

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Change in Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Coordinating Committee
Date: January 31, 2000

Recommended Action:

Approve the proposed changes in the structure of the Lakeside Laboratory Coordinating Committee.

Executive Summary:

Based on recommendations from the Iowa State University Internal Auditors, some modifications in the organizational and operating structure of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory are recommended for Board approval. The existing coordinating structure has worked reasonably well over the years as evidenced by the success in achieving, and even exceeding, the goals established by the Board of Regents for the Lab in 1993. There are some areas, however, where more specificity in the duties of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Coordinating Committee would be beneficial.

It is proposed that the Provosts at each university be designated as the representatives of the universities on the Coordinating Committee and that the duties of the Coordinating Committee be specified. The initial institutional appointments to the Coordinating Committee were persons with a sufficient level of authority and/or influence within the universities so that the actions of the Committee were accepted and sufficiently communicated within the university structures. In recent years, however, changes in administration and delegation within the universities resulted in well-meaning, but sometimes ineffectual representation, that caused a certain level of dysfunction on occasion. The appointment of the Provosts would remedy this situation and allow for regular monthly meetings and communication (as needed) on Lakeside Lab matters. The Provosts meet as a group - the Interinstitutional Committee on Educational Coordination (ICEC) at each Board of Regents meeting. There has also been a problem in the past of scheduling meetings of the Committee, which would be remedied by the representation of the Provosts.

This proposal is consistent with the Board of Regents Action Plan, Key Result Area 4.0.0.0, to provide effective stewardship of the institutions' state, federal, and private resources.

The specific duties being recommended for the Coordinating Committee are listed below. Generally the proposed duties are those which the Committee has already performed (e.g., hiring the Director) or are duties which are not now being performed with any consistency and clarity of authority (e.g., approving fees).

Background:

In 1993, the Board of Regents approved a new organizational structure consisting of a "Coordinating Committee" and a three-year plan for the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. This action was taken as a result of the identification of a series of problems at the Lab including declining enrollments, deteriorating facilities, poor community relations and difficulties in interinstitutional coordination. With Board approval, the new Coordinating Committee hired a new Director for Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and began implementation of the three-year strategic plan. Within three years, all of the major planning goals had been achieved and the major problems had been resolved. The Laboratory has since enjoyed strong enrollments due to new, innovative curricular offerings, improved community relations and better interinstitutional coordination.

Many persons and organizations contributed to this success. The new Director hired by the Coordinating Committee has provided critically needed leadership to the Lab. The community, primarily through the efforts of a group known as the Friends of Lakeside Laboratory, has contributed time, funding and support for the Lab including several projects such as the new Wait Water Quality Laboratory and other physical improvements to the property. Iowa State University has provided excellent support services for the overall operation of the facility. The Coordinating Committee provided the overall guidance needed for the successful operation of the Lab.

Like every organization, some fine-tuning of the operation is desirable from time to time to maintain the overall effectiveness of the operation. Last fall in a report to the Board of Regents Banking Committee, the ISU Internal Auditors identified several issues with respect to the operation of the Lab. All of the issues raised by the Auditors are currently in the process of being addressed, or have already been addressed. Most of these issues relate to minor operational and procedural matters. One issue raised by the auditors related to the Coordinating Committee and concerned the need to better define the authority of the Coordinating Committee.

In 1993, the Board established the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Coordinating Committee, consisting of a representative from each of the Regent universities, a representative nominated by the community and a representative of the Board

Office. Dr. Robert Barak has served as “chair” of the Coordinating Committee since its inception. The Director of the Lab serves as an “ex-officio” member of the Coordinating Committee. A primary function of the Committee was to provide for greater interinstitutional oversight of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, thus addressing one of the major problems identified in the previous structure. The Committee was also charged with “responsibility for achieving the goals and providing necessary oversight and direction to the Director.”

The Coordinating Committee has worked reasonably well over the years since its establishment but could now benefit from greater clarification of its authority and membership. The Board Office has developed a proposed change in the responsibilities and membership of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Coordinating Committee that would specifically identify the Provosts on each campus as the institutional representatives on the Coordinating Committee and add the following specific duties:

- (1) Hire, establish salary, and annually evaluate the performance of the Director of Lakeside Laboratory.
- (2) Approve all policies, major operating procedures, and fees (including the disposition thereof).
- (3) Develop a strategic plan for the Lakeside Laboratory, to present the plan for approval of the Board of Regents and monitor progress of the plan.
- (4) Approve overall staffing of the Lakeside Laboratory and seek Board approval for any new positions consistent with Board policy.
- (5) Approve all budget requests for new institutional reallocation and for state appropriations before recommending such requests to the Board of Regents.
- (6) Approve all program offerings (credit and non-credit).
- (7) Approve all major additions, changes and plans for the property, including the physical facilities.
- (8) Provide any additional oversight to the Lakeside Laboratory operation as may be necessary for the effective operation of the facility.

The proposed Committee changes would continue the Committee’s reporting to the Board for the overall operation of the Lakeside Laboratory and seeking Board approval as needed. It would also ensure appropriate consultation with the institutions before making any recommendations to the Board of Regents. The University representative on the Coordinating Committee would be responsible for ensuring appropriate and timely internal communications regarding the Lakeside Laboratory.

This proposed structure has been reviewed with the institutions, the Director of Lakeside Laboratory, the current Coordinating Committee members and the ISU Internal Auditors. Suggestions from these persons have been incorporated into the proposal, where possible.

Conclusion:

The general organizational structure of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has worked reasonably well over the years. It certainly was an improvement over the previous structure in which the operation was carried out essentially by one Regent institution to the near exclusion of the other two universities. This exclusion resulted in a series of major operational problems. The proposed changes and modifications being proposed would build on the existing successful structure to strengthen the overall operation of the Lakeside Laboratory. The Interinstitutional Coordinating Committee is critical to the success of the Lakeside Laboratory.

Robert J. Barak

Approved:

Frank J. Stork