

November 14, 2025

Governor Kim Reynolds
Office of the Governor
1007 East Grand Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50319

Mr. Charlie Smithson
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Ms. Meghan Nelson
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Dear Governor Reynolds and Members of the Iowa General Assembly:

Pursuant to the 2026 Iowa Code §261J.4; 2025 House File 856 §7; 2025 Iowa Acts Ch. 113 §7, enclosed is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Prohibition and Restriction Compliance Report which was approved by the members of the Board of Regents during its November 2025 meeting.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Braun
Executive Director

\\Box Sync\Board of Regents Shared\BF\Legislative\2026\Reports\

Attachments

cc: Michael Peters
Legislative Liaisons
Legislative Log

Contact: Aimee Claeys

IOWA CODE 261J COMPLIANCE REPORT**Committee Action Requested:** Receive the report.

Executive Summary: Pursuant to Iowa Code 261J.4, the Board of Regents is required to submit an annual report that certifies its compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 261J, on or before December 1. On September 3, 2025, the Board of Regents engaged Consovoy McCarthy Park PLLC (Consovoy) to conduct an internal investigation of the Regent Institutions to ensure compliance with Iowa law regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, including Iowa Code 261J. This investigation is currently ongoing.

The Board of Regents is fully committed to complying with Iowa Code 261J and has taken several steps to ensure compliance. The timeline of actions the Board has taken since March 2023 to ensure comprehensive implementation of Iowa Code 261J is included in Attachment A. In addition, the Board office worked with the universities to establish the necessary structures to ensure that any future concerns, should they arise, are addressed promptly and effectively to ensure ongoing compliance with the law.

IOWA CODE 261J COMPLIANCE REPORT

On March 14, 2023, President Michael Richards [appointed](#) a working group (DEI Study Group) to initiate a comprehensive study and review of all DEI programs and efforts at the Regent institutions. In addition, President Richards directed all universities to pause the implementation of any new DEI programs until the study was completed.

On November 16, 2023, the DEI Study Group presented their [report and recommendations](#) for consideration by the Board. As a result, the Board adopted the recommendations as [Board Directives](#). President Richards requested the universities to provide progress reports at the April Board meeting.

On February 28, 2024, the Board approved [policy manual revisions](#) to implement several of the Board Directives.

On April 25, 2024, the university Presidents provided progress reports and implementation timelines to the Board.

- [DEI Updates](#) docket memo
- [University of Iowa updates](#)
- [Iowa State University updates](#)
- [University of Northern Iowa updates](#)

On June 3, 2024, Aimee Claeys met with Chief Deputy Attorney General Leif Olson and Solicitor General Eric Wessan to discuss the DEI language contained in SF 2435 and the Attorney General's role in enforcement.

On September 20, 2024, Aimee Claeys and Rachel Boon met with Chief Deputy Attorney General Leif Olson, Deputy Attorney General Jeff Peterzalek, and Solicitor General Eric Wessan to provide a general status update on the Board of Regents review process.

On November 7, 2024, the Board received a [DEI Report](#) detailing efforts to ensure compliance with Senate File 2435 by its effective date of July 1, 2025.

The changes included updates to the diversity portion of the general education core at Iowa State University and the University of Iowa. These updates took effect at the end of the spring 2025 semester and apply to students enrolling at the universities as of fall 2025.

On January 15, 2025, the Board [approved](#) updates to the Board's 2022-2027 strategic plan and asked the universities to review their strategic plans and update them in accordance with the Board's plan.

As of February 13, 2025, all three universities implemented [updates](#) to the university applications for admission regarding questions used to collect legal sex and self-identified gender.

During the February 27, 2025, Board meeting:

1. The universities provided their [updated strategic plans](#) for Board approval.
 - [University of Iowa](#)
 - [Iowa State University \(Metrics\)](#)
 - [University of Northern Iowa](#)
2. The Board [approved revisions](#) to Board Policy Manual Chapter 4.2 Freedom of Expression regarding university statements on matters of public concern and use of social media.
3. [President Bates directed](#) the universities to take down all web pages, either current or archived, relating to DEI.
4. [President Bates directed](#) the Board Office, in consultation with the universities, to begin workforce alignment and low enrollment review of academic programs with a full and complete report to the Board at the November 2025 meeting.
5. The University of Iowa requested, and the Board approved, the [termination of the Bachelor of Arts in Social Justice](#).
6. The Board declined to consider reorganization of several departments into a Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at that time. The University is now reviewing other alternatives to the organization and structure of the relevant departments.

On March 27, 2025, the University of Iowa [closed](#) the Division of Access, Opportunity and Diversity (DAOD).

At the April 23-24, 2025 Board meeting, the Board approved a [new Board Policy](#) to create a requirement that the universities publicly post syllabi for undergraduate courses with an effective date of start of the fall semester in 2026.

At the June 10-12, 2025 Board meeting, the Board received, as a first reading, [proposed Board Policy – DEI and CRT Requirements](#). The Board received feedback from a wide variety of constituents on the proposed policy as drafted. After reviewing and considering the feedback, an [alternative policy](#) that met the Board objectives in a manner consistent with existing Board policies on academic freedom and course content was presented and approved at the August 12, 2025 Board meeting.

As reported in the November 2024 report, the University of Northern Iowa was in full compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 261J. Since the November 2024 report was issued, the University of Iowa has:

1. Ceased operating non-academic living learning communities (LLCs) in the residence halls.
2. Fully transitioned several cultural centers, college-based groups and university-wide programs into student organizations. The Multicultural and International Student Support and Engagement unit was dissolved within Leadership and Engagement, with its staff continuing to advise all student organizations, including the cultural centers' programming boards.

Additionally, since the November 2024 report was issued, Iowa State University has:

1. Fully shut down the Center for LGBTQ+ Student Success.
2. Closed the Iowa State Conference on Race and Ethnicity (ISCORE) office. The university continues to evaluate alternatives for students, faculty and staff to present research on a range of topics on campus.
3. Fully transitioned several college-based groups or university-wide programs to student organizations.

These changes indicate compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 261J prior to the July 1, 2025 effective date. Upon the conclusion of the investigation by Consovoy, the Board will evaluate any additional information that is provided.