

Contact: Bob Donley/Sheila Doyle

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMUNICATION PLAN – PHASE 1
A BOARD OF REGENTS INITIATIVE

Actions Requested:

1. Approve the establishment of the Board of Regents Interinstitutional Communication Committee comprised of communication directors from the five Regent institutions, the Board's State Relations Officers, and representatives of the Board Office, as listed in this agenda item.
2. Adopt Phase 1 of the Board of Regents Communication Plan as outlined in this agenda item for immediate implementation.
3. Direct the Communication Committee to undertake periodic reviews and updates of the Communication Plan, at a minimum of once annually, for presentation to the Board. The first series of updates will be based on the new Board Strategic Plan and will result in Phase 2 of the Communication Plan.

Executive Summary: The development of the Board of Regents Communication Plan, which is one of the Board's top four priorities, responds to the Board directive at the June 2008 meeting to develop a communication plan with the primary objective to effectively articulate the positive impact and value of Iowa's public Universities and special schools to the State of Iowa and its citizens. Development of the Plan began with meetings between the Executive Director and the communication directors at each of the universities to outline the Board's directive. Several subsequent group meetings of the institutions' communication directors were held to discuss and develop the Plan.

The result provides a comprehensive Communication Plan with a framework to promote communications between the Board of Regents and its various stakeholders. It would also be used to guide and enhance the communication functions of the Regent institutions to ensure that their messages to Iowans consistently reflect the positive impact and contributions of the Board and the institutions.

The proposed Plan outlines an initial communication strategy (Phase 1) which includes measures that can be implemented immediately, along with measures that are currently in the implementation process or are ongoing. The communication directors recommend the use of "Iowa's public universities" and "special schools" to most clearly identify the Regent institutions for the proposed messages. Phase 1 also identifies audiences, provides messages to guide communications, and lists measures to be implemented.

The Communication Plan must be dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of the Board and Iowa's public universities and special schools. The Plan promotes ongoing discussion among the Communication Committee to refine existing measures and develop new ideas. As a result, the Plan includes periodic reviews and updates, at a minimum of once annually, for presentation to the Board.

The Board is currently updating its Strategic Plan with a targeted implementation date of July 1, 2009. The Communication Committee believes the Board's Communication Plan and Strategic Plan should be closely aligned to maximize the effectiveness of each. Accordingly, the first series of communication updates will be based on the new Board Strategic Plan and will result in Phase 2 of the Communication Plan. It is anticipated that the first communication update will be presented to the Board at the March 2009 meeting.

The Plan would be implemented in an efficient manner using the existing expertise and resources of the institutions' communication operations.

The following institutional and Board Office representatives have participated in development of the Plan and will comprise the Board of Regents Interinstitutional Communication Committee.

Board of Regents Office

Bob Donley	Executive Director
Sheila Doyle	Policy and Operations Analyst, Communications and Facilities

University of Iowa

Steve Parrott	Director, University Relations
Linda Kettner	Associate Director, University Relations
Scott Ketelsen	Associate Director, University Relations

Iowa State University

Carole Custer	Director, University Marketing
John McCarroll	Executive Director, University Relations

University of Northern Iowa

James O'Conner	Assistant Vice President for Marketing/Public Relations
Stacey Christensen	Community Relations Manager, University Marketing/Public Relations

Iowa School for the Deaf

Jeanne Prickett	Superintendent
Cynthia Angerth	Outreach Coordinator

Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School

Patrick Clancy	Superintendent/Administrator for Statewide System for Vision Services
Dianne Utsinger	Director of Human Resources

State Relations Officers

Keith Saunders
Andy Baumert
Joe Murphy

Board of Regents Communication Plan – Phase 1

Objective

The primary objective of the Board of Regents Communication Plan is as follows: **To communicate messages of the positive impact of the Board of Regents, Iowa's public universities, and special schools, on the State of Iowa.**

Audiences

The Communication Plan acknowledges a number of stakeholders for the Board, Iowa's public universities, and special schools:

- Iowa Citizens
- Students (high school, community college, existing college/university students, etc.) and their Families
- State Government
- Business and Industry (Iowa, national, international)
- Alumni and Donors

Messages

The specific goal of the Board's messages is to illustrate positive contributions to the State and its citizens, while highlighting the following ongoing objectives:

- Accountability and transparency
- Responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars
- Commitment to quality education, research, and outreach
- Positive return on students' investment
- Campus safety
- Economic investment for the state
- The importance of adequate State funding for Iowa's public universities and special schools

The Communication Plan will provide targeted messages to illustrate the accomplishments and contributions of Iowa's public universities and special schools, which would include, but would not be limited to, the following subject areas:

- Quality, affordable educational opportunities
 - Competitive tuition rates
 - Quality faculty
 - Low student/faculty ratios
- Increasing enrollments and graduation rates
- Student return on investment with substantial increase in earning potential and improved quality of life
- Ongoing efforts to address student debt
- Continuing efforts to improve campus safety
- National and peer rankings (U.S. News and World Report, Princeton Review, etc.)
- Increasing sponsored research funding and its benefits to students and services to Iowans
- Increasing private gifts which contribute to scholarships, faculty (endowed chairs, etc.), instructional facilities, etc.
- Quality campus facilities which contribute to excellent academic programs and the attraction and retention of faculty, staff and students
- Contributions to Iowa economy
 - Total budget, state appropriations, positive return on state funding investment
 - Number of employees, and Regent alumni in all 99 counties, all contributing to Iowa economy
 - Creation of and research in new technologies
 - Technology transfer and business/community development activities serving all 99 counties
 - Services to numerous businesses, including disaster services, and agricultural ventures across the state
 - Efforts to retain graduates in Iowa
- Contributions to medical industry and health care for all Iowans – top producers of nurses, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, etc.
- Sustainability efforts on campuses to mitigate future cost increases – ongoing development of sustainable practices and educational and research programs that promote sustainability, and continued implementation of energy policies and programs that are aligned with state and national energy initiatives – some examples include energy conservation measures, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting use of renewable fuels, research in wind energy, incorporation of sustainability elements into the student curriculum, development of sustainable building environments, recycling programs, etc.

- Services to Iowans
 - Services of University Hospitals and Clinics to thousands of Iowans in all 99 counties, ensuring the best possible health care for our state
 - Iowans' participation in ISU Extension programs
 - Outreach through on-line courses to meet growing educational needs of all Iowans
 - Regent Admission Index, Articulation Web Site, Voluntary System of Accountability

Implementation Measures

The Board's messages would be communicated utilizing the following measures:

- Preparation of an annual report from the Board President to the State, highlighting the major accomplishments of the Board, Iowa's public universities and special schools in the past year, to be distributed to the Governor, Iowa Legislature, and citizens, possibly in February of each year consistent with the Board's presentations to the Education Appropriations Committee during the legislative session.
- Coordination of public appearances by members of the Board of Regents, individually and with other Board members, to a variety of the Board's stakeholders.
 - Presentations to Iowa civic groups, businesses, chambers of commerce, etc., to promote the many contributions of Iowa's public universities and special schools to the state.
 - Presentations to school boards, education board of directors, etc., to promote the high quality educational opportunities of Iowa's public universities and special schools, communicate admission requirements, etc.
 - Meetings with state and local government leaders (a minimum of three meetings annually).
 - Meetings with local, state, and national higher education media, including newspapers, radio and television (including public radio and television news programs) to discuss education policy initiatives and issues.
 - Informational forums across the state where Board members can listen and respond to the concerns of Iowans.
- Development of information sheets; this would include general information, as well as information tailored to specific stakeholders and target groups. Some examples include the following information related to the Board and Iowa's public universities and special schools:
 - The many contributions to the State of Iowa and its citizens.
 - The quality educational programs, admission requirements, etc., for prospective students (for distribution to high schools, parent/teacher organizations, community colleges, other colleges/universities, etc.).
 - The many contributions to business and industry and the state's economy (for distribution to government and business groups).

- The collaborative efforts among the institutions, with community colleges, and business/industry partnerships (for distribution to government and business groups, educational institutions, etc.).
- The contributions to health care (UIHC outreach services, improving health care for lowans, indigent patient care, educating doctors, etc.), and research (emerging treatments and technologies, ongoing research in cancer, cystic fibrosis, etc.).
- Sustainability efforts (for distribution to legislative, government and business groups).

Other measures to support communication efforts:

- Provide periodic Committee reviews and updates of the Communication Plan for presentation to the Board, at a minimum of once annually.
- Develop Phase 2 of Communication Plan based on the Board's Strategic Plan for presentation to the Board.
- Hold periodic meetings of the Communication Committee, at a minimum of four times annually, to: review and update the Communication Plan; discuss issues with the Executive Director and Board president (if available); address changing communication needs, refine existing measures and develop new ideas; and coordinate messages with efforts of State Relations Officers.
- Provide a full-time communications position in the Board Office (Director of Communications and Public Affairs) to oversee implementation of the Communications Plan, serve as a liaison between the Board, Iowa's public universities and special schools, and coordinate the work of the Communications Committee in the ongoing review and further development of the Communication Plan.
- Continue ongoing efforts for increased collaboration and enhanced communications with Board members, the Board Office, Iowa's public universities and special schools to include issues management, distribution of press releases, and development of press statements on common institutional subjects (tuition, enrollment, student debt, sustainability, etc.).
- Update the Board of Regents web site to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, expand information availability, encourage increased usage, and improve ease of use.
- Develop internet data base for the institutions and Board Office to input, share, review, and track Freedom of Information media requests.
- Continue press availability sessions at each Board of Regents meeting.
- Continue preparation of summary of Board meeting action items.