

## **BOARD PRESIDENT BATES COMMENTS – FEBRUARY 27, 2025**

The higher education landscape is changing at the state and federal levels.

One of the things that the Board does is to assist the institutions to ensure they change as well.

We must stay ahead of the curve and not play catch-up. As we are all aware, DEI has been a central focus during the last two summers and legislative sessions.

While we have made significant progress, we need to complete the work. For example, after working with the Board Office for the past several months, the University of Iowa announced that three Living Learning Communities will no longer exist after the end of this spring semester. We understand that some are upset, but to comply with recent decisions, this is the path forward.

But we have more to do. While there have been administrative eliminations and restructuring, the universities need to look again to see if there are additional changes that should be made.

There has been work done on the university web pages, but a simple search shows there is a lot more work to do. For some, it may look like nothing has been changed. This is not the case, but the changes must be made. I am directing the institutions to pull down any current or archived web pages regarding diversity, equity and/or inclusion. Once the pages are down then the universities, in consultation with the Board Office, can determine what pages need to exist but rewritten.

Also, we need to ensure that all three universities fulfill the request from the Governor, in her February 24th letter. In the letter, the Governor requested that by March 6th, each university identify any existing contract with the federal government that has DEI provisions, along with “the date of the agreement, contracting parties, dollar volume and an estimate of the percentage of the work to be completed.”

All of us, Regents, university administrators, faculty and staff, must examine what we are doing right now and what we will do going forward to ensure

that we are following the spirit of the laws and executive orders, not just the words on the paper. The time is now to make sure we complete our work.

I would also like to add to Regent Lindenmayer's comments from earlier during the Academic Affairs committee. The universities and the Board have been proactive in ensuring that programs that are no longer needed are eliminated and that new programs are added to meet the demand of students and the workforce needs of the state.

Currently, there are several bills in the legislature that would direct the Board to do a review of our programs and how they fit with high demand jobs and workforce needs. We do not need to wait for a bill. I am directing the Board Office, in consultation with the universities, to begin the review now and to have a full and complete report to the Board by its November meeting at the latest.

I know that there are some who believe the Board and the universities move too slowly in being responsive to concerns that are raised. There are many examples to show that is not true, but I would like to talk about the last docket item we have today regarding changing the admission application with regards to sex. Even before the letter from several members of the legislature was received, work was already underway to make the changes. Three days after the letter was received the changes were complete.

This Board recognizes the changes that are happening and are working to ensure changes are being made at the universities. The Board is working efficiently and systematically to make sure all the changes that need to be made, are made.

I would like to thank the Board, the universities, the legislature and the Governor for understanding that the Board is doing its work, and will make sure the work is done on time.