

Deloitte collects data, holds focus groups for efficiency study



Noah Cary/Iowa State Daily

Efficiency Forum

President Steven Leath addresses the audience to open the efficiency forum on April 1.

Questions from the initial data request from Deloitte.

The first two phases will cost about \$2.45 million, with the third phase being dependent on the recommendations made on the first two phases.

Any suggestions for the study or questions for Deloitte or the Board of Regents can be submitted to: suggestions@iastate.edu or visit the Iowa State University efficiency homepage.

Pull Quote

"It's all about making sure that as an institution, as an organization, that we are being as productive as possible and really using taxpayers and tuition dollars in the most productive way possible." - Miles Lackey, associate vice president and Iowa State's representative to the review committee.

Only focus on undergraduate education

"Phase one is supposed to focus on the undergraduates. We didn't know that. One of the things about our undergraduate program here is that our students get to interact with our graduate students. Our graduate students are our teaching assistants that allow us to do us some additional things, so you can't really divorce them." - Veronica Dark, Faculty Senate president.

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Deloitte collects data, holds focus groups for efficiency study By **Danielle Ferguson**, danielle.ferguson@iowastatedaily.com **TownNews.com**

Everything is on the table when it comes to making Iowa's public universities more efficient.

Deloitte Consulting, the chosen Board of Regents efficiency review consulting company, said this of submitted suggestions for the study.

The efficiency review, sometimes referred to as "Rising to the Next TIER," is a review that will look at the processes, programs and spending of all three regent universities — Iowa State, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa.

The review is still in phase one of three: collecting data. During this phase, Deloitte has requested data from different departments on campus, such as human resources, student services, academic support, information technology and finance and administration.

Data requests include: overview of core services provided, use of technology tools, average amount of student debt and aid, policies and procedures.

More than 100 people from the different campus areas either have been or will be meeting with a Deloitte consultant this week, said Miles Lackey, chief of staff and Iowa State's representative to the review committee.

Lackey said campus stakeholders, including faculty, staff and students, will also be a part of the interviews, giving them the opportunity to learn more about the review and give input.

"For students, it provides them with an idea to express their thoughts about how the institution can better meet their needs as well," Lackey said.

Lackey said everything from academics to dining and residence hall services will be examined during the study.

"These all have an impact on students to the extent that these can operate more efficiently and be even more focused on the students and more focused on serving students," Lackey said.

Hillary Kletscher, president of the Government of the Student Body, said she and former GSB president Spencer Hughes have a meeting with Deloitte on April 17. She said she's not sure about what topics will be covered.

Lackey said he encourages students to send in suggestions for the review and to check the Iowa State efficiency web page for any questions they may have or to watch the video on Iowa State's public forum.

Faculty perspective on the review

Faculty Senate President Veronica Dark said she and some of the faculty senators will have a meeting with Deloitte on Friday morning.

Dark said Deloitte has collected much of its quantitative data and is now moving into collecting qualitative data from interviews.

Dark said some faculty members noticed Deloitte talk about saving cost and improving efficiency, but didn't hear anything about keeping quality.

"We believe we have a really high quality product here," Dark said. "In general, high quality may cost a little more than low quality."

Dark said she met with a consultant from Deloitte who said they will also be looking at the quality of services.

The concern of duplicated programs among the three universities was raised at the Iowa State public forum for the review. Dark said concerns about duplicated programs resulting in an eliminated program isn't a valid concern among faculty.

She said there may be concerns if the efficiency study would involve transferring programs online.

"That would be something to be concerned about," Dark said. "You don't need to have people doing this at all three universities because students could take it online. We don't think that fits with the Iowa State experience."

Dark said, though, that they weren't feeling that pressure and that isn't a rational concern, either.

Dark said the consultant from Deloitte said phase one focuses on undergraduate programs, and could focus on graduate and professional programs later.

She said she and the faculty were under the impression that everything in the university would be examined because Deloitte and the regents said "everything is on the table."

Dark said she thinks the focus is on undergraduate education because a main focus of the study is to reduce student debt.

At the focus group, Dark said faculty will look at what they think is inefficient and what ideas they may have to better the undergraduate programs.

Next steps

After phase one, Deloitte will present what they call a set of “opportunities” to present to the Board of Regents.

These opportunities refer to ways to make the universities more efficient.

The regents, then, will decide which opportunities to pursue during phase two.

Phase two for financial-related topics will take place during the summer.

Phase two concerning academics, which will include input from faculty and students, will be in Fall 2014, Dark said.

After phase two, Deloitte will again present to the board to see which opportunities to take into implementation into phase three.

Phase three is undetermined.