

Contact: Mark Braun and Rachel Boon

ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Requested: Receive, as a first reading, the recommendations submitted by the Advisory Group.

Executive Summary: The Advisory Group is submitting the following recommendations for consideration. The Board will be asked to take action on the recommendations at the February 2021 Board of Regents meeting.

Background: On April 30, 2020, Board President Michael Richards established an Advisory Group to the Board of Regents with the following charge: Look for administrative and academic collaborations and efficiencies across the Regent enterprise. President Richards also established two subgroups to assist the Advisory Group with its charge – an Academic Subgroup and an Administrative Subgroup. The subgroups were comprised of university administrators and faculty leaders.

Since its creation, the Advisory Group and the subgroups have met throughout the summer and fall. The Advisory Group wishes to thank all of those who have participated in these meetings and the information provided. Additionally, the advisory group thought it was important to provide all of the ways in which the institutions already collaborate.

Current Collaborations

Iowa's public universities have been governed by the Board of Regents since 1909, leading to coordination and common policy frameworks on many issues over the past 110 years. While Iowa State University, the University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa have always maintained their unique identities, the institutions and their students have realized many benefits through organization as a common system. Whether a gain in operational efficiency that saves time, a cost reduction, or improved consistency in the student experience, there exists robust evidence that the universities are better because of their interconnectedness.

Over time, the facets of the universities' coordination and collaboration have multiplied in both formal and informal ways. In the post-World War II era, they initiated shared admissions frameworks. In the 1970s they joined with the private colleges and community colleges in Iowa to review new academic programs in the state through the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. By the 1980s there were formalized, cooperative ways to coordinate and improve transfer from Iowa's community colleges. Each of these decades' old efforts continues today. Over the past 20 years, dozens of opportunities for joint contract negotiations, technical assistance and unified policy-making proliferated as the Board of Regents and each institution recognized collaboration as a foundational principle.

The Board of Regents Strategic Plan 2016-2021 describes the values of transparency, public accountability and stewardship that undergird the importance of collaboration. Equally, the Board values innovation, continuous improvement and student success—values that drive new efforts as they are developed. Evidence of each of these values is found in examples of collaboration and joint efficiencies shared below. Stewardship is found in the drive to reduce costs that leads the Chief Information Officers to jointly negotiate software purchases. Continuous improvement is found in the cooperative biennial studies done by the Admissions Study Team. Innovation and student success are found in the academic program partnerships and research collaborations

designed by faculty. These examples, and many others, are points of pride for the Board of Regents and for the administrators, faculty and staff who work hard to develop them.

In isolation, each item on this non-exhaustive list is important; in total, the list is a visible display of the power of colleagues who work across institutions in service to the state of Iowa. The Board of Regents Advisory Group provides additional recommendations that enhance the vision of the Board of Regents to be a leading system of public higher education.

Examples of University Collaborations and Joint Efficiencies

Joint Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction supplies • Enterprise for overflow vehicles • Disaster recovery for IT (UI and UNI) • IT hardware, software and related contracts • Library acquisitions • Hazardous materials disposal • Student travel insurance and study abroad tracking system
Cross-institutional committees and ongoing functional coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BORIS (Board of Regents Information Security) • SECDEC (Statewide Extension, Continuing and Distance Education Committee) • LACTS (Liaison Advisory Committee for Transfer Students—partnership with community colleges and Iowa Department of Education) • Council of Provosts • Admissions Study Team • Chief Information Officers • Deans of academic colleges (e.g. Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Engineering) • BOR Enrollment Management • Vice Presidents of Student Affairs/Life • Directors of Residence Life (some joint staff training across institutions) • Communications Directors • Athletic Directors • Registrars • Financial Aid Directors • Institutional Research • International Programs • Public Safety/Security • Internal Audit • Legal Counsel • Procurement • Facilities & maintenance
Other collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty collaborations on research and grants (ex. SUI Public Health and ISU Vet Med) • Academic program partnerships between the Regents universities (ex. UNI Physics and ISU Engineering) • Academic program partnerships between the Regent universities and every community college in Iowa

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Resources common classifications in skilled trades areas, EAP and HR software collaborations• UNI on SUI procurement and travel platform• SUI supporting UNI talent acquisition system (Jobs@UNI)• SUI administering Student Health Insurance Program and Athletic Health Insurance Program for UNI• SIU provides select immigration services for UNI (H1B status, non-immigration status and permanent residency).• Regents International Study Consortium with 5 joint programs around the world• Pappajohn Center collaborations• ISU Research Foundation supports intellectual property work for UNI• Iowa Lakeside Laboratory• Western Iowa Regents Resource Center
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Recommendations

Recommendations 1 and 2 are directed to the Executive Director of the Board of Regents. The objective of these is to maximize the capacity of the Board office to support Board and institutional goals for consistency, transparency and providing access to exceptional academic programs to Iowans and beyond.

Digital Academic Delivery

Recommendation 1: The Board of Regents and the universities should explore and assess the opportunities and challenges of digital delivery of programs by assessing the market place and identifying unmet needs and the ability of the universities to meet those needs.

- A. The Executive Director will initiate a Regent-wide analysis of the market for digital delivery of educational programs. The analysis should focus on opportunities to provide services for underserved populations of students and support Iowa employers. It will analyze market demands, emerging markets, and workforce needs to identify potential market opportunities.
- B. In collaboration with the universities and in support of their unique missions, the Executive Director will assess new and existing delivery methods and infrastructure of digital academic delivery opportunities indicated in the analysis.
- C. In collaboration with the universities and in support of their unique missions, identify the potential for shared courses or other academic resources, including aligning academic calendars.

Collaboration with the Board Office

Recommendation 2: The Executive Director, in conjunction with the institutions, will evaluate each of the following:

- A. Integrating Internal Audit budget and operations into the Board office.
- B. Developing a consistent policy and practice for open records requests in partnership with the institutions.

- C. Expanding the Regents Data Warehouse by determining a common set of operational data inputs using common definitions modeled on work already successfully completed with enrollment and graduation data.
- D. Forming partnerships to track graduates and analyze employment and earnings outcomes. The effort focuses on partnerships with Iowa Workforce Development and the U.S. Census Bureau that enable expanded understanding of outcomes achieved by graduates of Iowa's Regent universities at multiple intervals of time after degree completion.
- E. Explore establishing a joint taskforce with K-12 and community colleges on concurrent enrollment and Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) to increase access for Iowa high school students and ensure a sustainable budget model for both concurrent enrollment and PSEO options.
- F. Working with universities to explore opportunities for joint legal resources and shared expertise.

Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 are directed to the presidents of the universities. These recommendations build upon existing practices and collaborations, and seek to maximize the efficiencies and opportunities available through joint efforts and collective strategies. The Advisory Group recognizes many of these recommendations have been examined in the past, but they merit revisiting as the context, market and opportunities evolve over time.

The Board would like an initial assessment of the areas listed below by December 2021. For those areas that warrant further consideration, the Board would like completion or substantial completion by June 30, 2022.

Joint Contracts

Recommendation 3: Direct the presidents to explore joint contracts or services in areas where cost reductions, improved terms or service improvements may be realized. Areas to consider include the following:

- A. Motor pool overflow contracts: Examine if a joint contract for the three universities achieves any additional savings during motor pool flex periods.
- B. Service contracts in support of Title IX compliance: In August 2020, new regulations took effect that led to additional requirements for addressing misconduct allegations that fall under Title IX. Several of the new procedures for documentation, hearings and use of advisors are permitted to be accomplished through outside contracts.
- C. Pharmacy benefits: Determine if joint contracting for pharmacy benefits achieves any additional efficiency or savings.
- D. Architectural and Engineering services: Determine if joint contracting for architectural and engineering services achieves any additional efficiency or savings.
- E. Insurance pools: Determine if joint contracting for insurance pools achieves any additional efficiency or savings.
- F. Mail Services: Examine opportunities to streamline mail services, including using a third-party vendor.
- G. Laundry operations: Examine opportunities to streamline laundry operations, including using a third-party vendor.

- H. Media and sponsorship contracts: Determine if joint contracting for media and sponsorship contracts achieves any additional efficiencies or savings.

Institutional Collaboration

Recommendation 4: Direct the presidents to explore cross-institutional resource- and service-sharing or policy alignment where cost reductions or service improvements may be realized.

Areas to consider include the following:

- A. Payroll: Examine opportunities to consolidate payroll operations to one institution or using a third-party vendor.
- B. Procurement: Identify commodities that can achieve savings by using a Regent-wide master contract.
- C. International Programs and Services: For many years, the universities have cooperated on the Regent's International Study Consortium and in other generally consultative manners to assure both opportunity for students and consistent use of best practices. As opportunities and policies associated with international programs constantly evolve, examine this area for potential service improvements or cost reductions.
- D. Human Resources: Examine opportunities for joint human resource efforts to achieve efficiency or savings, including but not limited to the following: training of employees, recruitment and on-boarding/off-boarding employees.
- E. Disaster recovery data backup: Examine opportunities to streamline and coordinate disaster recovery data backup.

Resource Opportunities

Recommendation 5: Direct the presidents to explore additional resource opportunities to support mission-critical operations or to serve public good. Opportunities to consider include the following:

- A. Joint grant-seeking and research collaborations led by faculty principal investigators.
- B. Expand economic development collaborations among the institutions and with:
 - a. Community colleges
 - b. Other Iowa higher education institutions
 - c. State of Iowa
- C. Recruit additional angel investors for economic development.
- D. Consider property sales where not in conflict with academic or research needs, or with long-range planning or donor intent.