

Deloitte officials conclude UI community interviews Consultants head to UNI in next step of efficiency study

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Written by
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Where Deloitte goes next

University of Northern Iowa

- **Town hall meeting:** 1:30 to 3 p.m. Monday in the Maucker Union Ballroom on the UNI campus.
- **Campus visit:** Monday to Friday.

Iowa State University

- **Town hall meeting:** Was conducted Tuesday.
- **Campus visit:** April 14 to April 18.

Deloitte Consulting wrapped up its five-day visit Friday at the University of Iowa after interviewing 220 students, staff and faculty to get ideas about how to cut costs and streamline services.

Next stop: the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

The consultants are conducting the first phase of a \$2.45 million review of Iowa's three public universities, which include UI, UNI and Iowa State University in Ames. The Iowa state Board of Regents — which oversees the state's public universities and two specialty schools — hired Deloitte in February to conduct the largest-ever efficiency study.

Deloitte's report is due in September.

Mark Braun, UI chief of staff and vice president of external relations, said Friday about 15 representatives from Deloitte spent the week on campus meeting with one, two and sometimes three people at a time. Each of the meetings lasted about an hour.

“They asked a lot of good questions and clearly wanted to understand how we operate,” said Braun, who said he also met with Deloitte representatives. “There were lots of questions about suggestions I might have to make things better, things to look at to increase efficiencies. That sort of thing.”

Deloitte will be on UNI’s campus next week followed by a five-day visit at ISU, which is scheduled to begin April 14.

UI’s visit began with a town hall meeting March 28, during which university officials promised a transparent, comprehensive review of operations. More than 300 people attended the meeting, including about a dozen protesters.

The regents hope to find \$15 million to \$24 million in efficiencies at the three institutions, which they say are necessary to continue to deliver quality education.

Examples of how a university might find efficiencies include simplifying policies and procedures and collaborating with the other two state universities — such as sharing faculty or making group purchases. Any savings will be reinvested into the university where it was realized.

Regents President Bruce Rastetter said it has been 30 years since a previous efficiency study and that a review of the entire system is long overdue. He said he believes such studies should be done more frequently, at least every five to 10 years.

“It should be part of the culture,” Rastetter said.

During the town hall meeting March 28, Rick Ferraro, director of Deloitte Consulting, said the current system of funding education in Iowa — with 70 percent coming from tuition and 30 percent from the state legislature — is not sustainable.

“It’s fundamentally not a sustainable system,” he said. “You can’t do it without running the risk of falling behind.”

Braun said Deloitte representatives were spread out across campus talking to a variety of people.

UI Athletics Director Gary Barta said Thursday during a meeting of the Presidential Committee on Athletics that he and several of his staff had been interviewed.

Rastetter said the regents understand all three state universities have a different mission and the board isn’t interested in homogenizing the state’s higher education system. But there is an expectation that any programs offered at a school be pertinent to the institution’s mission, he said.

“We need to make sure the universities are focusing on their core missions,” he said.