

Transparency Task Force Recommendations

As approved by the Transparency Task Force on June 19, 2013 – Final Report Pending

First Charge: Recommend best practices for responding to public information requests.

1. Request each public university, the special schools and the Board Office appoint a transparency officer or similarly named position. The person in this position or designee would maintain the log and track public records requests. The Task Force recommends that the Board of Regents consult with the president of each university and the superintendent of the special schools to determine the specific duties and reporting authority for the Transparency Officer.
2. Keep a central log of all public records requests. A log might contain the following:
 - a. Date of request
 - b. Name of person requesting the information
 - c. Type of records requested
 - d. Date the records are completed or guidance relating to the expected release date.
 - e. Legal authority for redaction
 - f. Name of the person assigned by the Transparency Officer to gather the information.
3. Maintain copies of any redacted information in case this information is needed in the future.
4. Similar to the current practice at the University of Iowa, require each university, the Board Office and the special schools to post on their respective web sites the public records requests received. (See: Univ. of Iowa: <https://publicrecords.uiowa.edu/request-log>.)
5. Require that summary transparency reports be created and released quarterly to relevant Iowa media by the Board Office, the public universities and the special schools. Each report would tabulate numerically the media and public requests and dispositions. Each report might also offer brief narrative highlights of transparency requests and dispositions during the reporting period.

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Second Charge: Recommend best practices for additional access to public information of interest to Iowans.

1. Hold a public comment hearing at each university, at the Board Office and at the special schools prior to each Board of Regents meeting.
 - a. Students, faculty, parents, alumni and citizens have an opportunity to provide comment on any issue affecting the Board of Regents, including the upcoming Board meeting agenda.
 - b. Each hearing shall last a minimum of one hour.
 - c. The Transparency Officers or designees will preside at each hearing.
 - d. The dates and times of the public hearings are staggered to maximize public input.
 - e. Each public hearing shall be video recorded and posted on the Board of Regents web site. A link to the video recordings shall be forwarded to each member of the Board of Regents.
 - f. Comments received during each public hearing shall be reviewed by the officers of the Board of Regents to determine if an issue raised during a public hearing should be placed on a future meeting agenda of the Board of Regents or if persons testifying at the public hearing should be invited to appear before the Board of Regents.
2. Establish a written public comment option for all docket decision items on each Board of Regents agenda. (See Alabama: <http://www.ache.state.al.us/Forum/Index.htm>)
3. Amend the Board of Regents policy relating to a request to appear before the Board so a request to speak is due after the Board agenda is made available to the public.
4. Require that academic program closures occur only at an in-person meeting of the Board of Regents.
5. Provide each member of the Board of Regents with a state e-mail account.
6. Post Regent conflict of interest papers on Board of Regents web site.
7. Establish a transparency data page on each university, special school and the Board of Regents web site.
8. Create a data base of frequently asked questions. Based upon timeliness of an issue or frequency of citizen contact with the Board of Regents, a question or issue and the response will be posted on the Board of Regents web site.
9. Hold a press briefing upon release of the docket. The Board of Regents Office would conduct the press briefing.
10. Require the Board of Regents to annually hold a minimum of one Board meeting in each congressional district.