen classes were slightly higher than at the University of Iowa. This one-year retention rate is a strong indicator of persistence to graduation. Similarly, the six-year graduation rates of ISU resident undergraduate students are also slightly higher than at the University of Iowa. However, overall, the six-year graduation rates for the three Regent universities are 68.4%, compared to the national average of 48.9% for all public four year colleges.

In conclusion, while it may appear, as noted by Mr. Hadley, that Iowa State University admits more students with an RAI below 245 than does the University of Iowa, it is impossible for the University of Iowa to determine actual RAI admissions as it does not calculate an RAI formula for all of its students, as does ISU.

It is obvious that an evaluation of this practice needs to occur. Therefore, in the coming year, the Board of Regents Office will conduct an assessment of the sustainability of the current RAI process.

*Robert Donley  
Executive Director  
Board of Regents, State of Iowa*