

From: Gartner, Michael [mailto:MichaelG@iowacubs.com]
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2007 11:12 AM
To: Amir Arbisser; bobd@mearndonlaw.com; Jenny Rokes; Mary Ellen Becker; vasquez.rose@principal.com; Ruth Harkin; Teresa Wahlert
Cc: gwstein@iastate.edu; Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]; Ben Allen; Fethke, Gary C
Subject:

Colleagues --

As you know, there has been much discussion of late about our use of e-mail to communicate. Some think it is a way of avoiding discussion in a meeting; others say it is a necessary and modern way to communicate for a board that meets just six times a year. The basic issue is this: When we communicate by e-mail, are we less transparent that we could be and should be as a state agency?

That's a legitimate issue. We must, of course, communicate between meetings, and e-mail is the best way. But we also must be transparent. There is a way both to use e-mail and to be transparent, and as of today I am asking Gary Steinke to implement it.

Gary will establish an "e-mail file" that will be on our Web site and open to anyone. Any time five or more Regents communicate by e-mail, he will put a copy of that e-mail instantly into that file so anyone can read it. Similarly, any time he or anyone else at the Board office sends out an e-mail to the Board, it, too, will automatically go into the file. Any Regent can also, of course, put into that file any communication between or among fewer than five Regents if he or she wants to do so.

I believe that this is good public policy, of course, and I also believe it will relieve us of the time-consuming chores we've all dealt with recently in replying to scores of open-records requests.

Here's how the process will work: A Regent should send any and all e-mails he or she wishes to be placed on the site to Gary. Board counsel then will review and redact, if necessary, and then Gary will have the item put on the Web. In all likelihood, the only redactions would be for personal information, conference call codes, and the like.

We will send out an announcement about this policy shortly.

I would appreciate any comments you have.

Best regards,

Michael