

July 11, 2011

Fellow Regents:

As you are aware, in May Governor Branstad called me to ask that I resign as president of the Iowa Board of Regents rather than serve out my statutory term to April 30, 2012. A couple of days later he made the same request of president pro tem Jack Evans.

Jack and I visited, and because the president and president pro tem are elected to two year terms by the Board and do not serve at the pleasure of the Governor, we respectfully declined to act on the Governor's unprecedented request. We believe this to be an important principle.

Instead, we reached out to our fellow Regents for your counsel. Not unexpectedly, the feedback was mixed, with some placing a higher priority on attempting to improve the working relationship with the Governor's office through a leadership change, and others favoring continuity of leadership as a way of protecting the independence of the Board.

As we have reflected on the feedback we received, we have become increasingly concerned about the distraction to the Board from an ongoing impasse. Already decision-making has become more difficult and time is being taken from the ongoing work of the Board.

Even though our legislators have just returned to their districts, the new fiscal year has already begun and our work continues. The Board will soon be preparing its legislative agenda for FY 2013. We are also at the front-end of recruiting and selecting a new president for Iowa State University – one of the most important functions of any governing board – and we cannot let governance issues become an impediment to attracting a quality candidate.

In our judgment, anything that distracts the Board from its mission or that weakens the Board's collective resolve must go by the wayside.

Therefore I am announcing today my intention to resign as president of the Board of Regents upon the election of my successor. Jack Evans has also decided to resign as president pro tem upon the election of his successor. Executive Director Donley will schedule a telephonic meeting at the earliest convenience of all Board members to elect Regents to fill the remainder of our terms.

Jack and I have chosen to share the background leading up to this announcement for three reasons: First, Iowans have a right to know why we are stepping down, and in particular that the decision each of us has made comes not because we are unwilling to fulfill the commitments we made when elected. Indeed, serving the citizens of Iowa as the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the Iowa Board of Regents has been one of the great pleasures of my life. Jack feels the same way.

Second, it is important to document that our resignations come only after extensive consultation with all Regents, and that we are taking this step for the express purpose of getting the Board refocused on the job that each of us was appointed to do.

Finally, we believe that it is important for the Board to unite behind our new president and president pro tem. As to this last point, we want to state clearly that when we look around our Board table, in each face we see a commitment to serve Iowans and a passion for higher education. That is why we can say without reservation that our new president and president pro tem, whoever they may be, will have our full and active support. And, while we are profoundly grateful to those Regents that have encouraged us to continue in our present roles, we now ask each of you to give our new leaders the same opportunity that you have given us.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our president pro tem, Regent Jack Evans. He is an outstanding member of our Board who has served with distinction these last four-plus years. I will ever be grateful for his courage in advocating for our institutions, his wise counsel on countless occasions, and his lasting contributions to higher education in Iowa.

I am proud of the many accomplishments of the Regent institutions, our students, faculty, staff and administrators these last four years. This has been a challenging period, including devastating flooding at the University of Iowa in 2008, the greatest global financial crisis since the Great Depression, and dramatic cuts in state support for our institutions. Nonetheless, each and every institution has continued to deliver on our priorities of education, research and service.

Despite the challenges of the last few years, Iowa's Public Universities have achieved record enrollments and generated record sponsored research. Tuition increases approved by this Board have been among the most modest in the last 25 years – including the single lowest tuition increase since 1982. On average tuition has increased only 4.6% annually over the last four years – well below national averages and not nearly commensurate with state budget cuts.

Keeping tuition low has only been possible because our institutions have identified and implemented tens of millions of dollars in expense reductions and efficiencies across their campuses. At the same time, our universities reached out a hand to struggling Iowa families by expanding student financial aid funding to never-before-seen levels.

In 2010 the Board adopted a new six-year strategic plan which includes quantifiable measures of performance. The Campus Sustainability Plan adopted in 2009 has already resulted in significant progress in the development of environmentally favorable building practices, purchasing, energy savings and recycling. The Board has improved its accountability and transparency to Iowans through the publication of the Board of Regents Annual Report. Thanks to outstanding campus leadership, in 2008 each of our institutions adopted and implemented revised sexual misconduct policies that set new standards nationally. The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School has transformed its educational delivery model to one better fitting the needs of today's blind and vision-impaired children. The Iowa School for the Deaf has faithfully served the needs of a significant number of deaf and hard of hearing children, despite budget cuts. The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics has delivered outstanding medical research and care to patients while improving its financial strength and stability. The universities' commitment to working effectively with Iowa's outstanding community colleges has never been stronger. And, it is my hope that the phrase "Iowa's Public Universities and Special Schools," which so aptly describes the stake that each Iowan has in these outstanding institutions, will continue in use long into the future.

Others have described the Iowa Board of Regents as the finest system of governance of public universities in the nation. If that is so, it is because individual Regents have had the courage to do what is right to build and preserve quality, affordable, higher education in our State. If our actions sometimes put us at odds with the politics of the moment, that is exactly as it should be.

I urge our new president and president pro tem to forge effective working relationships with the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Iowa's Public Universities & Special Schools can only benefit from strong collaboration. But in doing so, never forget that the ultimate test for each of us is whether we have sought to do the right thing as measured both by the oath we took to serve Iowans and by the 102 year legacy of independence of the Board of Regents of the State of Iowa.

I came to the Board of Regents already believing that the future of Iowa is inextricably linked to education. Today it is even clearer to me that the key to growing Iowa's population, creating good-paying jobs, increasing family incomes, and improving the quality of life in our state, is through a sound educational system that extends from the earliest days of a child's life and throughout our lives.

Though my role will soon change, my commitment to quality affordable higher education will not.

Thank you. It has been an honor to serve.

Regards,

David W. Miles