

Board of Regents President Craig Lang

Let me begin by saying that in life and in this role, I'm a firm believer in getting input from key players before making any major decisions. That's why I've spent the past couple of weeks reaching out to the Regents, University Presidents and other key leaders to learn more about issues that are "top-of-mind" for them. All of these conversations are necessary during a transition to determine common ground, and assess our future direction.

I've also spent a lot of time travelling around the state. As President of the largest grassroots organization in Iowa, I visit with Iowa families in every corner of the state; in fact, I'm heading up to Cresco this evening, to hear what they have to say about the needs of our children as they prepare to be leaders of tomorrow, among other things. My goal was to be accessible to folks and understand their issues first, before making any broad statements to the media. I appreciate your understanding about that.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING ISU PRESIDENT

My conversations with the Regents, University Presidents and others revealed that we all have far more in common than not. We are all united in our support and commitment for our students and higher learning institutions. With that, I have three priorities that I feel are necessary to focus on initially. They are by no means the *only* priorities of the Regents, but I feel these are most important to tackle first:

I've already said earlier that one of our most urgent priorities is the recruitment and selection of the next ISU President. As a land grant university, Iowa State should be a leader in the bio-economy; finding ways to bring more value to what we grow. That, in turn, will create higher-paying jobs to keep our best and brightest students in the state.

The next ISU President needs to be an innovator, a hard-charging visionary who can take ISU into the future, so that students who are interested in solving the world's energy and food needs will come here, to Iowa, to find and study the solutions.

But it's about more than biofuels, it's about new fields. We're in a global world. How are we preparing our students for those jobs and to operate in a global capacity? That would be a draw for our young people. We need to find cohesion in these studies, so multiple departments can work together to find solutions for the 21st century.

WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATURE

It's also important to work cooperatively with the Iowa Legislature. Regent funding comes from the appropriations committee of the Legislature. There has to be a stronger relationship with the Iowa legislature, to work together. We believe it's important to stop the loss of appropriations so that a student's cost is more closely aligned to the cost of inflation.

We're going to work on improving our relationship with the executive and legislative branch, providing openness and transparency on Regents system operations. That's why I invited the local legislators to breakfast this morning and to stay for the meeting. I understand that hasn't happened before. I appreciate the legislators and students participating here today and sharing input. Real progress can be made when all parties come together.

CREATING AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF OUR HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

And finally, we have tremendous learning institutions in this state, including the liberal arts/teaching program here at UNI and the outstanding medical facility in the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. My hope over the next 8 months is to help Iowans understand the value that these institutions provide us now and in the future so when our children graduate, they know that they can obtain the best education to be a teacher right here at UNI, or to be a doctor at the University of Iowa or to be involved in the bio-economy at Iowa State. We have much to offer them and we need to focus on our areas of strength.

This is the first day in my new role with the Iowa Board of Regents...there is much to accomplish in the remainder of this term. It starts today by building bridges, increasing our transparency to help get parents, students, Regents, lawmakers and Iowa leaders all working together, for the sake of our children.

Thank you. I look forward to visiting with the media at noon to answer any questions. Our three university presidents will also be joining me.