

From: Gartner, Michael

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To: Bob Downer (bobd@mearndonlaw.com); bonnie campbell; craig lang; dave miles; jack evans; Jenny Rokes; Rose Vasquez (vasquez.rose@principal.com); Ruth Harkin; jean robillard; Ben Allen; Fethke, Gary C; Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]

Subject: June Board meeting discussion

To Regents and Presidents and Dr. Robillard –

Unless presidential-search business intervenes, the next meeting of the Board of Regents will consist of a quite-short business session and then an informal, public discussion with the presidents and Dr. Robillard about some long-term views for the three institutions and the University Hospitals. The meeting is scheduled for June 13 in Des Moines.

Although the discussions can, and probably will, venture far afield, I think we should accept certain givens: Iowa will continue to have three state universities, Iowa demographic trends indicate the number of in-state applicants is not likely to increase, and – although this discussion shouldn't focus on the finances of the system – the percentage of state dollars in the education budgets of the universities will suffer periodic declines.

I'd like to structure the discussions loosely around five general issues:

1. What should the universities look like academically and structurally in 10 years? What areas should each excel in, both in teaching and in research? When is duplication a necessity, and when is it a less-than-ideal use of resources? What existing areas at each institution need to be fortified, what new areas need to be launched, what areas must be maintained but not emphasized, what areas should be phased out?
2. How should each university (and the University Hospitals and Clinics) relate to Iowa and Iowans? How can each university best serve the changing and ever-more-diverse interests and needs of the state and its citizens? How does this service role balance against the pure academic role of the universities – how can it enhance that role rather than detract from it?
3. How can the students at each university avail themselves of the offerings and expertise and cultures of each of the other universities? In other words, how do the universities relate to one another? In addition, how do they relate to the other institutions in the state, particularly the community colleges?

4. What can the universities do to make sure that entering students are more than adequately prepared for a university curriculum? How can the universities work with elementary and secondary education authorities and institutions to ensure that entering students are prepared to take advantage of all that the state universities have to offer?
5. What is the role of the university in the lifelong education of Iowans?

This session is not aimed at producing answers; the purpose is just to have a discussion and to see if these are the right questions to be asking. I see this as the first of a series of discussions. These discussions should give us much to ponder and should help the Regents as the Board determines its strategic outline for the future. Without that outline, we cannot ask the universities to come up with their own plans, for each plan must mesh with the overall Regents plan. I would hope that we could emerge from this meeting with a common base of knowledge about what we have and who we are – and some glimmerings of where we want to go and where the presidents and Dr. Robillard think we can go. But we cannot know any of this unless we have this initial full, frank and candid discussion with everyone participating.

If any of you have anything you want to add to this memo, please let me know.

Finally, the other day I ran into a friend who is a very successful president of a major state university. We were talking about things like the items in this note, and he said, “Remember this: Everyone wants progress. No one wants change.”

Best,

Michael

p.s. The Iowa Cubs are in town that evening, and you all are invited to come to the game, relax and enjoy ballpark fare and good baseball.