CENTER FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Annual Report 2026

Achievements · Opportunities · Obstacles · Challenges

with Recommendations for Future Action

July 2025 – October 2026

Submitted to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Board of Regents
pursuant to Iowa Code § 263C.10

Luciano I. de Castro

Professor of Economics, Interim Director

October 12, 2026

This page intentionally left blank.

Center for Intellectual Freedom
University of Iowa
Calvin Hall, 2 West Jefferson St., Iowa City, IA 52245

October 12, 2026

The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa
Members of the Iowa General Assembly
Members of the Iowa Board of Regents

Re: 2026 Annual Report of the Center for Intellectual Freedom, submitted pursuant to Iowa Code § 263C.10

Dear Governor Reynolds, Members of the General Assembly, and Members of the Board of Regents:

I respectfully submit the 2026 Annual Report of the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa, the Center's first annual report. Iowa Code § 263C.10 provides:

> **263C.10 Annual report.** *Beginning in 2026, the director of the center shall submit an annual report to the governor, the general assembly, and the board of regents by December 31. The report shall provide a full account of the center's achievements and shall identify any opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of the center.*

In accordance with this provision, the report gives a full account of the Center's achievements and identifies the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the Center's development. Because this is the inaugural report, it also describes the Center's establishment under House File 437 (2025) and the steps taken to build its programs. It closes with lessons learned and my recommendations for the Center's continued development, including preparation for the graduation requirement established by House File 2800 (2026).

I am submitting this report ahead of the December 31 deadline because the Board of Regents is expected to appoint the Center's permanent director in the coming weeks. Submitting it now ensures that the report is prepared by the person who

directed the Center during the period it covers, from my appointment as Interim Director in July 2025 through October 2026, and that it offers a first-hand account of that period.

For full transparency, I should note that I applied for the position of permanent Director. The Executive Committee of the Advisory Council did not advance my application, and I am no longer a candidate. The concerns I raise in this report about the search process and the Center's governance therefore do not concern my own prospects; they concern the conditions under which any director of the Center will have to work.

The report is organized as follows:

- Executive Summary, Introduction, and Timeline of Events
- Part I: Foundations of the Center
- Part II: Achievements
- Part III: Obstacles Encountered
- Part IV: Events Surrounding the Resignations from the Advisory Council
- Part V: Missed and Remaining Opportunities
- Part VI: Challenges Ahead
- Part VII: Reflections, Lessons, and Recommendations
- Appendices and References

In keeping with the statute's direction to identify obstacles, Part III discusses matters that have affected the Center's development, including decisions and actions at the governance level. I have presented these matters with supporting documentation, in the belief that a complete and accurate account best serves the Center's statutory mission and the interests of the State of Iowa.

Respectfully submitted,

Luciano I. de Castro
Professor of Economics and Interim Director
Center for Intellectual Freedom, University of Iowa

Enclosure: 2026 Annual Report of the Center for Intellectual Freedom

Contents

Letter of Transmittal . . . . . **iii**

Executive Summary . . . . . **xii**

Introduction . . . . . **xv**
The Center and Its Mandate xv
Why the Center Is Unique xv
Sources and Evidence xvi
A Note on Terminology xvi
Structure of the Report xvi

Timeline of Events . . . . . **xviii**

I Foundations of the Center **1**

1 Why a Civics Center at the University of Iowa? **2**
1.1 The Ideological Imbalance of the Faculty 2
1.2 From Imbalance to Enforcement 3
1.3 Why Universities Will Not Correct Themselves 4
1.4 Connection with the National Movement 5
1.5 Two Kinds of Centers: Civic Discourse and Civic Thought 6
1.6 Beyond the Foundations: The Study of Free Societies 8
1.7 Criticisms and Challenges 9
1.8 Balance, Not Neutrality 10
1.9 Combating Ideology Without Indoctrination 11
1.10 Why Iowa 14

2 How Inaction Set the Stage for Creating the Center by Law **15**
2.1 The Board's Directive on Civic Education 15
2.2 UNI and ISU Act, UI Does Not 16
2.3 The DEI General Education Requirement: A Change in Name Only . 17

3 The Approval of the Law and My Early Involvement **20**
3.1 I Try to Engage with the University 20
3.2 The Legislators' Proposals: HSB 52 and SF 127 24
3.3 The University Proposes an Alternative Center 25
3.4 The Only Professor to Support the Creation of the Center 26

3.5 Emails to Legislators . . . 28

4 From the Approval of the Bill to the First Actions . . . 33
4.1 How I Became the Interim Director . . . 33
4.2 My Appointment and Meeting with Executive Director Mark Braun . . . 36
4.3 The Offer Letter . . . 37
4.4 The First Actions at the University . . . 37

II Achievements 38

5 Achievements . . . 39
5.1 A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action . . . 39
5.2 Administrative Foundations . . . 39
5.3 The Center's Website . . . 39
5.4 The Advisory Council . . . 40
5.5 Meetings of the Advisory Council . . . 45
5.6 Meetings of the Executive Committee . . . 46
5.7 The Bylaws . . . 47
5.8 The Inaugural Event: The Reforming Universities Summit . . . 48
5.9 The Proposal to the Department of Education . . . 48
5.10 The First Courses . . . 49
5.11 The Market Demand Assessment . . . 50
5.12 The America 250 Speaker Series . . . 52
5.13 Proposals Prepared . . . 52

III Obstacles Encountered 55

Introduction to Part III . . . 56

6 The Visit of Professor Richard Lowery . . . 58
6.1 Preliminaries . . . 58
6.2 Why I Wanted to Bring Professor Richard Lowery . . . 59
6.3 Initial Arrangements . . . 60
6.4 The Intervention of Provost Kregel . . . 61
6.5 Trying to Solve the Problem . . . 62
6.6 The Email from Mark Braun . . . 63
6.7 The Report Sent to Regent Hensley and David Barker . . . 64
6.8 Amy's Warning and My Decision to Proceed . . . 67
6.9 How the Episode Ended . . . 68

7 Hiring Faculty . . . 70
7.1 The Director's Authority over Hiring . . . 70
7.2 Learning the University's Hiring Process . . . 70
7.3 The Process Halted . . . 74
7.4 Consequences for the Center's Courses . . . 75

8 The Bylaws and the Dispute over Expenditures . . . 77
8.1 The Center's Authority over Its Bylaws . . . 77
8.2 The First Draft and Its Rejection . . . 77
8.3 Revising the Draft . . . 80
8.4 The Central Dispute: Authority over Expenditures . . . 83
8.5 The Outcome . . . 86

9 The Inaugural Event . . . 88
9.1 Training of Advisory Council Members . . . 88
9.2 Difficulties with the Board . . . 90
9.3 Email Summarizing Outstanding Issues . . . 90
9.4 Interference Regarding the Open-Meeting Designation . . . 91
9.5 The President and the Provost Did Not Attend . . . 95

10 The "Unaccounted" Monitors . . . 98
10.1 The initial message to Regent Hensley . . . 98
10.2 My initial defense . . . 98
10.3 The confirmation from the IT department . . . 99
10.4 Follow-up and request for an apology . . . 101
10.5 Hensley's comment . . . 102
10.6 Provost's response . . . 102
10.7 Collin's comments . . . 104
10.8 Communication with Regent Hensley . . . 106
10.9 Conciliatory message to the Provost . . . 108

11 How the University Administrators Capture the Board . . . 110
11.1 Four Structural Problems . . . 110
11.2 A Regent's Attempt to Engage the Provost . . . 112
11.3 The Case of Regent Barker . . . 114
11.4 A Problem for the General Assembly . . . 116
11.5 The Need for Independent Academic Advice . . . 117

12 Communications Routed Around the Director . . . 118
12.1 Discussion with Regent Hensley . . . 118
12.2 First Communication to the Board President Cramer . . . 119
12.3 Second communication to President Cramer . . . 121

13 The Center's Status within the University . . . 123
13.1 The Center's URL . . . 123
13.2 Courses at the University . . . 126
13.3 Other Issues . . . 128

14 The Planned Book and the Policies It Required . . . 133
14.1 The Board Office Consults the University's Lawyers . . . 133
14.2 Why the University's Copyright Policy Was a Concern . . . 136
14.3 Policies . . . 137
14.4 "No Reason You Cannot Move Forward" . . . 144

14.5 The Claim That the Center Falls Under Board Policy 147

15 The Two Reports Presented in April 150
15.1 Approval of Research Expenses for the Market Assessment 150
15.2 The CSI Report and the University's Comments 153
15.3 My Response 155
15.4 Professor Lowery's Assessment 157
15.5 The Second Delay Request 157
15.6 The Attempt to Prevent Publication 158
15.7 The Capitol Meeting and the Report Presented 160

16 Attempts at Restructuring the Center 163
16.1 The Plan to Have a Director of Administration 163
16.2 The Proposal to Change the Center's Organizational Status 164
16.3 The CIF Committee in the Board of Regents 166

17 Control over Payments and Salaries 170
17.1 Payment of Lecturers 170
17.2 Collin Sawyer's Salary Increase 178

18 The New Law and the Shutdown of the Center 185
18.1 The position of the President 185
18.2 The Approval of the Bill 185
18.3 Shutdown of the Center 186

IV Events Surrounding the Resignations from the Advisory Council 188

19 The Plan to Reorganize the Center 189
19.1 How the Plan Was Developed 189
19.2 The Proposed Operational and Financial Management Framework . 194
19.3 The Question of Tenure 196
19.4 The Proposed Requirement of at Least Three Finalists 197
19.5 Subsequent Developments 198

20 Micromanagement of Travel 199
20.1 The Requirement of Advance Approval 199
20.2 The Board's Own Precedent: The 2016 Review of Presidential Travel . 201
20.3 Application to the Center 202
20.4 The Practice of This Policy 203
20.5 What Is Behind This Plan 206
20.6 What Should Be Done 206

21 The Board's Approval of the Restructuring Plan 208
21.1 The Board Meeting of September 16, 2026 208
21.2 My Written Objections 208
21.3 Professor Lowery's Confirmation 212
21.4 The Outcome 213

22 The Resignations from the Advisory Council . . . 214
22.1 The Dispute over the Search Timeline . . . 214
22.2 Board President Cramer's Ultimatum . . . 215
22.3 The Resignations . . . 217
22.4 The Request to Remove the Resigning Members from the Website . . . 219
22.5 Public Reaction . . . 219
22.6 Assessment . . . 220

23 The Search for a Permanent Director . . . 221
23.1 The Original Timeline . . . 221
23.2 The Failed Attempt to Hire a Search Firm . . . 221
23.3 The Assurance of Open Evaluation . . . 222
23.4 The Selection of Finalists . . . 223
23.5 Complaint to the Iowa Public Information Board . . . 224
23.6 Meetings Between the Finalists and University Administrators . . . 224

V Missed and Remaining Opportunities 226

24 Opportunities . . . 227
24.1 The Scholars of the Advisory Council: An Opportunity Lost . . . 227
24.2 The General Education Requirement: An Opportunity at Risk . . . 228
24.3 Proposed Fellowships for Faculty and Students . . . 229

VI Challenges 230

25 Challenges . . . 231
25.1 The Scale of the General Education Requirement . . . 231
25.2 Faculty Recruitment and the Tenure Home . . . 231
25.3 Credibility with Faculty and Students . . . 232
25.4 Coordination with the Other Civics Centers . . . 232
25.5 Sustainable Funding . . . 232
25.6 Leadership Transition and the Advisory Council . . . 233
25.7 Press Coverage . . . 233

VII Reflections, Lessons, and Recommendations 234

26 My Approach as Interim Director . . . 235
26.1 Seeking Dialogue from the Start . . . 235
26.2 Working with Colleagues and Staff . . . 235
26.3 Seeking Conciliation in Conflict . . . 236
26.4 Mistakes I Made . . . 236
26.5 Holding My Ground . . . 238
26.6 The Risks of This Report . . . 239

26.7 What Do You Do When You Are Left Alone? . . . 239

27 Lessons Learned . . . 241
27.1 Universities Disregard the Law When No One Enforces It . . . 241
27.2 The Board Is Captured by the Administrators It Oversees . . . 241
27.3 The "Dialogue" Trap . . . 242
27.4 Three Types of Conservative Professors . . . 242
27.5 Reformers Are Rare, and Administrators Push Them Out . . . 243
27.6 Reformers Cannot Succeed Without Committed Allies . . . 244
27.7 Pretending Is Far Easier Than Reforming . . . 244
27.8 Abandoning Reformers Has a Lasting Cost . . . 246
27.9 The Iowa Outcome . . . 246

28 Recommendations . . . 248
28.1 Suspend the Search for a Permanent Director . . . 248
28.2 Appoint a New Interim Director . . . 248
28.3 Let the Elected Branches Decide the Center's Direction . . . 248
28.4 Create an Independent Academic Council . . . 250
28.5 The Continuing Case for Civics Centers . . . 250

Appendices 252

A University of Iowa Proposal for a Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership (Form C, January 17, 2025) . . . 253

B My Presentation at the Iowa House . . . 259

C A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action (July 20, 2025) . . . 273

D Versions of the Bylaws . . . 283
D.1 Draft sent to the Board Office . . . 284
D.2 Comments to the Bylaws Proposed by the Board Counsel . . . 296
D.3 New Version of the Bylaws Incorporating Board Office Suggestions . . . 302

E Policies . . . 315
E.1 Policy 01 – Management of Policies . . . 315
E.2 Policy 02 – Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression . . . 318
E.3 Policy 03 – Content Development and Intellectual Property . . . 322

F CIF Courses . . . 324
F.1 Political and Economic Institutions in the United States . . . 324
F.2 American Culture and Values . . . 337

G Faculty and Student Fellowships . . . 350
G.1 Faculty Fellowship . . . 350
G.2 Student Fellowship . . . 353

H Report "Issues Facing the Center" . . . 356

I Proposal to Change CIF Organization Status 375
J Suggestions for Higher Education Legislation 378
References 379

Executive Summary

The Center for Intellectual Freedom was established by House File 437, approved by the Iowa General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds on June 11, 2025. I was appointed Interim Director at the Board of Regents meeting on July 30, 2025.

Despite the difficulties described below, the Center recorded a number of achievements in its first year, described in Part II. Its Advisory Council was appointed and its bylaws were approved. Its inaugural event brought the Governor, legislators, and scholars from across the country to the Old Capitol. It offered its first two courses in Spring 2026, completed the market assessment required by law, and launched an America 250 Speaker Series in Fall 2026.

Since my appointment, however, I have encountered persistent and substantial obstacles to fulfilling the Center's mission. This report documents some of those obstacles, from the Center's earliest months through October 2026, including the University's and Board Office's handling of many aspects of the Center's day-to-day operation.

> **Central Finding.** University of Iowa administrators have used their influence over the Board of Regents to hinder the Center's operations at nearly every stage of its development.

House File 2800 appeared to give the Center its greatest opportunity: beginning in 2028, University of Iowa undergraduates must complete required civics courses administered by the Center, an estimated 12,000 students each year. Under the framework approved by the Board in September 2026, however, I believe this opportunity will be lost. The required courses will be shaped by a director operating under close control by a Board that has consistently followed the University administration's preferences. As a result, the Center for Intellectual Freedom is on course to become a lost opportunity: a staged pretense of reform, rather than the real change that could have been truly valuable to the students of the University of Iowa. These opportunities and challenges are discussed in Parts V and VI.

Seven lessons. Beyond the specific obstacles documented in this report, my year as Interim Director taught me seven lessons, which I develop in Chapter 27:

1. **Universities disregard the law when no one enforces it.** For me personally, this was the greatest surprise. House File 437 established the Center as an independent academic center, required it to offer courses, and gave its Director

sole and exclusive authority over hiring. Yet the Center's hiring was blocked, the Provost declared that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit," and decisions the statute assigns to the Director were made by others. Administrators could set the statute aside because nothing happened to them when they did.

2. **The Board is captured by the administrators it oversees.** In principle, the regents govern the universities. In practice, I observed the reverse: the administrators are the ones in charge, and the regents tend to see their role as serving the universities rather than holding them accountable (Chapter 11).
3. **Offering "dialogue" as a substitute for legislative enforcement is a trap.** Critics often argue that centers like ours should be developed through dialogue with the faculty rather than imposed by law. But if administrators will disregard even a law, an invitation to dialogue will accomplish nothing; indeed, when the Board merely asked the University to explore a civic education initiative, it did nothing.
4. **Reformers are rare, and administrators work to push them out.** Conservative professors fall into three groups: the *concealed*, who hide their views to protect their careers; the *accommodators*, who accept positions created to promote intellectual diversity but also accept the limits administrators set; and the *reformers*, who openly pursue substantive change, even at personal cost. Administrators have little to fear from the first two groups; the reformers, who seek real change, are the ones they work hardest to remove.
5. **Reformers cannot succeed without committed allies.** Reform requires legislators, regents, and civic patrons willing to identify true reformers, distinguish them from accommodators, and stand by them under pressure.
6. **Pretending is far easier than reforming.** It is easier to announce a center, hold events, and point to visible activity than to carry out the substantive changes real reform requires. Faced with that difficulty, regents, legislators, and civic patrons will be tempted to favor accommodators, who allow everyone to claim success while nothing of substance changes.
7. **Abandoning reformers has a lasting cost.** Each center captured by accommodators teaches potential reformers to remain concealed, reassures administrators that outside pressure can be absorbed without change, and persuades the public that reform has been achieved when it has not. The effect is perverse because the failure becomes visible only later, when the problems persist despite the apparent reform. By then, it breeds skepticism and, eventually, the conviction that nothing can be done, discrediting the very idea of reform.

Choosing the path of pretense in Iowa would be a betrayal of the will of the people of Iowa, expressed through the legislature that created this Center.

Recommendations. Chapter 28 presents my recommendations in full. In summary, they are as follows:

1. **Suspend the search for a permanent director.** Appointing a director under the framework approved in September 2026 would lock the Center into a structure that prevents it from carrying out its statutory mission. The consequences would be lasting and difficult to reverse: either a center that continues at the expense of Iowa taxpayers without delivering substantial benefits, or the permanent foreclosure of any real change in the future. Suspending the search avoids both outcomes.
2. **Appoint a new interim director** to maintain the Center's operations in the meantime. I do not wish to continue in this role under the conditions described in this report.[1]
3. **Leave the Center's final direction to the elected branches that created it.** The Center was established by statute, enacted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor; the Board of Regents was charged only with implementing it. Its final direction should therefore be decided by the Governor who takes office in January 2027 and by the General Assembly, who are accountable to the people of Iowa for the laws they enact, together with a substantially renewed Board of Regents. A decision made by new leadership, with full knowledge of the Center's first year, is far more likely to endure than one made now.
4. **Choose between true reform and discontinuation.** If the Center is to continue, it must be given the independence House File 437 intended; otherwise, it should be discontinued. Either course is preferable to sustaining a pretense of reform, which is cheap for those who pretend but costly for the people of Iowa.
5. **Create an independent Academic Council.** The General Assembly should establish a council of distinguished scholars from research universities outside Iowa to advise the Board of Regents on academic matters, with members appointed by the General Assembly from candidates identified through a national search. This would give the Board an independent source of academic expertise, reducing its dependence on the administrators it oversees, and would remain valuable whatever the future of the Center.

I continue to believe in the importance of centers like this one. This experience shows only that they require far more resolve than was anticipated to persist against the opposition they face.

[1] This statement expresses my intention; it is not a formal resignation, which I will submit separately to the Board of Regents if necessary. I will continue to serve as Interim Director, and to cooperate fully in an orderly transition, until a successor is appointed. For the record, I also applied for the position of permanent Director. The Executive Committee of the Advisory Council did not advance my application, and I am no longer a candidate. The conditions that lead me not to wish to continue as Interim Director would apply equally to the permanent position, and my recommendations regarding the search do not concern my own prospects.

Introduction

This chapter introduces the report. It describes the Center's statutory mandate and the period the report covers, explains what makes the Center unique among civics centers in the United States, and sets out the principles followed in presenting the evidence, including the distinction between documented facts and my own interpretation. It closes with a note on terminology and an overview of the report's structure, to help readers find the parts most relevant to them.

The Center and Its Mandate

The Center for Intellectual Freedom was created by House File 437, passed by the Iowa General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds on June 11, 2025 (full text of HF 437; see also the Center's own charter page). The law established the Center as an independent academic center under the Board of Regents, housed at the University of Iowa, and gave its Director statutory authority over hiring, market assessments, and other core operational matters described throughout this report.

Iowa Code § 263C.10 requires the Director to submit an annual report to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Board of Regents, giving a full account of the Center's achievements and identifying the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in its development. This is the Center's first such report. It covers the period from my appointment as Interim Director in July 2025 through October 2026. To explain the context in which the Center was created, Part I also reviews events from 2023 onward, beginning with the Board of Regents' directives on civic education.

Why the Center Is Unique

To my knowledge, the Center is unique among academic centers in the country in one important respect: it is the only center not subordinated to a dean, provost, or president of the university that houses it.

> **Why is the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa unique in this respect, with a Director who does not report to a dean, provost, or president?** The short answer, developed throughout this report, is that University of Iowa administrators do not fear the legislative body or the Board of Regents.

The reason lies in a basic difference of accountability. At most universities, admin-

istrators respond to their governing boards and to the legislature, because those boards and legislators retain real oversight and real leverage. At the University of Iowa, by contrast, university administrators have been able to capture the Board of Regents, shaping and directing its decisions rather than being held accountable by it, largely without regard for the wishes of the legislators who fund and oversee the university. It was precisely because of this dynamic that the General Assembly chose to place the Center outside the normal university hierarchy: it did not trust university administrators to leave the Center's mission intact. As this report documents in detail, that distrust has proven well founded.

Sources and Evidence

This report is based primarily on documents: emails, letters, agendas, minutes, and other records created at the time of the events described, many of which are reproduced in full. I have also drawn on public sources, including press coverage, recordings of public meetings, and published reports, which are cited where used.

Because the report also offers my own interpretation of these events, I have tried to distinguish clearly between the two. Where I describe what happened, I rely on the documentary record. Where I offer an assessment of why something happened, or of the intentions of those involved, I present it as my own judgment, and readers are free to evaluate it against the documents provided. In a few places, I report information I received from others; where I do so, I identify it as such.

In the correspondence reproduced in this report, bold emphasis has been added by me unless otherwise noted. Email headers have been simplified, and signature blocks, contact details, and automated notices have been omitted. Where portions of an email are omitted, this is indicated with a note; omissions within a sentence are marked with an ellipsis in brackets.

A Note on Terminology

Three institutions appear throughout this report, and it is important to distinguish them. The *Board of Regents*, or simply the *Board*, is the nine-member governing body to which the Center reports under the statute. The *Board Office* is the Board's professional staff, led by its Executive Director, which prepares the Board's agendas, communicates with the institutions on its behalf, and, as this report shows, exercised considerable authority over the Center's day-to-day operations. The *University*, unless otherwise indicated, refers to the administration of the University of Iowa, and not to its faculty, staff, or students as a whole.

Structure of the Report

The report is organized in seven parts, followed by appendices.

Part I, *Foundations of the Center*, explains why a center like this one is needed, both in American higher education generally and at the University of Iowa in particular. It then describes how the University's inaction in response to the Board's directives led the General Assembly to create the Center by law, my own involvement in that process, and the Center's first steps after its creation.

Part II, *Achievements*, describes what the Center accomplished in its first year: its administrative foundations, its Advisory Council and bylaws, its inaugural event, its first courses, the market assessment required by law, and its speaker series. It also lists the proposals the Center prepared but that were not adopted.

Part III, *Obstacles Encountered*, documents the obstacles the Center faced in carrying out its mission. They include restrictions on its hiring, its expenditures, its courses, and its policies; the routing of communications around its Director; and the handling of the market assessment. It also examines how the Board of Regents came to accommodate the University rather than enforce the law that created the Center.

Part IV, *Events Surrounding the Resignations from the Advisory Council*, describes the plan to restructure the Center approved by the Board in September 2026, the resignations of eleven members of the Advisory Council that followed, and the search for a permanent director.

Part V, *Missed and Remaining Opportunities*, and Part VI, *Challenges*, discuss the conditions the Center could still take advantage of and the difficulties inherent in its mission, including the general education requirement established by House File 2800.

Part VII, *Reflections, Lessons, and Recommendations*, reflects on my own conduct as Interim Director, draws the lessons of the past year for anyone who hopes to reform a public university, and presents my recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Board of Regents.

The appendices reproduce the University's own proposal for a civics center, my short-term plan for the Center, and some proposals for the Center and the Board of Regents.

Timeline of Events

2023–2024: the run-up to the Center's creation

2023	**Jun**	Senate File 560 directs the Board of Regents to review diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at the state universities.
	Nov 16	The Board adopts its directives, including Directive #9, after changing "develop" to *explore* an initiative on free speech and civic education.
2024	**Sep**	The Board approves UNI's Center for Civic Education.
	Oct	I meet Regent David Barker through Professor Dan Klein; legislators begin planning a bill for the University of Iowa.
	Nov	ISU announces its Cyclone Civics initiative. The University of Iowa proposes no initiative of its own.
	Dec	I inform Senior Associate Dean Barrett Thomas of the legislators' plans and offer to help the University engage with them.

2025: the Center's creation and first months

2025

Jan — HSB 52 and SF 127 propose a "School of Intellectual Freedom." The University prepares its own proposal for a "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership," not shared with me.

Feb 11–12 — I publish an op-ed supporting the bill and testify in its favor, the only UI professor to do so.

Jun 11 — Governor Reynolds signs HF 437, creating the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

Jul 29–30 — The Board appoints me Interim Director. The day before, Executive Director Braun says he expects to approve the Center's expenditures.

Aug 27 — After I offer to pay for Professor Lowery's visit myself, Executive Director Braun asks that the visit be postponed.

Sep 17 — The Board appoints the 26-member Advisory Council, half of them nationally recognized scholars.

Oct 3 — The Center is told to hold off on hiring faculty, at the Provost's direction after consultation with the Board Office.

Oct 13 — Board Counsel declines to recommend the Center's draft bylaws; negotiations over expenditure authority follow.

Nov 4 — The bylaws posted for the Board's agenda differ from those submitted, adding Executive Director approval of expenditures. The posting is never corrected.

Nov 25 — The Executive Director reports "missing" monitors to Regent Hensley. IT later confirms that all 11 delivered are accounted for.

Dec 3–6 — The Board approves the bylaws (Dec 3). The inaugural Reforming Universities Summit is held at the Old Capitol (Dec 5–6).

2026, January–May: the market assessment, the new law, and the suspension of activities

2026

Jan 12 — The University's counsel sends the Board Office University copyright policies, in response to questions about the Center's planned book.

Feb 17 — I submit three Center policies to the Board Office. No comments are ever received.

Mar 17 — The Provost states that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa."

Mar 19 — The attempt to hire a search firm for the director search fails.

Apr 9 — At a meeting at the Capitol, I present a report on the obstacles facing the Center, and CSI presents its market assessment.

Apr 10–13 — A "Director of Administration" role drafted by the Executive Director is offered to Professor Fumerton, who declines. I propose making the Center an independent organizational unit.

Apr 14 — Payments to the Center's lecturers are placed on hold.

Apr 16–28 — The Board Office comments on the CSI report, and Regent Hensley twice asks that its release be delayed.

Apr 29–30 — CSI releases the report (Apr 29). The Executive Committee approves the Center's policies and fellowship proposals (Apr 30).

May 3 — The General Assembly approves HF 2800, requiring UI undergraduates to take Center courses from 2028.

May 7–18 — The Center's new courses, expenditures, and travel are suspended (May 7). The book project ends after the policies are put on hold. Lecturer payments are released (May 18).

2026

Jun 2–8 — Governor Reynolds signs HF 2800 (Jun 2). At the Advisory Council meeting of June 8, the Center's activities are paused except for the speaker series.

Jul 29 — The Board creates a committee of three regents to oversee the Center.

Jul 31 — Regent Hensley requires advance approval of each trip by the Director.

Aug 28–31 — I receive the restructuring plan prepared by the Board Office and the University (Aug 28). At the meeting to discuss it (Aug 31), I am told that my attendance at three academic conferences is denied.

Sep 1 — The Executive Committee advances me, the only one of six candidates who chose open consideration, for further consideration.

Sep 3–10 — The America 250 Speaker Series opens with lectures by Professors Todd Zywicki and Wilfred McClay.

Sep 16 — The Board approves the restructuring plan and requires three to four finalists for the director position.

Sep 19–22 — Eleven of the Advisory Council's thirteen faculty members resign; the Board accepts the resignations.

Sep 25 — The Executive Committee, reduced to five members, selects four finalists in closed session. I am not among them.

Sep 28 — I ask the Iowa Public Information Board to review the closed session of September 25.

Oct 2–9 — The Advisory Council approves sending the finalists to the Board (Oct 2). The finalists meet the University's President, Provost, and Faculty Senate President (Oct 5–9).

Part I

Foundations of the Center

CHAPTER 1

Why a Civics Center at the University of Iowa?

Why should the University of Iowa have a center like the Center for Intellectual Freedom? The question can be approached from two perspectives. The first is general: why should civics centers exist at all? The second is particular: why does Iowa need one? The two are not independent. If the general case can be established, the burden of proof shifts. Supporters of the Center no longer need to show that Iowa requires one; its opponents must instead explain why the reasons that apply elsewhere do not apply here. As this chapter will show, those reasons apply in Iowa with particular force.

The general case rests on three claims. First, American faculty are overwhelmingly, and increasingly, left-leaning. Second, this imbalance is not merely a matter of private opinion: it is sustained by moral conviction and enforced through mechanisms that discourage dissent, with damaging consequences for the pursuit of truth and for the relationship between universities and the public they serve. Third, universities have shown little capacity to correct the problem on their own. Together, these claims explain why legislatures across the country have created independent civics centers, and they point to what such centers should aim to accomplish.

1.1 The Ideological Imbalance of the Faculty

That faculty are overwhelmingly left-leaning is documented by a substantial body of research; see, among others, Klein and Western (2005), Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte (2005), Gross and Simmons (2014), Langbert, Quain, and Klein (2016), Langbert (2018), and Langbert and Stevens (2020). The imbalance is most extreme at the most prestigious institutions. Examining voter registration among faculty in five fields at forty leading universities, Langbert, Quain, and Klein (2016) found 11.5 registered Democrats for every registered Republican. There may well be structural reasons for this imbalance, but I will not explore its causes here and will treat it simply as an established fact; see Gross (2013).

Figure 1.1 shows how the political composition of American faculty has changed over the past half century. In 1969, liberals were already the largest group, at 45.4 percent of faculty, but conservatives made up a substantial 27.5 percent, and by 1984 their share had risen to 33.8 percent, roughly three conservatives for every four liberals. That was the high-water mark of conservative representation. From the late 1980s onward, the liberal share rose steadily while the conservative share declined, so that by the 2010s liberals outnumbered conservatives by about five

to one. In the most recent data, from 2021–22, 74.2 percent of faculty identify as liberal, 14.9 percent as moderate, and only 10.8 percent as conservative, a ratio of nearly seven liberals for every conservative (Honeycutt 2024). The jump between 2016–17 and 2021–22 should be read with some caution, since the latest figures come from a different survey than the earlier HERI series. But the trend does not depend on that last data point: within the HERI series alone, which uses a consistent methodology from 1989 to 2017, the liberal share rose from 45.2 to 59.8 percent while the conservative share fell from 16.1 to 12.1 percent. Whatever the precise figures, the direction is unmistakable, and nothing in the data suggests that the trend is reversing on its own.

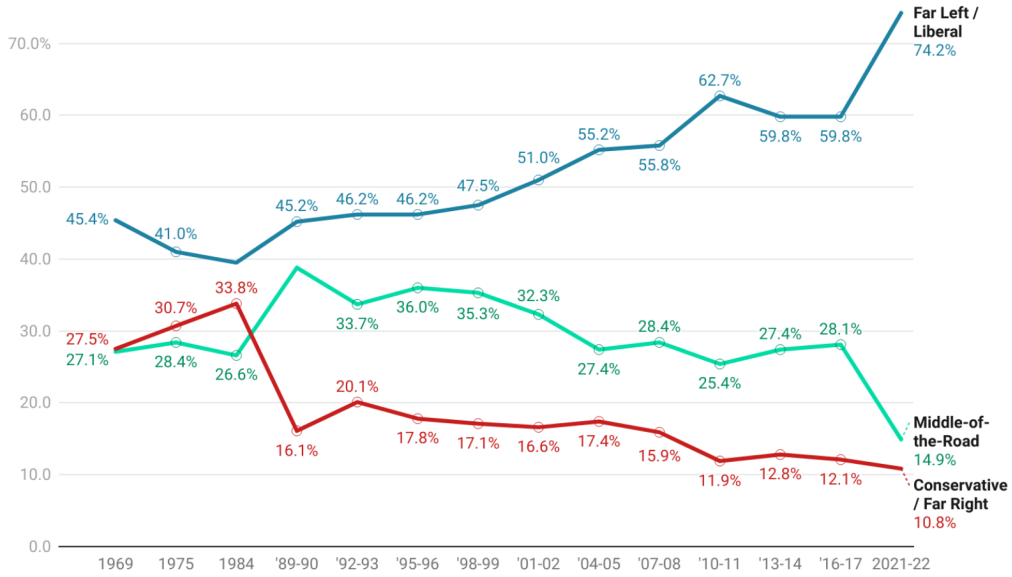


Figure 1.1: Political ideology of U.S. faculty, 1969–2022. Reproduced from Honeycutt (2024, Figure 1) under a CC BY 4.0 license. The series combines Carnegie Foundation data (1969–1984), Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) data (1989–2017), and the author's 2021–22 faculty surveys.

1.2 From Imbalance to Enforcement

Political predominance alone, however, does not explain the problems universities now face. If faculty simply held left-leaning views as a matter of private intellectual conviction, the imbalance would be regrettable but not alarming. There is a more active element at work: the emotional energy and moral righteousness that fuel the dominant ideology on campus. Those who hold a view as a matter of opinion can tolerate disagreement. Those who hold it as a matter of moral certainty tend to regard disagreement as a moral failing, and dissenters not as colleagues to be persuaded but as obstacles to be removed.

This moral energy is what turns an imbalance of opinion into a system of enforce-

ment. Diversity statements required of job applicants have functioned as political litmus tests: in one widely reported case at the University of California, Berkeley, 679 of 893 otherwise qualified applicants for faculty positions were eliminated on the basis of their diversity statements alone. Discrimination is also openly acknowledged: in one survey, 22 percent of academics said they would discriminate against a known Trump supporter in hiring.[1] Under these conditions, conservative faculty learn to keep their views to themselves, a pattern I examine more closely in the final chapter of this report.

The concern that ideology has displaced open inquiry is not confined to conservatives. In Krauss (2025), thirty-nine scientists and scholars from a wide range of disciplines and political leanings document how progressive ideology, advanced through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) bureaucracies, campaigns to "decolonize" curricula, and the policing of language, has come to shape research and teaching. Because these accounts come from scholars with no shared political agenda, they are difficult to dismiss as partisan grievance.

The contributions show that the problem reaches even the hard sciences, which are often assumed to be immune to ideological pressure. Armstrong (2025) examines efforts to "decolonize" mathematics, and Coyne and Maroja (2025) describe the ideological subversion of biology. Horsman (2025) characterizes DEI as a pseudoscience that threatens science itself, while Krylov and Tanzman (2025) document the censorship of scientific work. The volume also devotes an entire section to cancel culture, recounting the cases of scholars who were punished for challenging prevailing orthodoxies.

The consequences extend beyond the careers of individual dissenters. A community of scholars without dissenters loses its natural defense against groupthink, confirmation bias, and motivated reasoning: questions that challenge the prevailing view go unasked, and findings that support it go unchallenged (Duarte, Crawford, Stern, Haidt, Jussim, and Tetlock 2015). Universities that exist to seek the truth become less able to find it. And as the gap between the professoriate and the public widens, higher education risks placing itself increasingly at odds with the society it is meant to serve, and on whose trust and support it depends (Honeycutt 2024).

1.3 Why Universities Will Not Correct Themselves

If the problem were simply a lack of awareness, it could be solved from within. But the evidence suggests otherwise. Efforts at internal reform have been underway for more than a decade, and over that period the imbalance has not narrowed; it has grown (Gillen 2026). This should not be surprising. The faculty who would have to carry out internal reform are drawn from the same majority that produced the imbalance, and the hiring process that sustains it is controlled by that majority.

[1] Both figures are reported in Gillen (2026).

Several contributors to Krauss (2025) reach the same conclusion. Pinker (2025) proposes a five-point plan to save universities from themselves, and Redding (2025) argues that depoliticizing science requires nothing less than a revolutionary reform of the professoriate. Taken together with the survey evidence, these accounts suggest that universities lack the internal incentives to reform themselves. Meaningful change will require sustained action from reformers within the faculty and from their allies outside it.

1.4 Connection with the National Movement

The Center for Intellectual Freedom was not created in isolation. Over the past few years, centers devoted to civic education have multiplied across American colleges and universities, many of them established by state legislatures. Understanding this broader movement helps explain both why the Center was created and what kind of center it should aspire to be.

In December 2025, Heterodox Academy published the first systematic survey of these institutions, which it calls "civics centers."[2] The authors identified 45 centers at 41 institutions in 25 states, including Washington, D.C.[3] The Center for Intellectual Freedom is among them, as is the School of Civic Leadership at the University of Texas at Austin. Table 1.1 summarizes some of the report's main findings.

Table 1.1: Civics centers in the United States, as of October 31, 2025.

Characteristic	Number
Centers identified	45
Institutions	41
States (including Washington, D.C.)	25
Centers at public institutions	26
Centers at private institutions	19
Centers created by legislation	14
Centers already operational	32
Autonomous	16
Semi-autonomous	14
Off-campus affiliates	2

Source: *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, pp. 7–9.

The movement is recent. Half of the centers in the dataset were founded in 2021 or later. Until around 2022, centers were created almost entirely without legislative

[2] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 3.

[3] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 7.

action: only one of the 23 centers created between 1956 and 2022 was mandated by law. Since then, the pattern has reversed. Thirteen of the 22 centers created between 2022 and 2025 were established by legislation.[4] The timing is telling: legislatures turned to mandating centers only after years in which universities, left to themselves, had done little to address the imbalance described above.

The political geography is equally clear. Fifty-eight percent of the centers are in Republican-controlled states, 31% in Democrat-controlled states, and the rest in states with split legislatures or in Washington, D.C. Among public institutions, 81% of the centers are in Republican-controlled states, and every legislatively mandated center was created by a Republican-controlled legislature, five of them in Ohio alone. The pattern reverses at private institutions, where 58% of the centers are in Democrat-controlled states.[5] The authors note that the Institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee was created with broad bipartisan support, but they also observe that no center in their dataset was created by a Democrat-controlled legislature.[6]

1.5 Two Kinds of Centers: Civic Discourse and Civic Thought

The Heterodox Academy report distinguishes two main orientations. Centers focused on *civic discourse* emphasize rhetorical virtues, viewpoint diversity, and the reduction of political polarization, using words such as "bridging," "dialogue," and "civil." Centers focused on *civic thought* emphasize classical liberalism, the history of the American founding, and Western civilization.[7] Among the operational centers, ten focus on civic thought, ten on civic discourse, and twelve on both. Public institutions tend to emphasize civic thought, while private institutions tend to emphasize civic discourse.[8]

This distinction is more than a matter of labels. In my view, it reflects two different answers to the question of what is wrong with higher education, and two different political sensibilities.

1.5.1 Civic Discourse and Its Limits

Civic discourse sounds unobjectionable. Who could be against civility, dialogue, and mutual understanding? In practice, however, the emphasis on discourse tends to serve the left. On campuses where the overwhelming majority of faculty lean

[4] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 7.

[5] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 7.

[6] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 13.

[7] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 5.

[8] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 10.

left, a program of "dialogue across difference" is rarely an invitation for that majority to reconsider its own views. More often, it becomes a way of teaching the minority, usually conservative students, to be more tolerant of the ideas that prevail on campus, however radical or implausible those ideas may be. The burden of tolerance falls on one side. Positions that would have been considered extreme a generation ago are presented as one side of a respectable conversation, and the student who objects to them is the one who must learn to be more open.

It is therefore not surprising that civic discourse is the dominant focus at private institutions, which are concentrated in Democrat-controlled states, and at centers that were not created by legislation.[9] Nor is it surprising that no Democrat-controlled legislature has mandated a civics center: for those who are comfortable with the current state of the university, there is little to correct. The report's authors offer a related explanation, suggesting that public institutions in Democrat-controlled states may emphasize civic *engagement*, such as voter participation and community outreach, rather than civic thought or discourse, and that political leaders of different parties may understand civics and citizenship differently.[10] Either way, the evidence suggests that the two sides of the political spectrum are not asking universities for the same thing.

Civil discourse has value, of course. But civility is a procedure, not a substance. A conversation can be perfectly civil and still rest on false premises. Teaching students how to disagree politely does not teach them what is true, and it does nothing to correct the imbalance that motivated the creation of these centers in the first place.

1.5.2 Civic Thought: The Foundations of American Society

The civic thought movement, by contrast, is more closely associated with the right, and for good reason. It goes to the foundations of American society: the founding documents, the Constitution, the classical and Judeo-Christian sources of Western civilization, and the great texts that shaped the institutions of a free people.[11] Instead of asking students merely to be civil, it asks them to understand what they have inherited and why it is worth preserving. This is a substantive response to a substantive problem: a generation of students who know little about the principles of their own country, and who have often been taught to regard those principles, and the civilization from which they emerged, with suspicion.

I share this commitment. Yet I do not believe that civic thought, as usually understood, is enough.

[9] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 10.

[10] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 13.

[11] For representative statements of this approach, see Carrese (2024) and B. Storey and J. S. Storey (2025).

1.6 Beyond the Foundations: The Study of Free Societies

It is not sufficient to study the old foundations of society. One might argue that the classical thinkers and the founders have already said everything that needs to be said, and that the task of a civics center is simply to transmit their wisdom. This presumption is mistaken. Even if the classics contained every relevant insight, those insights remain inaudible today unless they are brought back into the conversation and reframed in light of contemporary circumstances. Each era presents new problems, new institutions, and new threats to liberty, and each requires fresh work that extends the reach of classical wisdom rather than merely repeating it.

Friedrich Hayek understood this better than anyone. In his famous postscript to *The Constitution of Liberty*, "Why I Am Not a Conservative," he argued that conservatism, by its very nature, cannot offer an alternative to the direction in which society is moving; it can at most slow the movement down.[12] Preserving the past is not the same as understanding the conditions that make freedom possible. In "The Intellectuals and Socialism," Hayek drew the practical conclusion: the defenders of a free society had lost ground because socialists had been willing to think boldly about the future, while liberals had settled for defending the status quo. He urged that the building of a free society become once again "an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage."[13]

This is the role I believe the Center for Intellectual Freedom should play. Beyond teaching the foundations of American society, it should promote research and teaching on the questions that determine whether a society remains free, including:

- the moral foundations of markets and of a free economy;
- the unintended consequences of policies that pursue social justice, equality, or similar goals;
- the political systems, constitutional rules, and judicial institutions that protect freedom and deter authoritarianism;
- the incentives that shape academia itself, and whether they serve the pursuit of truth;
- the spiritual and moral underpinnings of a free society; and
- practical strategies for limiting the size and scope of government.

Pursuing these questions requires more than courses. It requires faculty who produce original scholarship of the highest quality. Academic reputation is built on research, and it is research that attracts the best faculty, the best students, and the donors who allow an institution to grow. It also requires the ability to persuade. The goal is not to preach to the converted, but to engage the many students who

[12] Hayek (1960), Postscript.
[13] Hayek (1949).

have never encountered a serious argument for freedom, and to give them the tools to reach their own informed conclusions.

The Center's bylaws express this aspiration. They commit the Center to educate students "by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth," and to enhance the intellectual diversity of the University.[14] Seeking the truth is neither an exercise in civility nor an exercise in preservation. It is the work of discovering, and teaching, what allows people to live freely.

1.7 Criticisms and Challenges

The civics movement has its critics. Some object that many centers were created by state legislatures rather than emerging organically within their institutions. Others worry that faculty hired by these centers, and the prominent conservative academics who serve on their advisory boards, could politicize them. Still others worry that independent centers will become intellectual silos, isolated from the rest of the university.[15] The report also notes that legislatively created centers may generate resistance from faculty who feel that their role in university governance has been overridden, or that a new center duplicates existing teaching and research, as reported in Ohio and North Carolina.[16]

These concerns deserve a serious answer. The objection to legislative creation assumes that universities would have addressed the problem on their own if given the chance. The evidence reviewed above suggests that they would not, and the experience documented in this report confirms it. When the Board of Regents asked the University of Iowa to explore a civic education initiative of its own, the University did nothing (Chapter 2); the General Assembly acted only after that invitation had been declined. Even then, with a law in force, the University set aside the provisions that stood in its way, as Part III documents. If a statute was not enough to secure the University's cooperation, there is little reason to believe that dialogue alone would have produced any center at all. I return to this point in Section 27.3.

The worry about politicization overlooks the fact that the university as a whole is already politicized, in one direction; a center that adds missing perspectives reduces politicization rather than increasing it (see Section 1.8). And while the risk of isolation is real, the greater risk, for a center of this kind, is absorption. Robert Conquest famously observed that any organization not explicitly and constitutionally right-wing will sooner or later become left-wing. A center that depends on a university's existing hierarchy for its hiring, its courses, and its budget will, over time, come to resemble the institution it was created to complement.

This is why independence matters. The Heterodox Academy report classifies cen-

[14] *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*, p. 2.

[15] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 3–4.

[16] Carreon (2025); Quinn (2024).

ters as autonomous or semi-autonomous according to whether they offer their own courses, credentials, and faculty lines.[17] But even autonomous centers typically report to a dean, a provost, or a president, and therefore remain subject to the institution's existing hierarchy.

1.8 Balance, Not Neutrality

A sharper criticism holds that civics centers are not what they claim to be. In a recent essay in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Timothy Messer-Kruse argues that the mission statements of several such centers reveal their purpose: phrases such as "ordered liberty," "natural law," and "Western civilization" are, in his reading, signals of a conservative political commitment, not of open inquiry (Messer-Kruse 2026). He asks whether a Republican legislature would tolerate a university institute devoted to teaching the Marxist-Leninist tradition, and he warns that proposals to give such centers authority over required civics courses, as in Ohio, would allow them to exclude viewpoints legislators dislike.

The criticism deserves a direct answer. Centers like ours are not neutral with respect to the current state of the university. They exist to strengthen perspectives that are underrepresented on campus, and those perspectives are disproportionately conservative and classical liberal. The question is whether this is a betrayal of academic values or a reasonable response to the situation described in this chapter. I believe it is the latter, for three reasons.

1.8.1 Balance Requires Favoring the Underrepresented Side

The evidence reviewed in Section 1.1 leaves little doubt that the left dominates American academia, and that its dominance has grown. If anything is to be done about this, the remedy must favor the other side. This conclusion does not depend on preferring conservative views to progressive ones. A person who leans left, but who values balance over dominance, should reach the same conclusion.

The reason is arithmetic. Suppose a university in which seven of every eight faculty members lean left, and suppose it adds a new center that is perfectly balanced, with equal numbers of scholars from each side. The university as a whole would remain almost exactly as imbalanced as before. A perfectly balanced weight placed on an unbalanced scale does not level it. To move the institution as a whole toward balance, the new addition must tilt in the opposite direction to the imbalance it is meant to correct.

1.8.2 The Only Feasible Remedy Is a Limited One

It would be far better if the university as a whole were balanced, so that no center needed to favor any side. But mandating balance across an entire university is

[17] *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*, p. 12.

neither feasible nor desirable. It would require the state to oversee the hiring of every department and the content of every course, which is precisely the kind of political control over academic life that critics rightly fear. Creating a center that strengthens underrepresented perspectives is a much more limited intervention. It leaves every existing department, program, and course untouched, and adds a small counterweight alongside them. Measured against the scale of the imbalance, it is a modest step toward balance, not a takeover.

Nor is a center with an identifiable intellectual orientation an anomaly in the university. Many existing programs state their commitments openly. At the University of Iowa, for example, the International Studies program describes its mission in terms of challenging systemic inequality and incorporates that perspective into all of its courses, including those approved for general education (University of Iowa, International Studies Program 2026). Such commitments are generally accepted as part of academic life. The objection to civics centers, then, is not to the existence of programs with a perspective, but to the existence of programs with this particular one.

1.8.3 Favoring a Perspective Is Not Indoctrination

Favoring underrepresented perspectives in who is hired and what is studied does not mean teaching students what to conclude. The Center's purpose, as the next section explains, is to give students the strongest statements of competing positions and the tools to evaluate them for themselves. A student who studies Mises alongside Marx, under a professor who takes both seriously, is exposed to a broader range of ideas than one who encounters only the perspective that already dominates the campus.

1.8.4 What the Objection Reveals

Seen in this light, the objection is revealing. A center that adds a small counterweight to an overwhelming imbalance leaves the dominant perspective with nearly all the ground it already holds. If even this limited remedy is treated as unacceptable, the concern is not, for many of its critics, the preservation of balance, which does not exist, but the preservation of the existing dominance. Those who value intellectual diversity, whatever their own politics, should welcome a modest effort to restore some of it.

1.9 Combating Ideology Without Indoctrination

A common objection to centers like ours is that an institution created to counter one ideology will simply promote another. If the problem with the university is indoctrination, the argument goes, a center founded by its critics will only replace one form of indoctrination with a different one. The objection deserves a serious answer, and I have tried to give one from the beginning. In public interviews, including my appearance on Iowa PBS's *Iowa Press*, I have insisted that the Center

is an academic enterprise. Its purpose is not to tell students what to think, but to teach them how to think: how to reason carefully, weigh evidence, and evaluate arguments, including arguments they find congenial. Properly conceived, then, the Center would not only avoid indoctrinating students into a right-wing ideology, but could serve as an antidote to indoctrination of any kind.

1.9.1 Reading the Arguments Themselves

One of the most effective ways to teach reasoning is to expose students to the strongest statements of competing positions, in the words of their own authors, and to ask students to understand the reasoning before judging it. The University of Austin (UATX) offers a useful model. Its course *Intellectual Foundations of Economics* assigns the following readings:[18]

- Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions*
- Plato, *First Alcibiades*
- Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*
- John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
- Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*
- Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution*
- Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth"

The list is notable for what it includes. Students read the founding texts of socialism, by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, in full and in their authors' own words, alongside Mises's argument that socialist economic calculation is impossible. They are not told in advance what to conclude. A student who has read Marx and Lenin directly, and then weighed Mises's response, is far better equipped to judge socialism than one who has only been told what to think of it, whether favorably or unfavorably. This is the kind of education the Center aims to provide.

1.9.2 An Illustration: The Flat Earth

To see more clearly how students can study a doctrine critically without being indoctrinated into the opposite one, consider an example far removed from politics. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that belief in a flat Earth were treated as a doctrine. A course could take the doctrine seriously, state its claims fairly, and then examine the evidence. Much of that evidence students can verify for themselves: the way ships disappear hull-first over the horizon, the curved shadow the Earth casts on the Moon during a lunar eclipse, or the different lengths of shadows cast at the same moment in distant cities, the observation Eratosthenes used to estimate the Earth's circumference more than two thousand years ago. Teaching students

[18] University of Austin, "52 Texts Our Students Are Reading"; see also National Review, "Visiting a New University in Austin, Texas".

to make and interpret such observations is not indoctrination. It is teaching them the tools of science and how to apply them.

A committed flat-Earther might object that such a course merely indoctrinates students into a rival ideology, that of the round Earth. The objection is not fair. The purpose of the course is to use sound methods to reach sound conclusions, and the methods themselves are not prejudiced: had the observations come out differently, the same methods would have supported a different conclusion. What separates education from indoctrination is not the conclusion students reach, but whether they are given the means to check it for themselves.

1.9.3 Three Objections

One might reply that political and moral questions are not like the shape of the Earth, and that the ideology of the left cannot be examined with scientific tools. This is partly true. Values cannot be settled by evidence, and emotional reactions cannot be refuted by data. But political debates also rest on factual claims: about history, about the effects of policies, about what the data show. These claims can be examined with the same care as any other, and the logical consistency of arguments can be tested regardless of their subject. Learning to separate factual claims from moral commitments and emotional reactions is itself among the most valuable lessons a university can teach.

A more radical reply rejects the tools themselves, holding that reason, evidence, and even mathematics are instruments of domination. This position is not hypothetical. For example, in a 2017 essay for mathematics teachers, the education scholar Rochelle Gutiérrez argued that "mathematics itself operates as Whiteness," carrying unearned privilege in society much as Whiteness does (Gutiérrez 2017). Efforts to "decolonize" mathematics, discussed earlier in this chapter, proceed from similar premises (Armstrong 2025).

At this point, rational argument reaches its limit. If the tools of reasoning are themselves dismissed as instruments of oppression, there is no common ground on which evidence could change anyone's mind: any argument against the position can be dismissed as one more exercise of domination. A belief that no evidence or argument could ever count against is the defining mark of indoctrination. Teachers who convey this view leave their students with no means of evaluating any claim, including their teachers' own, and education built on it cannot teach students to think for themselves. The Center for Intellectual Freedom is committed to the opposite: to "free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth," in the words of its bylaws, and to giving students the tools to reach their own conclusions.

1.10 Why Iowa

Everything said so far applies to American universities in general. The question remains whether it applies to Iowa, and the evidence suggests that it does, with particular force.

Iowa's free speech climate is poor. In the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings published by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), the University of Iowa received a speech climate grade of D-, with a score of 62 out of 100, and fell 42 places to 105th of 261 institutions (*UI Receives D- Freedom of Speech Grade* 2026). More revealing is what Iowa students report about their own behavior. In the 2026 rankings, the University placed 227th of 257 institutions on self-censorship, among the worst in the country, even though it placed 22nd on students' perception of administrative support for free expression (Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression 2025). Students, in other words, believe that the administration supports free speech in principle, and yet they hold back their views in practice. This is consistent with a climate in which pressure to conform operates informally, through peers and faculty, rather than through written rules, and it is precisely the kind of pressure that formal policies and administrative assurances cannot remedy.

The University's own record points in the same direction. As Chapter 2 shows, the University of Iowa was asked to explore a civic education initiative of its own and chose to do nothing. The General Assembly created the Center only after that opportunity had been declined. And as Part III documents, even after the law was passed, the University repeatedly obstructed the Center's operation.

This history explains the Center's most distinctive feature. Recognizing that a center embedded in the University's hierarchy would be absorbed by it, the General Assembly designed the Center for Intellectual Freedom to report directly to the Board of Regents rather than to a dean, a provost, or a president. Among the dozens of civics centers now operating or being established across the country, that structural feature is what makes it unique, and, as the rest of this report shows, it is also what has made it the target of such persistent resistance.

The burden of proof, then, has shifted. The general case for civics centers is strong, and nothing in Iowa's circumstances weakens it. On the contrary, the University's free speech climate, its decision not to act when invited to, and its resistance once the Center was created all show that the reasons for an independent center apply in Iowa at least as strongly as anywhere else.

CHAPTER 2

How Inaction Set the Stage for Creating the Center by Law

In 2023, the General Assembly directed the Board of Regents to review diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at the state universities, and the Board responded with a set of directives to the three institutions. This chapter examines how the University of Iowa answered two of them. The first section describes the directive asking the universities to explore an initiative in civic education and free speech. The second shows how the University of Northern Iowa and Iowa State University each created a civics center in response, while the University of Iowa did not. The third examines the University's response to a separate directive on the DEI-related general education requirement, which it renamed without changing its substance. Taken together, these episodes show a consistent pattern of minimal compliance, and they explain why, by the end of 2024, legislators concluded that a center at the University of Iowa would have to be created by law.

2.1 The Board's Directive on Civic Education

Division V, § 11 of Senate File 560, signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds on June 1, 2023, required the Board of Regents to "conduct a comprehensive study and review of the diversity, equity, and inclusion programs" at the regents institutions. Moreover, § 11(2) established the following:

> The state board of regents shall prepare a report containing its findings and recommendations to be considered by the state board during its November 2023 meeting. The state board of regents shall submit a final report containing findings and recommendations to the governor and the general assembly no later than December 1, 2023.

Michael Richards, then President of the Board of Regents, appointed Regents David Barker, Frederick "Jim" Lindenmayer and Greta Rouse to form the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Study Group, tasked with the production of such a report.[1] Recommendation #9 of their report reads as follows:

[1] Richards was succeeded as Board President by Sherry Bates, who held the position at the time of the Center's creation in 2025. As of this writing, the Board President is Robert Cramer.

> 9. Develop a proposal, including cost, to establish a widespread initiative that includes opportunities for education and research on free speech and civic education.

This report was discussed during the Board of Regents meeting of November 16, 2023, and the above recommendation was amended to replace the word "develop" with "explore." An argument used to support this change was to allow the universities to determine whether following this recommendation would be appropriate or not.

This deference toward universities appears frequently in Board of Regents meetings. With the change, the recommendations became a set of Board directives. On November 27, Board of Regents Executive Director Mark Braun submitted the corresponding report to satisfy the requirements of SF 560.

2.2 UNI and ISU Act, UI Does Not

Pursuant to this directive, the University of Northern Iowa proposed the creation of a Center for Civic Education, which was approved by the Board of Regents at their meeting on September 18–19, 2024. UNI announced the creation of the Center for Civic Education immediately after that.

Iowa State University followed a two-step process. At the Board of Regents meeting of November 13–14, 2024, ISU President Wendy Wintersteen announced the launch of Cyclone Civics as a university-wide civic education and free expression initiative, with a five-year initial commitment, housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. ISU subsequently proposed converting this initiative into a formal Center for Cyclone Civics, which received initial committee approval on April 23, 2025 and full Board approval at the meeting of April 23–24, 2025, as reported by the Iowa Capital Dispatch and The Gazette.

Nevertheless, the University of Iowa did not propose a similar initiative on its own campus, apparently ignoring the Board of Regents directive #9. As a result, by the end of 2024, Iowa legislators decided to propose the creation of a center at the University of Iowa by statute.

> **Takeaway.** The University of Iowa administrators chose to do nothing in response to directives to create civics-related initiatives of its own, and this inaction set the stage for the creation of the Center by an act of the legislature.

2.3 The DEI General Education Requirement: A Change in Name Only

Directive #9 was not the only one the University of Iowa answered with minimal action. Directive #6 of the same set of Board directives, adopted on November 16, 2023, addressed the general education requirements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion:

> 6. Initiate a review of DEI-related general education categories and update category names to accurately reflect the array of options students may select from to satisfy these requirements and ensure a breadth of offerings.

The Board also decided how the directives would be implemented. Regent David Barker, a member of the study group that had prepared them, proposed that the Board oversee their implementation. Regent Cramer asked how this would be implemented. Board's President Michael Richards instead stated that the Task Force would be discontinued and that implementation would be left to the universities themselves, without supervision by the regents. Regent Barker voluntereed to continue working at the topic, but the offer was rejected.[2] The consequences of this decision are the subject of the rest of this chapter: left to implement the directives on their own terms, the universities did so as they saw fit.

At the University of Iowa, the relevant requirement was the "Diversity and Inclusion" area of the General Education CLAS Core, which every student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences must complete with at least three semester hours of coursework. Ten months after the directive was adopted, the College announced its response. In a memo dated September 18, 2024, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education Cornelia Lang informed faculty that, following a review initiated by the Board directive, the Diversity and Inclusion area would be **renamed** "Understanding Cultural Perspectives" beginning September 23, 2024. The "Values and Culture" area would also be renamed "Values and Society," to distinguish it from the new name.

The memo was explicit about what would *not* change. Every course approved for the Diversity and Inclusion area would remain approved under the new name, and the area's learning outcomes and content descriptions would remain unchanged. The only practical instruction to faculty was to update the name of the area in their syllabi by Spring 2025. The College's announcement to students was equally clear: students would not need to take any additional or different courses because of the renaming. A year later, the College's summary of curricular changes for 2024–25 confirmed that student requirements in the renamed areas had not changed.

[2] During the Board of Regents meeting on July 30, 2025, Regent Barker made another statement about DEI and referenced the discontinuation of this Task Force.

2.3.1 What the Requirement Teaches

The University's own documents allow a direct comparison of the requirement before and after the renaming. The current learning outcomes for Understanding Cultural Perspectives state that students explore the "historical and structural bases of inequality," learn about the benefits and challenges of diversity, reflect critically on their own social and cultural perspectives, and increase their ability to engage with people of different backgrounds. These are the same outcomes that applied to the Diversity and Inclusion area: course descriptions published in the University's course-search system for Fall 2022, well before the directive, already described their goals in the same terms, including the benefits and challenges of diversity and the structural relationships of inequality.

The courses tell the same story. Table 2.1 lists several courses that satisfied the Diversity and Inclusion requirement in Fall 2022 and that appear, under the new name, in the 2026–27 General Catalog. Their titles and descriptions remain unchanged. *Introduction to Social Justice*, for example, is still described as covering principles and theories of social justice and how intersectionality can create tensions within social movements. Even the University's course-search system continues to identify the area internally by the code `DIVERSITY_INCLUSION`.

Table 2.1: Selected courses approved for the DEI-related general education area, before and after the renaming.

Course	Fall 2022 (Diversity and Inclusion)	2026–27 (Understanding Cultural Perspectives)
`SJUS:1001 / GWSS:1003` Introduction to Social Justice	Yes	Yes
`GWSS:1002` Diversity and Power in the U.S.	Yes	Yes
`HIST:1040` Diversity in History	Yes	Yes
`ANTH:2151` Global Migration in the Contemporary World	Yes	Yes
`AFAM:2064 / SOC:2064` African American Families	Yes	Yes

Sources: University of Iowa, MyUI course search (Fall 2022); University of Iowa, *General Catalog 2026–27*.

2.3.2 Compliance in Form, Not in Substance

In fairness, the University did what the directive literally asked for: it reviewed the category and changed its name. It also made one substantive change in the following year, allowing transfer credit to satisfy the requirement, which had previously

had to be completed with coursework taken at the University of Iowa.

But the directive did not ask merely for a new name. It asked for names that *accurately reflect* the options available to students, and for a breadth of offerings. A name that accurately reflected this requirement would refer to diversity, inclusion, and inequality, because that is what its learning outcomes still require students to study. "Understanding Cultural Perspectives" does the opposite. It describes the same content in more neutral terms, making the requirement appear broader than it is. In this sense, the renaming did not bring the label closer to the substance; it moved the label away from it.

The episode follows the same pattern as the University's response to Directive #9. When the Board softened its civic education recommendation from "develop" to "explore," the University explored and did nothing. When the Board asked for a review of the DEI general education category, the University reviewed it and changed only its name. In both cases, the University satisfied the letter of the directive while leaving the substance untouched.

Takeaway. The University of Iowa administrators responded to the Board's directives with minimal action. It renamed its DEI general education requirement without changing its courses, content, or learning outcomes, and it did nothing to create a civic education initiative of its own. This inaction set the stage for the creation of the Center by an act of the legislature.

CHAPTER 3

The Approval of the Law and My Early Involvement

In October 2024, during a visit to George Mason University to give a talk, I had the opportunity to have dinner with Professor Dan Klein. During the dinner, Dan picked up his phone, called his friend Regent David Barker, and said, "David, you have to talk with this guy," before handing me the phone. After meeting Regent Barker in Iowa City, he organized a meeting in Des Moines with Representative Taylor Collins and Senators Kerry Gruenhagen and Lynn Evans. During that meeting, they informed me that they were planning to propose a bill to create a center in the University of Iowa, and I expressed my strong support. Immediately after coming back to Iowa City, I tried to inform the University about this plan.

3.1 I Try to Engage with the University

I wrote to Barry Thomas, Associate Dean of the College of Business, about my meeting with the legislators, inviting a colleague from the Department of Economics to join us:

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 4:17 pm
> **To:** Thomas, Barrett
> **Cc:** Amir, Rabah
> **Subject:** Meeting
>
> Dear Barry,
>
> I recently met some legislators in Iowa (I can tell you the circumstances later), and they mentioned an idea that I think could be good for us. I talked with Rabah about it, and he agrees.
>
> We would like to discuss it with you, since this idea would probably get going this coming year.
>
> Do you have some time this week to meet with us? Otherwise, we can try after the New Year.
>
> Please let us know.
>
> Best,
> Luciano and Rabah

In the meeting with Barry, I informed him that I had met the legislators as an American citizen, but wanted to let the University know. Moreover, I told him that the legislators were planning to submit a bill for creating a center for civics education at the University of Iowa, and I thought it would be a good idea if we could discuss the matter with them, so that we could cooperate to design the bill in a way that could satisfy the University and the legislators. I offered to meet with the University administrators to discuss the information I obtained and see how we could develop such cooperation. Barry thanked me for the information and said that he would contact the administration immediately. A few days passed and I received no contact. I thought this was probably because of the end of the year. In January, I met Barry in the corridor and asked about the contact. He said that he had informed the central administration and thought they would contact me directly. Indeed, he had reached out to Peter Matthes to arrange a meeting with me:

> **From:** Thomas, Barrett
> **Date:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 1:39 pm
> **To:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Subject:** Meeting with Faculty Member
>
> Pete,
>
> I just spoke with the faculty member whom we'd discussed previously. He would appreciate a chance to meet with you. He said sometime next week would be best. Do you have someone on your side to handle scheduling? Thanks.
>
> Barry
>
> Barrett Thomas, Ph.D.
> Senior Associate Dean

I was not copied in this email but later received a copy of it, through Peter Matthes' secretary, Elsa Thomas, after he forwarded this email and asked her to schedule a meeting. Elsa and I coordinated, and I met Peter Matthes on Monday, February 3, 2025.

During that meeting, Peter Matthes talked about the need to do a market demand assessment, to see if demand for civics courses existed. I replied that it would be really hard to estimate demand if we do not know what these courses would contain, and in which conditions they would be offered. When I tried to stress the importance of working with the legislators to develop a bill that could be satisfactory to the University, he expressed the expectation that the bill would be "killed in the Senate." Not giving up the effort of engaging and working together with the University, on the evening of that day, I sent an email to Peter Matthes saying: "I look forward to continuing the conversation with you and folks in the University."

Peter replied the following morning, mentioning that the University had begun its own process to assess market interest.

> **From:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Date:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 3:44 am
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** Re: Public
>
> Thank you.
>
> We have begun the process to understand the market place and should have some direction in the next week or so.

I responded expressing concern that this market exploration could delay, rather than advance, the creation of the school, and urged that we move quickly to bring a proposal to the Board of Regents.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 8:02 am
> **To:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Subject:** RE: Public
>
> Thank you, Peter.
>
> However, I must stress that focusing too much on understanding the "marketplace" can be misleading. History is replete with organizations that dismissed opportunities they later regretted. For instance, as discussed in Clayton Christensen's books that I mentioned yesterday, Western Union failed to recognize the value of the telephone, Nokia overlooked the smartphone revolution, and Kodak missed the digital photography revolution, even though it was well positioned to capitalize on it.
>
> I aim for honesty to save us time and enhance our communication. Hence, with all due respect, I view this "market exploration" as potentially unproductive. Even if you gather substantial evidence suggesting no market exists, you won't convince me. This isn't because I disregard facts; on the contrary, I have published in econometrics and know how sausages are made. In this case, the main difficulty is the lack of relevant data, since the product does not yet exist. If you ask "do you prefer to call the neighbor across the street or just go there?" you are asking the wrong question and will get a misleading answer. Before determining demand, we must clearly define what the product is, which we haven't done yet.
>
> There is also the other, more favorable possibility that, after your exploration, you conclude that there is a market. However, we've just lost precious time that we could have used to come up with an institutional arrangement that can work.
>
> The University of Iowa has a GREAT opportunity in front of it. I see it as a really, really GREAT opportunity. I hope we do not waste it by being distracted on secondary

> things.
>
> There are potential donors that are willing to bring money for the university to allow us to create this new school, that can be a truly outstanding academic unit. They want to give us money, but we do not want it? It does not make sense!
>
> Let me tell you what I think would be a great objective: let us develop a plan so that at the next Board of Regents meeting the University of Iowa can present the plan for this new school. I am confident that we can get this done, if we start working on the proposal immediately.
>
> I look forward to your thoughts.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

Peter Matthes's last email on this matter was the following:

> **From:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Date:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 11:50 am
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** Re: Public
>
> Thank you for providing additional information.
>
> I agree that work should be done on the "product", and I believe that we can and should work in parallel to:
>
> - Perform initial market discovery for student interest
> - Perform initial market discovery for philanthropic interest, and
> - Create the products
>
> The hypothesis is that by starting the market discovery now we will be able to test the products to determine market viability faster and understand the viability of philanthropic support.
>
> And developing the product, as you know, requires work within the academic structure and is in the management of the faculty.
>
> Developing a long-term sustainable financial model is crucial and by working a parallel process we can find long-term success.
>
> What I see as next steps is that the administration will start the process of market viability but we will need the faculty to work on the product.
>
> Does that sound like a plan?
>
> Thanks
> Pete

Notice that he never opened the door to collaboration or joint development. Although I did not know when we spoke, I later learned that the University had developed its own plan for a "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership," apparently prepared in January 2025, before we spoke. Peter Matthes never informed me of this proposal or shared it with me. I discuss more details about the University's proposal in Section 3.3 below.

Takeaway. I tried repeatedly to engage the University and work with it toward developing a shared proposal. The University administrators showed no interest in this collaboration and did not even share the plan it was already developing internally. It was simply not interested in working with the legislature, or with me, to arrive at an arrangement it could accept.

3.2 The Legislators' Proposals: HSB 52 and SF 127

At the start of the 2025 legislative session, Representative Taylor Collins, Chairperson of the House Committee on Higher Education, submitted House Study Bill 52, and Senator Kerry Gruenhagen, a member of the Senate Education Committee, submitted Senate File 127. Both bills proposed the creation of a "School of Intellectual Freedom" at the University of Iowa.

The School would have been an independent academic unit, physically located in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and led by a dean appointed by the Board of Regents from a list of finalists submitted by an academic council. The bills set out the school's functions, required bylaws, funding provisions, faculty staffing requirements, and the dean's duties and reporting line. Interestingly, this initial proposal had the dean of the School reporting directly to the president of the University of Iowa (emphasis added):

HSB 52, Sec. 10, New Section 263C.9(4).

The dean shall consult with the dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences when carrying out the dean's duties. However, the dean **shall report directly to the president of the university** or a designee of the president.

This initiative was covered by The Gazette in an article titled "Iowa lawmakers float bills saying what should be taught on campus." The title itself reflects a familiar line of criticism: that legislators are improperly dictating matters the University should determine for itself.

There were some hearings to discuss the proposal. Former Governor Terry Branstad spoke in defense of the bill, and this was covered by The Gazette in an article titled "Former Iowa Gov. Branstad backs bill for new UI 'School of Intellectual Freedom'."

The article also reported opposition from a recent UI graduate, who testified as follows:

> **Student testimony, as reported by The Gazette, January 28, 2025.**
>
> "I find this a laughable and ridiculous waste of money, time and resources, and I frankly find it ideologically motivated and pathetic," Denney said. "I don't understand how you look at the offerings of the University of Iowa and not see all of these ideas already represented there, including through American studies, including through all of the history curricula that are offered. This is just pointless."

As far as I am aware, no University of Iowa faculty member spoke publicly, in any legislative hearing, either for or against the bill, apart from myself. I did not speak at this particular hearing, but at a later one, a few days afterward, as I discuss below in Section 3.4.

Takeaway. Two points from this episode are worth highlighting:

- The legislators' original design subordinated the school to the president of the university, not to the Board of Regents as in the bill that was ultimately approved.
- There was already strong public opposition, voiced at this hearing, to the very idea that legislators could involve themselves in what was framed as purely a university matter.

3.3 The University Proposes an Alternative Center

The University of Iowa prepared its own proposal for a "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership (CCDL)," submitted to the Board of Regents on Form C.[1] The proposal, reproduced in Appendix A, describes a center to be housed in the Office of the Provost and directed by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, using a "hub and spoke" model to connect existing university units and programs related to civic dialogue, free speech, and civic engagement. It sets out the center's proposed mission, activities, governance structure, relationship to similar centers at other Iowa universities, and a proposed budget of $250,000 per year in institutional funding for three years.

In the article previously quoted about the January 28 hearing, The Gazette reported that UI lobbyist Keith Saunders mentioned the plan:[2]

[1] The proposal was apparently submitted on 1/17/25, since the file name includes this date.

[2] Keith Saunders was a member of the Board of Regents staff assigned to the University of Iowa as its state relations officer. The University's organizational chart of March 2025 lists him as "Direc-

> DES MOINES, in responding to an Iowa House proposal that would require the University of Iowa to establish a "School of Intellectual Freedom," a UI lobbyist Tuesday announced campus plans to create a new "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership."
>
> Plans for that new center have been submitted to the Board of Regents, according to Chief Government Relations Officer and UI representative Keith Saunders, who said the proposal will be considered at the board meeting in February.
>
> "So we are moving down the road on this," Saunders said, adding, "The center that's envisioned at the University of Iowa would be very similar to what UNI and Iowa State have already proposed."

The main problem with the University's proposal was the tight control that the university administrators would maintain over the Center. If the idea was to change something about the university, this control would not be appropriate.

In private conversations about the University's proposal, I learned that the reaction was that "now, it is too late" and the legislators decided to move forward with the bill proposal.

> **Takeaway.** After the bill was introduced, the University of Iowa's representative presented the University's own, administration-controlled center as an alternative, encouraging legislators to leave the matter to the University rather than create the Center by law.

3.4 The Only Professor to Support the Creation of the Center

I was the only professor at the University of Iowa who publicly supported the creation of the School/Center for Intellectual Freedom. On February 11, I published an op-ed in *The Gazette* titled "New school at UI is needed."

Drawing on Joseph Schumpeter's thesis that capitalism could be undermined from within by intellectuals hostile to it, I argued that universities have become platforms for critiquing American values, institutions, and history, and that a new school could expand research and teaching into areas neglected by existing departments, including serious scholarship defending capitalism as an economic system. I anticipated the objection that such a school would violate academic freedom, responding that I and other professors already wished to research and teach on these

tor of Governmental Relations, Board of Regents," reporting to the University's Vice President for External Relations. This is why the Iowa Legislature's lobbyist declarations for HSB 52 list him as a registered lobbyist for the Board of Regents.

topics but faced strong disincentives to do so: reluctance among mainstream journals to publish work challenging prevailing academic views, and diminished job prospects for scholars seen as holding right-leaning positions. I closed by urging Iowa legislators to be bold enough to create the school, so that capable conservative scholars from elsewhere could be drawn to Iowa.

On February 12, I presented to the committee data on the ideological composition of university faculty: nationally, registered Democrats outnumber Republicans among faculty eight to one, and at the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, eleven to one, with an even wider gap in campaign donations (21 to 1 nationally, 42 to 1 at UI, measured in dollars). I argued that this imbalance is self-reinforcing, since faculty tend to hire like-minded colleagues, contrarian scholarship is harder to publish in well-regarded journals, and professors who depart from academic orthodoxy pay a real professional price, discouraging others from doing so. My presentation is reproduced in Appendix B.

I also described my proposed course, "Political Economy and Capitalism," which university staff had excluded even from a student-interest survey, and noted that the University offered no course in which students could learn why and how capitalism works and what its advantages are compared to other systems. I closed by stating that the issue was not ideology but truth, and that those who dismissed the proposed school as ideologically motivated never leveled the same criticism at the ideological enterprises already embedded within the university.

My presentation was covered by *The Gazette*, in an article titled "University of Iowa professor, citing Democratic bias on campus, advocates new 'School of Intellectual Freedom' ", and by the *Iowa Capital Dispatch*, in an article titled "Professor: School of intellectual freedom could 'make universities great again' ". The phrase in the second headline comes from the closing slide of my presentation, where it expressed an aspiration: that the school could contribute to improving universities. I did not claim that creating the school would, by itself, accomplish that.

This hearing was also covered in a constituent newsletter sent by Representative John H. Wills, Speaker Pro Tempore. It summarized my presentation on faculty political imbalance, recounted the "Political Economy and Capitalism" course proposal and its rejection from the student survey, and noted that no course in the University's economics catalog even mentioned the word "capitalism" in favorable terms. Wills closed by endorsing the creation of the School of Intellectual Freedom.

I also sent comments on the bill to several legislators. One of them later told me that my participation had been very helpful in advancing the bill's passage. I do not claim that my involvement was crucial, only that I contributed. Others, especially the legislators themselves, played a far more important role.

Takeaway. Because I was myself a university professor publicly stating that I wanted to teach courses the University had shown no interest in offering, my own position undercut the argument that the school would interfere with academic freedom: I was not an outside force imposing a viewpoint on the university, but a faculty member seeking the freedom to teach and research as I saw fit.

3.5 Emails to Legislators

During my hearing, some Democratic representatives asked me questions that challenged the arguments I used in my presentation. Not only did I respond to all of them during the hearing, but later I also wrote individually to follow up with more details and clarifications. None of them replied. The emails that I sent are below.

From: Luciano de Castro
To: Representative Jacoby
Subject: Thank you for your comments today

Dear Representative Jacoby,

Thank you for your comments today. I would like to use this opportunity to provide a more detailed response to your points.

1. On "exaggerating a little bit": I included the phrase "I'm exaggerating a little bit" precisely because of my commitment to truth. I could have limited myself to the comment, that was a playful, but in general correct comment about academia. I included the disclaimer out of respect for intellectual honesty. Perhaps this reason wasn't clear, and you interpreted it differently, but that was my motivation.

2. Faculty left inclination: Regarding your comments on statistics about the political inclination of faculty, we can indeed argue about the relevance of specific data sets, although more than one statistic was presented. In any case, the overarching point, which I believe is undeniable and was also noted by Rep. Steven Holt, is that professors generally lean left politically. Do you disagree with this general observation?

3. Perceptions of Conservatives: You mentioned that, out of three, only one statement accurately reflected liberals' perception of conservatives. I guess that you meant that conservatives are motivated solely by political gain. Am I correct? If that was your implication, allow me to offer my own case as a counterexample. I am not running for office, yet as a conservative, I am advocating for this school not for political gain but because I believe that will create a good environment for the development of important research and teaching. It is possible that conservative politicians value similar things, isn't it?

4. Bias and Commitment to Truth: If I am not mistaken, you expressed the hope that

I was less biased. Well, I strongly support the bill, and this might be perceived as a bias towards its implementation. On the other hand, you may be doubtful about my commitment to the pursuit of truth, and I can see why you might have this doubt. Let me try to help by saying something about my training. My primary field is economic theory, and most of my scholarly work revolves around mathematical proofs of economic statements. Therefore, most of my professional efforts are directed towards finding correct statements and correct arguments or proofs for what I say. After working for so many years trying to avoid logical errors, you become very devoted to truth, in an almost religious way. While the real world is more complex than economic theorems, this commitment to truth underpins almost everything I do.

I hope this response contributes positively to our ongoing conversation.

I was disappointed to hear that your stance shifted to "heck no" following my presentation. However, should this school be established and should I have any influence over its operations, please know that I will make efforts to have you participating in its events.

Warm regards,
Luciano.

From: Luciano de Castro
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025, 12:28 am
To: Representative Jennifer Konfrst
Subject: Following up on this morning's comments

Dear Representative Konfrst,

Thank you for your comments. I would like to revisit one of your points from this morning to provide further clarification.

You expressed concern about a statement I made:

> The University of Iowa does not offer a course where students can learn why (and how) capitalism works, and what its advantages are compared to other systems.

I maintain that this statement is accurate. I did not claim that capitalism is not mentioned in courses at the University of Iowa. In fact, a couple of courses explicitly include the word 'capitalism' in their descriptions. However, merely mentioning capitalism, often in the context of its criticisms, does not equate to having a course dedicated to exploring why and how capitalism functions effectively compared to other economic systems.

I am reaching out to ensure my claim is clearly understood. I appreciate your feedback and welcome the opportunity for further conversation you might find benefi-

cial.

Best regards,
Luciano de Castro.

From: Luciano de Castro
To: Representative Skyler Wheeler
Subject: Thank you

Dear Representative Wheeler,

Thank you for your comments this morning. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I look forward to having further discussions with you.

Best regards,
Luciano

From: Luciano de Castro
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025, 12:55 am
To: Representative Skyler Wheeler

I forgot to add something: the reference that I mentioned in my response to your question.

Here is the link to the blog post by John Cochrane, who is a fantastic economist, who happens to be right-wing.

https://johnhcochrane.blogspot.com/2022/06/aea-p-measure-of-organization.html

In this post, he complains about the number of papers that are devoted to race, gender, etc, in the main meeting of the AEA (American Economic Association), which is the main association of economists here in the US. It is just incredible. At some point, he adds the following comment:

> Perhaps a better way to characterize the list is to think about what is surprisingly, stunningly, incredibly absent, even if one regards the AEA as devoted to "pressing public policy concerns" rather than fundamental research, and especially if the AEA is about economics, incentives, budget constraints, markets, as a way of thinking about public policy.
>
> There is nothing on inflation, federal reserve, monetary or fiscal policy, the effects of the $5 trillion dollar stimulus, the astounding February 2020 3.5% unemployment rate, the speed and nature of the covid recession, and the equal speed of recovery to the same unemployment rate. Search and matching vs. Phillips curves, supply vs. demand in the covid recession, and more. Macroeconomics altogether gets one very technical session.

Other posts that you might find interesting are the following:

https://johnhcochrane.blogspot.com/2023/12/sociology-meetings.html

https://johnhcochrane.blogspot.com/search?q=AEA

Best,
Luciano.

From: Luciano de Castro
To: Representative Ross Wilburn
Subject: Your comments this morning

Dear Representative Wilburn,

Thank you for your comments this morning.

I am reaching out because I am not sure if I fully understood your statement. I believe you were suggesting that this school is unnecessary because the University of Iowa already has mechanisms in place to establish such centers.

If this was indeed your point, please correct me if I'm wrong, I would appreciate your advice on how to proceed. As I mentioned in my talk, I proposed a new course titled "Political Economy and Capitalism," described as follows:

> The course adopts a market-friendly perspective on current political issues. Students will learn how to formulate an informed and well-reasoned response to criticisms of capitalism and evaluate the benefits and shortcomings of various government policies.

This proposal was intended only for inclusion in a survey to assess student interest. However, the university staff prevented this course proposal from even being considered in the survey, deeming it uninteresting for the university. I disagree; I believe this course is crucial and should be developed and offered to students. Unfortunately, I was unable to sway the university administration, which quashed the idea before students could express their interest.

I also think that securing resources for research on similar topics is even more challenging. To be frank, I feel somewhat helpless in navigating the university administration to push this forward.

Perhaps you had a different approach in mind. I would greatly appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Best regards,
Luciano.

Takeaway. I showed a willingness to reach out to legislators who disagreed with me, engaging their objections directly and reasoning with them.

CHAPTER 4

From the Approval of the Bill to the First Actions

Governor Kim Reynolds signed House File 437 into law on June 11, 2025, establishing the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa. Following the approval of the law, I was informed that the President of the Board of Regents, Sherry Bates, had appointed Regent Christine Hensley to lead the implementation of the Center. Regent David Barker, who had worked more actively than any other regent for the Center's creation, was given no role in its implementation: he was not included in the early planning correspondence (see Section 4.1), and he was not appointed to the Advisory Council, although he remained a regent until October 2025.

4.1 How I Became the Interim Director

In the first half of July, I received a call from Regent Christine Hensley asking me if I would accept the position of interim director of the Center. I accepted the invitation. She said that Peter Matthes would be in touch soon to discuss the details. She then sent the following email (I have highlighted the phrase concerning me and the contact I should expect).

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025, 10:10 am
> **To:** Mark Braun; Bates, Sherry; Robert Cramer; Kurt Tjaden
> **Cc:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** [External] Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Good morning all. Want to provide an update on the Center for Intellectual Freedom.
>
> This past week I had the opportunity to visit with both the Governor and Sherry. As a result I have made numerous contacts and would like to provide information that can be presented to the full Board on July 30. All individuals listed below have accepted and are excited to be asked to serve.
>
> After reviewing all of the various groups that should be represented on the Board the decision was made to go with a larger board, i.e. 20 to 22 individuals and have an Executive Committee made up of 8 or 9. Following are the groups with terms indicated per the legislation.

> Board of Regents, Chris Hensley, Robert Cramer, Kurt Tjaden, all with four year terms, Mike Richard's and Jim Lindenmayer with 2 year terms.
>
> Corporate, Mike Whalen, 4 year term, Steve Lacy, 2 year term, Reynolds Cramer, 4 year term.
>
> Community/Elected, Liz Mathis, 4 year term, Congressman Ganske and Ambassador Branstad both with 2 year terms. John Hendrickson, 4 year term.
>
> University of Iowa, Peter Matthes, 4 year term.
>
> Faculty, 9 in total with a 5/4 split in the two year and four year terms.
>
> We are working also to identify one additional female for the board. Recommendations are welcome.
>
> We will present to the Governor's office this week a draft letter to be sent to faculty and hopefully will have the faculty group finalized by the middle of August.
>
> Additional information, **Professor DeCastro has agreed to serve as interim Director of the Center and Peter Matthes will work with him to coordinate the paperwork, etc.**
>
> A preliminary timeline is as follows:
>
> - 7/30 Board action on all of the above
> - August, finalize faculty for the board
> - September, first meeting of the board
> - October, potential guest speaker
> - October, national search for director
> - November, market survey re: classes
>
> Let me know if questions or if I missed anything.
>
> Sent from my iPad

I waited a few days and told her that I had heard nothing from Peter Matthes or the university. She said, "strange," and promised she would contact him immediately and follow up. A few more days passed without any contact.

I then began to wonder what might be behind this silence. It occurred to me that a narrative could be forming to avoid my appointment as interim director. What narrative could this be? I considered the following possibilities.

- The bill does not require the appointment of an interim director; this appointment could simply be postponed.
- The Board could focus instead on appointing members of the Advisory Council, which needed to be completed soon in any case.
- The Advisory Council could conduct the national search for the director directly, so that the Board would appoint a permanent director from the outset,

rather than an interim one.

I thought one of these possibilities might be raised by a regent during the meeting, making it not unlikely that the Board would decide against appointing me as interim director. There was, however, an important reason to have an interim director in place: not only to work on recruiting the Advisory Council and assessing market demand, but, more importantly, to begin reassuring University faculty that the Center would be a serious academic enterprise rather than an ideological unit. I therefore decided to prepare a short-term plan describing what an interim director could do, and how such a director could act to avoid the kind of faculty backlash observed at other universities. I sent the plan to Regents Christine Hensley and David Barker on July 20:

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Sunday, July 20, 2025, 10:21 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Barker, David
> **Subject:** Short-term plan for the CIF
>
> Dear Chris and David,
>
> I've been thinking about the New Center of Intellectual Freedom (CIF) and jotted down some ideas for immediate actions we could take. You'll find them in the attached document.
>
> Could you take a look and let me know what you think? If you're okay with it, I'd like to share this in a reply to Chris's email from last Monday, copying the other Board of Regents members on that thread.
>
> Looking forward to your feedback!
>
> Best,
> Luciano

The document titled "A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action," is reproduced in full in Appendix C. It outlines the steps I believed were necessary to launch the Center quickly and address the negative perceptions already forming around it.

A few days later, a visit to the Board of Regents was arranged, so that I could meet other Regents as well as some prospective members of the Advisory Council. As asked, I sent my CV and included an observation as follows.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Monday, July 28, 2025, 10:19 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** CV and Update

> Dear Chris,
>
> As promised, please find my CV attached.
>
> I wanted to provide a brief update. I haven't heard from Peter Matthes, but I connected with Barry Thomas, the Associate Provost and former dean of my college, whom I knew previously. Through him, I was able to visit Calvin Hall.
>
> I also reached out to Cheryl Reardon, Director of HR, who informed me **she was "asked to hold off on meeting until after Wednesday's Board meeting"**.
>
> See you tomorrow!
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Notice the phrase highlighted above, which shows that the University was unwilling to meet with me, even though Regent Hensley had asked it to do so.

4.2 My Appointment and Meeting with Executive Director Mark Braun

The Board of Regents confirmed my appointment in its meeting on July 30, 2025.

The day before, on July 29, 2025, I met Executive Director Mark Braun for the first time. He said two things that day that proved significant later.

First, Braun stated that the University requires approval for expenditures and commented: "It seems just so natural that I would be the person approving the expenses." At the time, I viewed this as a routine administrative arrangement. I later came to understand that it was, in practice, a mechanism for controlling the Center's operations, as the rest of this report will illustrate with multiple cases.

The second thing that was relevant was my compensation. He said that the Center would pay a fraction of my salary at Tippie College of Business (TCOB). That fraction would be determined later. This, obviously, would not add anything to my salary: it would just reduce some of the commitment with TCOB. However, he would give me an administrative stipend corresponding to 35% of my current salary.

A few days later, I was informed that the BoR would pay 30% of my salary at TCOB, thus reducing my time there to 70%. I was also told that my stipend would be 30%. I then called Mark Braun to remind him that his promise was a 35% stipend, and perhaps the 30% was a confusion with the fraction of my time reduced with TCOB. When I said this over the phone, Mark Braun remained silent. He did not contradict me, but also did not say that he would agree. He was just silent.

4.3 The Offer Letter

The offer letter was sent to me on August 19, 2025. It specified that my appointment would begin on August 1, 2025, the first day of the month following my appointment by the Board of Regents. It also confirmed the reduction of my time at TCOB to 70%, corresponding to the one-course teaching reduction.

The notable aspect, however, was the administrative stipend. It was not 35%, as Executive Director Braun had initially indicated. It was not even 30%, as I had later been informed. It was 30% of my salary minus $135.

I did not believe this was a mistake. My phone call with Mr. Braun about the stipend had been very recent, and the letter listed the 30% of my salary to be paid by the Center in place of TCOB immediately before the stipend figure, so the two numbers could hardly have been confused. A reduction of $135 is also too small and too specific to be a rounding choice. I understood it as a signal that the terms of my appointment, and the Center's finances more generally, would be set by the Executive Director, regardless of what had been discussed. He may, of course, have had something else in mind, but this was how I understood it at the time.

It did not trouble me much. My concern was not who held authority but whether the Center could achieve its mission, and I believed that if I accepted the terms without dispute, the Board Office would allow the Center to do its work. That belief proved mistaken. As the following chapters show, the Board Office would come to exercise control over the Center's actions far beyond the terms of my appointment. In any case, I had no real alternative: declining the terms would have meant not serving as Interim Director at all. I therefore signed the offer letter without complaint.

4.4 The First Actions at the University

As the offer letter stipulated, I began working at the Center on August 1, 2025. Within the first few weeks, I hired someone to develop the Center's website and launched the process to hire an administrative assistant.

PART II

Achievements

CHAPTER 5

Achievements

This chapter summarizes the Center's principal achievements from its creation through October 2026. Many of them were accomplished despite the obstacles documented in Part III.

5.1 A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action

On July 20, 2025, I prepared a Short-Term Plan to be implemented at the Center. It is reproduced in full in Appendix C, and it guided the Center's first actions described in this chapter.

5.2 Administrative Foundations

In its first weeks, the Center established the basic infrastructure it needed to operate:

1. Hiring of an administrative assistant, Collin Sawyer, who became the Center's Administrative Services Manager;
2. Hiring of a web designer;
3. Setting up the Center's office in Calvin Hall, including equipment (monitors, computers, printer);
4. Ordering business cards and other materials.

5.3 The Center's Website

The Center's website was developed over about two months by the web designer hired in August 2025.[1] It presents the Center's mission, news, bylaws, meetings and events, courses, staff, Advisory Council, and a donation page, and it links to the Center's YouTube and X accounts. According to the University's Office of Strategic Communication, the site ranks well in Google searches, and visitors arriving from search engines stay for over a minute on average (see Section 13.1). In April 2026, after the requests described in Section 13.1, the University agreed to grant an exception allowing the simpler address `cif.uiowa.edu`.

[1] *Center for Intellectual Freedom, The University of Iowa (website)*.

5.4 The Advisory Council

As required by Iowa Code § 263C.7, the Board of Regents appointed the Center's Advisory Council. The Board approved the Council on September 17, 2025, with 26 members: 13 public servants and community members, and 13 nationally recognized faculty from institutions and organizations across the country.[2,3] The Council's principal functions are to advise the Center and to conduct the national search for its permanent director. The sections below describe the meetings and deliberations that led to the Council's formation. Developments affecting the Council in September 2026 are discussed in Section 25.6.

5.4.1 Meetings on July 29 and August 25, 2025

On July 29, I went to Des Moines, where I met the following members of the Advisory Council:

1. Terry Branstad: Governor and Ambassador to China, Republican, 2 years
2. Reynolds Cramer: CEO of Fareway, Republican, 4 years
3. Robert Cramer: Board of Regents, Republican, 4 years
4. Greg Ganske: Congressman, Republican, 2 years
5. Christine Hensley: Board of Regents, Republican, 4 years
6. John Hendrickson: Government Affairs, Iowans for Tax Relief, Republican, 4 years
7. Steve Lacy: Retired CEO of Meredith Corporation, Democrat, 2 years
8. Mike Richards: Former Board of Regents President, Republican, 2 years
9. Kurt Tjaden: Board of Regents, Independent, 4 years
10. Mike Whalen: CEO of Heart of America, Independent, 4 years

On August 25, I met:

1. Sherry Bates, Regent & President of the BoR
2. Jim Lindenmayer: Former College President, Independent, 2 years
3. Mark Braun, Executive Director
4. Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
5. Rachel Boon, Chief Academic Officer

5.4.2 The Meeting with the BoR and UI on September 4, 2025

On Thursday, September 4, I had a conversation with the Board of Regents and some people from the University of Iowa.

The participants were the following:

[2] *Advisory Council*.
[3] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council".

- Board of Regents (BoR):
  1. Sherry Bates, Regent & President of the BoR
  2. Christine Hensley, Regent
  3. Kurt Tjaden, Regent
  4. Mark Braun, Executive Director
  5. Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
  6. Rachel Boon, Chief Academic Officer
  7. Josh Lehman, Senior Communications Director
  8. Stephanie Griffin, paralegal
- University of Iowa:
  9. Kevin Kregel, Executive Vice President and Provost
  10. Jamie Jorgensen, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel
  11. Peter Matthes, Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations
  12. Cheryl Reardon, Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President
  13. Keith Saunders, Director of State Relations
- Center for Intellectual Freedom:
  14. Luciano I. de Castro, Interim Director and Professor of Economics

Before the meeting actually started, I said that I had hired my assistant and someone to develop the website. I said that I was told the offer letter would go "today or tomorrow." Kevin Kregel interjected that the assistant would begin on September 23.

Mark Braun started describing the requirements of the law (263C), which come from House File 437. He mentioned that the Advisory Council would have open meetings and that if the Executive Committee made decisions, these would be open as well.

We started discussing the need for political balance in the Advisory Council. I asked what exactly political affiliation means for people outside the US. After that, first Mark Braun and then Peter Matthes commented that we did not need faculty from other states.

I answered that it was absolutely crucial to have connections with quality faculty, because this would signal the level of quality that we want to establish in the university. It is really important for academic reputation. Aimee Claeys argued that we already have great faculty in Iowa. I responded that we do not have in Iowa schools like Stanford, Chicago, Princeton, etc. Other centers similar to ours, like the one in Tennessee, try to connect to high-level academics exactly to establish this high academic standard. One of the things they have done is to include

Arthur Brooks, from Harvard, and Daniel Diermeier, who is chancellor of Vanderbilt and was previously my colleague at Northwestern University, dean of the Harris School at the University of Chicago, and provost of Chicago. Having these people is essential and of central importance.

Mark Braun also asserted that "since the Center is subordinated to the Board of Regents, it is just natural that I will be the one in charge of approving the expenses of the Center."

He also mentioned the need to do the market assessment of the classes. Another thing he mentioned was that we had to determine whether the University already had a course that would meet these needs. In that case, the Center would not need to create the course.

5.4.3 The Case for Appointing the Full Council

Note. This subsection reproduces the analysis I prepared in early September 2025, ahead of the Board of Regents meeting of September 17, 2025, at which the initial members of the Advisory Council were to be appointed. At the time, it was plausible that the faculty members would not be approved at that meeting.

It was really important to include the full set of members, that is, also the faculty, in the list of members of the Advisory Council to be approved at the September 17 Board of Regents meeting, for the following reasons:

- The political balance requirement is met only when we include the faculty listed in Table 5.2. Appointing only the people from Iowa would open the criticism that the Advisory Council is not balanced.
- There is some risk that the partially constituted Advisory Council will take irreversible action before the full council is appointed.
- A complete nomination of the Advisory Council would allow it to start functioning at full capacity.
- The faculty will be incentivized to attend and fully participate from the beginning.
- The faculty could attend and contribute to the inaugural event.

I also suggested that Barry Thomas (Associate Provost) substitute for Peter Matthes as the University of Iowa employee, for the following reasons:

- It was argued during the meeting on Thursday, September 4, that the University of Iowa has great faculty. This is true. Therefore, we should take the opportunity to include a faculty member from the University of Iowa.
- Since only one employee of the university can be included in the Advisory

Council, it seems only natural that this person be one of its faculty.

- There are other people with administrative experience on the council.
- Besides being faculty, Barry Thomas is an experienced administrator who occupies a high position in the University of Iowa hierarchy. He combines knowledge of both the academic and administrative sides of the University.

The proposed members of the Advisory Council at that time are listed below. The full Council, including the faculty members, was approved on September 17, 2025.

Table 5.1: Advisory Council Members from Iowa and their Political Affiliation (proposal of September 2025)

#	Name	Description	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	# y.
1	Terry Branstad	Governor and Ambassador to China	✓			2
2	Reynolds Cramer	CEO of Fareway	✓			4
3	Robert Cramer	Board of Regents	✓			4
4	Greg Ganske	Congressman	✓			2
5	Christine Hensley	Board of Regents	✓			4
6	John Hendrickson	Government Affairs Iowans for Tax Relief	✓			4
7	Steve Lacy	Retired CEO of Meredith Corporation		✓		2
8	Jim Lindenmayer	former College President			✓	2
9	Liz Mathis	former Iowa Legislator		✓		4
10	Peter Matthes / Barry Thomas	University of Iowa			✓	4
11	Mike Richards	former Board of Regents President	✓			2
12	Kurt Tjaden	Board of Regents			✓	4
13	Mike Whalen	CEO of Heart of America			✓	4
	Total	13	7	2	4	

Table 5.2: Faculty Advisory Council Members (proposal of September 2025)

#	Name	Affiliation	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	# y.
1	Dorian Abbot	University of Chicago			✓	2
2	Mark Bauerlein	Emory University, emeritus			✓	2
3	Dan Bonevac	University of Texas at Austin	✓			2
4	Carlos Carvalho	University of Austin	✓			4
5	Thomas P. Gallanis	George Mason University	✓			4
6	Joshua Katz	American Enterprise Institute		✓		4
7	Sergiu Klainerman	Princeton University			✓	4
8	Richard Lowery	University of Texas at Austin			✓	4
9	Iván Marinovic	Stanford University			✓	4
10	Wilfred McClay	Hillsdale College	✓			2
11	Nicola Persico	Northwestern University			✓	2
12	Joshua D. Rauh	Stanford University; Hoover Institution			✓	4
13	Harald Uhlig	University of Chicago			✓	4
	Total	13	4	1	8	

5.5 Meetings of the Advisory Council

The full Advisory Council met three times between its appointment and the date of this report. All three meetings were held virtually and were open to the public, as required by Iowa's open meetings law. Between them, the Council's Executive Committee met several times in closed session, mainly to conduct the search for a permanent director.

5.5.1 First Meeting: November 18, 2025

The Council's first meeting took place on November 18, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., a little more than two weeks before the inaugural event.[4] The Board of Regents had tabled the Center's proposed bylaws at its meeting of November 12–13 so that the Council could review them first (see Chapter 8). At this meeting, the Council approved the bylaws with amendments and formed its nine-member Executive Committee (The Daily Iowan 2025a). The meeting also included the open-meetings training required of Council members (Section 9.1). The Board of Regents approved the bylaws unanimously on December 3, 2025 (Section 8.5).

5.5.2 Second Meeting: June 8, 2026

The second meeting took place on June 8, 2026, days after the Governor signed House File 2800, which requires University of Iowa undergraduates to complete six credit hours in courses offered by the Center, beginning in 2028. Much of the meeting was devoted to the implications of that requirement. Regent Hensley said that the Center would need to hire a significant number of faculty before the courses began, and that, while it should not be subordinate to the University, a strong working relationship with the University would be essential (Luhmann 2026). Asked about the influence of the market assessment, she stated that Representative Collins had seen the report and that it had clearly shown the benefit of the requirement for the Center (*Could the Center for Intellectual Freedom Become Its Own UI College?* 2026).

Professor Lowery, as chair of the search, reported that the effort to hire a search firm had failed and that the Executive Committee would conduct the search itself, with applications due July 30 and a recommendation expected before the Board's September meeting (*Iowa Law Puts Center for Intellectual Freedom at Center of New Graduation Requirements* 2026). Regent Hensley also announced that, apart from the speaker series, the Center's activities, including new courses, would be paused while the Council searched for a permanent director and worked on the curriculum for the required courses (see Chapter 18). I reported on the courses offered in the spring and on plans for a speaker series on America's 250th anniversary.

[4] Center for Intellectual Freedom (2025b).

5.5.3 Third Meeting: October 2, 2026

The third meeting took place on October 2, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., after eleven of the Council's thirteen faculty members had resigned (Chapter 22).[5] Professor Bauerlein, who had been named chair of the Executive Committee on September 25, reported that the committee had narrowed the candidates for director from eleven to six and then to four, and described the criteria it had applied, including research in U.S. history, government, and civics, administrative experience, and engagement with the Center's stakeholders. The Council, now reduced to fifteen members, approved sending the four finalists to the Board of Regents, and Regent Hensley announced that a special meeting of the Board had been scheduled for October 20 to make the selection (Draisey 2026b).

5.6 Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Advisory Council met five times between December 2025 and September 2026. At the first three meetings, the director search was discussed at the beginning, with Collin Sawyer and me intentionally absent from that portion; at the last two, the search was discussed in closed session. The main points of each meeting, according to its minutes, are summarized below.

5.6.1 Meeting 1: December 22, 2025

Members attending were Christine Hensley, Mark Bauerlein, Thomas Gallanis, Richard Lowery, Liz Mathis, and Mike Whalen. The committee discussed the logistics of hiring a permanent director and reviewed the inaugural event held on December 6.

5.6.2 Meeting 2: February 12, 2026

With the same members attending, the committee received an update on the director search, including a response from a search firm. Regent Hensley explained that funds could reach the Center either through a special legislative appropriation or through reallocation by the Board from the University's appropriation, and that the special appropriation, then directed to the University, could in the future be given directly to the Center. On policies, the minutes record that the question of University policies versus Center policies was to be checked by the Board of Regents legal team (see Section 14.1). The committee also received updates on course marketing and on the market demand assessment.

5.6.3 Meeting 3: April 30, 2026

Members attending were Christine Hensley, Mark Bauerlein, Thomas Gallanis, Richard Lowery, Ivan Marinovic, and Liz Mathis. The committee discussed HF 2800; according to the minutes, if the bill failed to pass or to be signed, the Regents

[5] Iowa Board of Regents (2026c).

would adopt a policy routing general education requirements through the Center. It reviewed the budget, requesting a reclassification of miscellaneous expenses and the inclusion of fellowship costs, and discussed the release of the market demand assessment and the spring courses. The committee unanimously approved the Center's three proposed policies, as well as the faculty and student fellowship proposals. I also announced the America 250 Speaker Series for the fall. Finally, the committee approved replacing Terry Branstad with Greg Ganske as a member.

5.6.4 Meeting 4: September 1, 2026

Members attending were Christine Hensley, Mark Bauerlein, Thomas Gallanis, Greg Ganske, Richard Lowery, Ivan Marinovic, Joshua Rauh, and Mike Whalen. After a closed session on the director search, the committee discussed in open session the six candidates who had chosen open consideration, and advanced only one: me. Regent Hensley discussed the new Board of Regents committee overseeing the Center and noted that questions about the Center's independence remained open. I reported on the speaker series and on the cancellation of planned visits to other centers and conferences for lack of authorization by the Board's committee; Regent Hensley explained that the purpose was to keep me focused on the speaker series, and Richard Lowery, Thomas Gallanis, and Ivan Marinovic expressed concern about the decision. The committee also discussed forming Scholar Committee subcommittees to plan faculty hiring and the curriculum for Fall 2028.

5.6.5 Meeting 5: September 25, 2026

Following the resignations described in Chapter 22, the committee had five members: Christine Hensley, Mark Bauerlein, Greg Ganske, Liz Mathis, and Mike Whalen. A representative of the Attorney General's office also attended. Mark Bauerlein was announced as the new faculty chair. After a closed session, he announced that the committee had settled on four candidates, identified only by number (32, 35, 41, and 56), whom the Board of Regents would invite to campus. The minutes record no vote on the finalists in open session (see Chapter 23).

5.7 The Bylaws

As required by Iowa Code § 263C.4, the Center prepared its bylaws. After the negotiations described in Chapter 8, the Advisory Council approved the bylaws, with amendments, at its meeting of November 18, 2025.[6] The Board of Regents then approved them unanimously at its December 3, 2025 meeting.[7] The approved bylaws are available on the Center's website.[8]

[6] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council approves bylaws, executive committee".
[7] *Meeting Agenda, December 3, 2025*.
[8] *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*.

5.8 The Inaugural Event: The Reforming Universities Summit

On December 5–6, 2025, the Center held its inaugural event, the Reforming Universities Summit, at the Old Capitol on the University of Iowa campus. The event brought together academics, higher education leaders, legislators, and state and federal officials from Iowa and across the country.[9,10] Its panels examined what is wrong with universities, how higher education reached its current state, and the experience of similar centers elsewhere.[11] A panel on the Center itself brought together Regent Christine Hensley, Senator Kerry Gruenhagen, Representative Taylor Collins, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education David Barker, and me.[12] Governor Kim Reynolds gave opening remarks on the evening of December 6, followed by a keynote address by Christopher Rufo.[13,14]

The total cost of the event was approximately $84,000. The event was organized despite the obstacles described in Chapter 9.

5.9 The Proposal to the Department of Education

In November 2025, Professor Karen Kedrowski, co-director of the Center for Cyclone Civics at Iowa State University, invited the Center to join a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education under the FIPSE program. The proposal was planned as a collaboration among the civics centers of the three Regents universities, with the Center receiving a subcontract that, according to her email, would approach $1 million.

> **From:** Karen Kedrowski
> **Date:** Friday, November 14, 2025, 10:49 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Allison Rank
> **Cc:** Kelly Shaw
> **Subject:** [External] Grant updates
>
> Hi All,
>
> Luciano, I'm so glad you'll be joining us on the grant.
>
> Our grants officer will be contacting your grants office with an amount for your subcontracts today. The amount will approach $1 million each.
>
> The Lyceum Movement in DSM has agreed to be our community partner in this initiative.

[9] "Center for Intellectual Freedom officials learn from other centers, look to future".
[10] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom hosts two-day inaugural event".
[11] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom hosts inaugural event with conservative leaders".
[12] "Center for Intellectual Freedom officials learn from other centers, look to future".
[13] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom hosts inaugural event with conservative leaders".
[14] "Gov. Kim Reynolds on UI Center for Intellectual Freedom: 'It's a chance to lead America'".

> I'm working on getting a letter of endorsement from the Governor. Is there anyone else we should ask?
>
> We have an education assessment guru here who has agreed to help write the assessment, and the ISU survey research shop is able to administer the assessment via web based survey. Are you okay with doing so at all three institutions? (We'll share data of course.)
>
> Please start working on your narratives. I will share ours as we progress to give you a page count. The award criteria are in document "PKG00291645-Instructions" starting on page 45.
>
> I'll send updates as I know then.
>
> Cheers,
> Karen

The Center for Cyclone Civics later decided to submit its application without the Center for Intellectual Freedom. Rather than let the opportunity pass, I prepared and submitted a separate application on the Center's behalf. The deadline was December 3, 2025, two days before the inaugural event, and I completed the proposal largely alone, at the cost of two nights without sleep in the days before the event. The application was not successful, but the proposal remains available to the Center's future leadership as a basis for future applications.

5.10 The First Courses

In Spring 2026, the Center offered its first two courses: "Political and Economic Institutions in the United States" and "American Culture and Values." Both were one-credit, seven-week courses graded pass/fail, with lectures by guest speakers.[15] Because the Center was not permitted to hire faculty (Chapter 7), the courses were hosted through University College, as described in Section 13.2. They began after spring break, later than originally planned.[16] Enrollment was 11 students in the first course and 8 in the second, for a total of 19.[17]

Lecturers included University of Iowa faculty (Professors Alex P. Smith, Timothy Hagle, and Richard Fumerton), faculty from other institutions (Professors Eric Dugdale, Stephen Balch, and Mark Bauerlein), and business leaders who serve on the Advisory Council, such as Reynolds Cramer and Mike Whalen (see Section 17.1).

The syllabi of both courses, with the topic and lecturer of each session, are reproduced in Appendix F.

[15] "University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom classes set to begin".
[16] "First course at University of Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom pushed to March".
[17] "Center for Intellectual Freedom optimistic for future".

5.11 The Market Demand Assessment

Iowa Code § 263C.9(2), established by House File 437, required the Center's director to conduct a market assessment to determine course demand and the number of faculty required. To fulfill this mandate, I commissioned the Common Sense Institute (CSI), a nonpartisan research organization, to carry out the study. The report, *Market Demand Assessment – University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom*, was released on April 29, 2026 (Chediak, Murrey, and Nguyen 2026). The circumstances of its release are discussed in Chapter 15. Its central finding was that centers like ours generate demand rather than find it waiting, and that general-education requirements are a major driver of enrollment at similar centers.[18] Below, I summarize it in more detail.

5.11.1 Methods

The study combined two approaches. First, CSI identified fourteen civics centers at other universities most comparable to the Center for Intellectual Freedom and requested meetings with their directors; eleven agreed to participate. Second, CSI fellows Quentin Chediak and Andy Nguyen conducted a statistical analysis of enrollment in undergraduate courses offered by the University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences between Fall 2022 and Spring 2025, to identify which factors best predict how many students enroll in a course. The study deliberately did not survey students, reasoning that it is difficult to measure interest reliably in courses and programs that do not yet exist.

5.11.2 Main Findings

The study's central conclusion is that centers of this kind do not begin with demand; they create it. Demand depends less on students' prior interest in a subject than on how the center's offerings fit into the requirements students must meet to graduate.

The directors interviewed agreed on two leading drivers of enrollment. The most important is offering courses that satisfy the university's general education requirements, especially when the center offers one of the only courses that satisfy a requirement. At the University of Florida, for example, enrollment in the Hamilton Center's courses nearly doubled, from 671 to 1,205 students, in the year its course began satisfying the state's new civics requirement. The second driver is offering courses that count toward credentials such as majors, minors, and certificates. Every director reported that purely elective courses attract few students.

The statistical analysis of University of Iowa data confirmed these accounts. Among all the factors examined, a course's requirement status explained by far the largest share of variation in enrollment, and courses that are the only way to satisfy a requirement showed the strongest relationship with enrollment. Factors often as-

[18] "Report: UI Center for Intellectual Freedom can create demand".

sumed to matter, such as the time of day, modality, instructors' past grading, and scheduling conflicts, each contributed less than five percent of the explanatory power.

The directors also identified three conditions common to successful centers. The first is genuine support from university leadership, which, as the report puts it, must be given "not just in word, but in deed and in truth." Several directors described how resistance from university leadership had slowed their progress. The second is reliable, recurring funding. The third is hiring faculty first: centers must recruit faculty to develop courses and programs before students can enroll in them. Directors described this as a "chicken-or-egg" problem, since legislators and university leaders often want to see evidence of demand before funding faculty, while demand cannot materialize until faculty have created the offerings that attract students.

5.11.3 Projections

The study offered projections based on three centers that share the Center's most important characteristics, each established by legislation at a state flagship university. If the Center for Intellectual Freedom followed the model of the Salmon P. Chase Center at The Ohio State University, which offered no courses in its first two years, it could enroll 82 students with 11 faculty by 2027–28. If it followed the Institute for American Civics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, it could grow from 91 students with one faculty member in 2026–27 to 612 students with six faculty by its fourth year. If it followed the Hamilton School at the University of Florida, it could reach more than 1,800 students and 35 faculty by 2028–29. The corresponding funding equivalents ranged from roughly $2.3 million to $7.6 million per year. Overall, the study estimated that demand could range from fewer than a dozen students to more than a thousand, and faculty needs from one to about three dozen, depending above all on the choices made by legislators, the University, and the Center.

5.11.4 Implications

Low enrollment in the Center's first courses, which were offered as electives without satisfying any general education requirement, is exactly what the study predicts, and says little about students' underlying interest in the subject. The study also shows that the conditions for success are largely outside the Center's own control: they depend on whether the Center's courses are integrated into the curriculum, on reliable funding, on the authority to hire faculty, and on genuine support from University leadership. As Part III documents, each of these conditions was precisely where the Center met resistance.

5.12 The America 250 Speaker Series

In Fall 2026, the Center launched a speaker series focused on America's 250th anniversary.[19] Planning for the series took place during the summer, while most of the Center's other activities were suspended. The selection of speakers drew on suggestions from members of the Advisory Council, and invitations were extended to several nationally recognized scholars and public figures. Regent Hensley assisted with this effort, reaching out to Senator Joni Ernst and, with the help of Attorney General Brenna Bird, to speakers from the Jewish community. As is common with speakers of this profile, responses were slow during the summer, and confirming each speaker required negotiating dates and honoraria.

The series opened in September. On September 3, George Mason University law professor Todd Zywicki gave a lunch-hour lecture at the Boyd Law Building, organized in partnership with the Federalist Society, on the historical and philosophical roots of American liberty in the rule of law, the Declaration, and the Constitution. On September 10, Hillsdale College professor Wilfred McClay, a member of the Advisory Council, lectured at the Iowa Memorial Union on the uniqueness of speech relative to other forms of expression.[20]

To promote these talks, the Center developed a system for sending individual invitations to University of Iowa faculty. This responded directly to a lesson from the inaugural event, for which too few faculty members had been invited (see Section 26.4.4). The results were visible: after his talk, Professor Zywicki remarked that in twenty years of speaking for the Federalist Society, he had never seen so many faculty members attend one of his lectures (see Section 20.4).

5.13 Proposals Prepared

Not all of the Center's work during its first year produced results that can be counted as accomplished. A significant part of it consisted of proposals prepared for the Advisory Council and the Board of Regents, intended to give the Center the policies, programs, and structure it would need to carry out its mission. None of these proposals has yet been adopted. They are listed here because they represent work completed by the Center and remain available to its future leadership; the reasons they were not adopted are discussed in Part III and in Chapter 24.

5.13.1 Policies

The Center's bylaws direct the Director to "develop policies and procedures for the Center, subject to the approval of the Advisory Council and the Board" (Article VIII, Section 6). On February 17, 2026, I submitted three proposed policies to the Board Office:

[19] "Center for Intellectual Freedom advisers debate oversight of activities, curriculum".

[20] *Regents Won't Let Center for Intellectual Freedom Interim Director Attend 3 Conferences* (Vanessa Miller, The Gazette).

1. Development, Approval, Amendment, and Management of Policies;
2. Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression;
3. Content Development and Intellectual Property.

The policies were approved by the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council at its meeting of April 30, 2026. They have not been approved by the Board (see Chapter 14).

5.13.2 Student Scholarships

On April 7, 2026, I sent Regent Hensley and Professor Lowery a preliminary proposal for a student scholarship program, intended to attract students to the Center's lectures and programs.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 2:30 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Richard Lowery; James R Lowery Jr
> **Subject:** Scholarship proposal
> **Attachment:** Preliminary proposal for the student scholarship program
>
> Hi Chris and Richard,
>
> I am sending you a preliminary proposal for the student scholarship program.
>
> This is still a draft and will be subject to review and possible revision by the Advisory Council.
>
> That said, I would like to request authorization to begin contacting students to invite them to attend our lectures. This would be done with the clear understanding that the final rules and conditions of the scholarship will be formally approved later by the Advisory Council (or the Executive Committee).
>
> Thank you, and please let me know your thoughts.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Following this request, the Center began inviting students to attend its lectures, as a first step toward building the program. The proposal was later developed into the student fellowship program, as described below.

5.13.3 Faculty and Student Fellowships

The Center also prepared proposals for fellowship programs for faculty and for students, which were presented to the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council on April 30, 2026. Faculty fellowships would allow scholars at the University of Iowa and elsewhere to develop research and courses aligned with the Center's mis-

sion; student fellowships would support undergraduate and graduate students who wish to engage more deeply with its subjects. Programs of this kind have been among the most effective means of attracting students at comparable centers, according to the market assessment (Section 5.11).

5.13.4 A Proposal to Reorganize the Center

On April 13, 2026, I submitted to the regents responsible for the Center a proposal for its reorganization. It proposed that the Center be recognized as a unit on a par with the University College and the University Libraries, able to offer its own courses and to receive administrative services from the University through a memorandum of understanding, and it addressed the problems of course offerings and of the Center's website address raised at the time. The proposal was not taken up; the framework later adopted by the Board was developed by the Board Office and the University without the Center's participation (Chapter 19).

PART III

Obstacles Encountered

Introduction to Part III

On multiple occasions during the 2025–26 academic year, the Board Office, in coordination with University administrators, blocked activities of the Center. I am not an expert in law, but based on my reading of the relevant statutes, I believe that at least some of these actions were illegal, or at least contrary to the spirit of the law that created the Center. I reported most of the underlying facts in a report that I presented at a meeting at the Capitol on April 9, 2026, and sent to Regents Cramer, Hensley, Tjaden, and Lacy on April 13 (see Section 15.7 and Appendix H).

Table 5.3 summarizes the statutory provisions at stake in the episodes documented in this part of the report, and in Part IV. The chapters that follow document each episode, beginning, where relevant, with the statutory provision involved.

Provision	What the law provides	What happened	See
§ 263C.9(3)	The Director may invite guest speakers on behalf of the Center.	The Executive Director asked that Professor Lowery's visit be postponed (Aug. 2025).	Ch. 6
§ 263C.9(1)	The Director has sole and exclusive authority over the Center's recruitment and hiring.	The Center was told to hold off on hiring faculty, at the Provost's direction after consultation with the Board Office (Oct. 2025).	Ch. 7
§ 263C.4	The Center establishes its bylaws, subject to Board approval.	The bylaws posted for the Board's agenda included a provision on expenditure authority not in the version submitted (Nov. 2025).	Ch. 8
§§ 263C.2(1), 263C.3(5)	The Center is an independent academic center and shall offer courses.	The Provost stated that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa" (Mar. 2026).	Sec. 13.2
§ 263C.9(2)	The Director conducts the market assessment.	The release of the assessment was twice delayed at the request of the Board's regent liaison (Apr. 2026).	Ch. 15
§ 263C.8(1)	The Advisory Council conducts the search and submits finalists to the Board.	The Board required three to four finalists and set the search timeline (Sep. 2026).	Ch. 21
§§ 21.5(1)(i), 21.5(3)	A candidate may be evaluated in closed session only at the candidate's request; final action must be taken in open session.	The Executive Committee selected the finalists in closed session, without a vote in open session, after assuring candidates who did not request closure that they would be evaluated in public (Sep. 2026). The matter is pending before the Iowa Public Information Board.	Ch. 23

Table 5.3: Statutory provisions at stake in the episodes documented in this report.

CHAPTER 6

The Visit of Professor Richard Lowery

On multiple occasions during the 2025–26 academic year, the Board Office, in coordination with the University, blocked activities of the Center. I am not an expert in law, but based on my reading of the relevant statutes, I believe that at least *some of these actions were illegal*, or at least contrary to the spirit of the law that created the Center. I reported most of the underlying facts in a report that I sent to Regents Cramer, Hensley, Tjaden, and Lacy, and to Professor Lowery, on April 13, 2026. This part documents those episodes. Where relevant, each chapter begins with the statutory provision at stake.

The first obstacle that we faced was the visit of Professor Richard Lowery. Under Iowa Code § 263C.9(3), the Director of the Center has the authority to invite guest speakers to the University on behalf of the Center.[1]

> § 263C.9(3) *"The director shall have the authority to invite guest speakers to the university on behalf of the center."*

6.1 Preliminaries

As stated above, on July 29, 2025, a day before the Board of Regents decided to appoint me as Interim Director for the Center, I went to Des Moines to meet regents and other people selected by Regent Christine Hensley to be part of the Center's Advisory Council. I returned to Des Moines on August 25 and met the president of the Board of Regents, Sherry Bates, and another member of the Advisory Council. To every future Advisory Council member I met, I gave a printed copy of a document I had prepared on July 20, and subsequently forwarded by email to Regent Hensley, titled "A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action," available in Appendix C. Regent Hensley told me that there were only two members of the Advisory Council she had selected whom I had not met personally.[2] Section 4 of that document, titled "Other Immediate Efforts to Launch the Center," item 4, read as follows:

[1] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

[2] At that time, the members of the Advisory Council were not yet approved by the Board of Regents.

4. Inviting Distinguished Professors for Short Visits. On the research front, we can invite professors from distinguished universities for short-term visits to help shape the Center's intellectual strategy. These visitors can deliver public lectures, participate in workshops, and collaborate with faculty and students to create a vibrant intellectual environment. Their presence will enhance the Center's reputation for academic excellence. The costs of these visits, primarily travel and accommodation, are modest but yield significant benefits in terms of credibility and intellectual vitality.

I also discussed the Short-Term Plan during a meeting held at the Board of Regents' office on August 25, attended by Mark Braun. During that meeting, I highlighted the planned short-term visits by scholars from other universities.[3]

6.2 Why I Wanted to Bring Professor Richard Lowery

As I said before, I was alone at the University of Iowa. I was the only professor who had publicly supported the creation of the Center, and nobody else had any knowledge of or experience with such centers. I realized that I needed help to develop the initial plans of the Center, since it would be harder to come up with everything alone. That's why I decided to seek Richard Lowery's help.

Before August 2025, I had met Professor Richard Lowery only twice. The first time was in October 2023, when I traveled to Dallas to obtain my American passport and then drove to Austin, where I visited the University of Texas at Austin to explore positions that were then open at the School of Civic Leadership, a new initiative there. The second time was in January 2024, when I gave a seminar at that university at the invitation of Professor Carlos Carvalho. He was not, therefore, a friend of mine when I invited him to work here.[4]

My conversations with Richard revealed that he was very knowledgeable about the landscape of initiatives for civics education. He is the most knowledgeable person I know regarding the numerous attempts, and failures, to reform higher education. He possesses an extensive and impressive network of contacts and was, at the time, leading a new initiative with professors from top U.S. universities to enhance higher education. At the beginning of Fall 2025, Richard was free from classes, available for traveling, and interested in coming to Iowa. He offered to assist us and, fortunately, was available to help, at no cost, with the initial planning to develop and shape the Center. He had worked on many such initiatives before

[3] Mark Braun stepped out of the conference room two or three times to take phone calls, and I am unable to confirm whether we addressed this topic during one of his absences.

[4] Over the past year we have of course had occasion to talk on multiple occasions, mainly about matters related to the Center. During that same period, however, I spoke considerably more often with Regent Christine Hensley than with Professor Lowery.

and would be able to help me with a number of things that needed to be prepared for the new Center.

I thought it was a great opportunity to count on his presence to help me develop the initial steps at the Center. For this reason, I planned to invite him to Iowa City to assist me in shaping the Center as one of my first actions.

6.3 Initial Arrangements

My attempt to organize his visit began with the following email.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Tuesday, August 12, 2025, 1:33 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Subject:** Short visits
>
> Hi, Amy,
>
> I would like to invite some faculty from other schools to visit our Center, even to help to develop it.
>
> What do I need to do for this? I would like to pay for their travel expenses, of course.
>
> Please let me know.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

She replied the following.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Tuesday, August 12, 2025, 3:00 pm
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** RE: Short visits
>
> Hi Luciano,
>
> We will need the following information in order to set up a "trip" that will allow us to reimburse your visitors for their travel, hotel, food, etc. expenses.
>
> Business justification/reason for trip/event. Trip dates and destination. Traveler name. Traveler address. Traveler email and phone.
>
> Amy

I took a few days to gather that information, then wrote to her again.

From: De Castro Filho, Luciano I
Date: Thursday, August 21, 2025, 10:02 am
To: Kirkey, Amy L
Subject: RE: Short visits

Hi, Amy,

Can you please create a trip for this professor? I assume that he buys the tickets and we reimburse, is that right? Any other concerns or things to pay attention to?

Best,
Luciano.

Business justification/reason for trip/event: Discussion on plans, initiatives and actions by the Center of Intellectual Freedom.

Trip dates and destination: September 2–12, 2025

Traveler name: Richard Lowery, Assoc. Professor of Finance, University of Texas at Austin, https://salemcenter.org/people/richard-lowery/

Traveler address: Home: [redacted]; Work: 2100 Speedway, Austin, Texas 78712

Traveler email and phone: Richard.Lowery@mccombs.utexas.edu, Cell: [redacted]

6.4 The Intervention of Provost Kregel

A few days later, I received the following email.

From: Kirkey, Amy L
Date: Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 1:06 pm
To: De Castro Filho, Luciano I
Subject: FW: Short visits

Hi Luciano,

I had a discussion with Provost Kregel about some other things this morning and I mentioned that you were having a visitor to Iowa City next week. Given that everything is new here with the Center, he asked for guidance from the Board Office on whether this was an allowable expense. I've been asked to follow up with you about this and to let you know that **outlays such as this need to be approved by the Executive Director of the Board of Regents**. It sounds like we are good to go with the administrative support, the website/communication plan, and the market demand survey, but that **invited visitors need to wait until later in the semester** after some of these other things are more fully developed.

I will await to hear further word from you about this.

Amy

6.5 Trying to Solve the Problem

After receiving the above email from Amy, I wrote to Regent Hensley.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 6:27 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** RE: Short visits
>
> Dear Regent Hensley,
>
> I am forwarding the email I received this afternoon regarding the short-term visits. As you may recall, these visits were outlined in the document I sent you approximately a month ago, titled "A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action." This is item 4 under "Other Immediate Efforts to Launch the Center," found in Section 4.
>
> I believe these visits will be highly beneficial to "help shape the Center's intellectual strategy," as the plan mentions. This is especially true for the first proposed visitor, Richard Lowery, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, who has dedicated significant time to initiatives like ours. He has graciously offered his expertise to help develop our strategy at no cost. I hope we can proceed with the plan we discussed and agreed upon.
>
> I also want to **express my gratitude for your support and for Amy Kirkey's** invaluable assistance during these initial days. **Amy, who sent me the email below, is an exceptional professional**.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Amy Kirkey had assisted the Center from its first days, and I wanted Regent Hensley to know it.

I did not want to allow Mark Braun to interfere so dramatically with the Center's operation. To accept his decision would have meant recognizing his authority to dictate every small decision at the Center. This was a crucial and decisive moment. Had I accepted it, I could see clearly that the Center would become entirely controlled by him and unable to accomplish anything. He would, in effect, become the Center's director.

After thinking more about this, I decided to write the following email to Amy.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 12:22 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Subject:** RE: Short visits

> Hi Amy,
>
> Thank you for your assistance. I understand the decision, but I view this visit as critical for the Center's development. I am so convinced of its importance that I am willing to cover the expenses personally.
>
> Please maintain the reservation for September 2–12 and arrange for the costs to be deducted directly from my paycheck. If the university is unable or unwilling to process the deduction, please contact me, and I will provide my credit card details. Should it not be possible to use my credit card for the reservation, kindly let me know, and I will contact the hotel directly to provide my payment information.
>
> Many thanks,
> Luciano

I did not question the decision not to use the Center's resources, and I was ready to respect it, even though I realized it would set an undesirable precedent. In this email, I did not ask anything from the University: I offered to pay for the visit with my own money, and asked only that Amy help set up the payment. I even said that if for some reason she could not make the reservation, I would do it myself.

6.6 The Email from Mark Braun

I later learned that, after my email above, Provost Kregel called Mark Braun to inform him of my message. Just two hours later, Mark Braun sent the following email.

> **From:** Mark Braun
> **Date:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 2:51 pm
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Cc:** Bates, Sherry ; Christine Hensley; Kregel, Kevin C; Aimee Claeys; Rachel Boon
> **Subject:** [External] Professor Lowery visit
>
> Luciano,
>
> It has come to my attention that you are trying to arrange for Professor Lowery to visit campus from September 2nd through September 12th to help in the development of the Center.
>
> While I appreciate your enthusiasm, **this is premature and should be postponed.** As you and I have discussed, several times, there is a specific **cadence** in the law (HF 437) that was passed creating the Center. As we discussed this past Monday, the initial Advisory Council appointments will be done at the September Board meeting.
>
> After your appointment, the Advisory Council is the next step in developing the Center. They are there to provide direction on the development of the Center. I would venture those conversations will be very insightful to standing up the center.

> Also, the Center needs to develop by-laws so it is clear how things are done when doing Center work.
>
> Just to reiterate our past conversations the **order** should be:
>
> - Hire support staff (if you have not already extended an offer)
> - Appointment of the initial members of the Advisory Council
> - Draft by-laws to present to the Board for approval
> - Search for the permanent director of the Center (run by the Advisory Council with support from the Center and Board Office staff)
> - Do a market survey to gauge the interest in courses and the type of courses
>
> Again, I applaud your enthusiasm, and we all have a vested interest in the Center being successful and complying with the law that was passed creating the Center.
>
> Regards,
> Mark

It should be clarified that the law itself does not determine an **order** or **cadence** in which things need to be accomplished. Although he uses both words in the message above, nothing in the law supports this interpretation. The only thing the law establishes is the deadline for appointment of the Advisory Council, which needed to be completed before December 31, 2025. My understanding, based on how the matter was handled, was that he wished to control the sequence and pace of the actions I was undertaking as Director, rather than that he had any substantive objection to the visit itself.

6.7 The Report Sent to Regent Hensley and David Barker

On August 29, 2025, I sent Regent Hensley and David Barker a report addressing the situation described above and proposing a way forward.[5]

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Friday, August 29, 2025, 12:52 pm
> **To:** Chris Hensley, David Barker
> **Subject:** Document
>
> Hi Chris and David,
>
> I have prepared a document addressing this matter and proposing a way forward. The primary message, though expressed boldly, is a request to "leave me alone to do

[5] It should be noted that, by this time, Regent Barker had given no role in matters concerning the Center. Regent Hensley was the one responsible for the Center within the Board of Regents. I nonetheless kept Regent Barker informed, given how instrumental he had been to the Center's development.

> my work" and a plea for their assistance in advising me on the regulations I must follow.
>
> Could you please review it and share your thoughts?
>
> I do not plan to distribute this document beyond the two of you. After incorporating your suggestions, I intend to resubmit it to Chris only, who may use it as she deems appropriate.
>
> Best,
> Luciano

Beyond the facts already presented above, that document contained my own comments and suggestions on how to deal with the situation. The passages below are reproduced directly from that document.

Sent to Regents Hensley and David Barker, August 29, 2025.

I called Amy on Thursday, August 28, and asked what had happened after she received my email. She said she forwarded my email of August 27 at 12:22 pm to Provost Kregel, and that he then contacted Mark Braun. The next thing she heard was that Kregel forwarded her the email above from Braun.

In my view, this sequence of events shows beyond a reasonable doubt that Kevin Kregel was attempting to undermine the Center. I base this on the following observations.

1. Many other expenses, including purchasing monitors and computers, hiring a web designer, and advertising for assistant positions, were approved without difficulty. These expenses would be submitted to Mark Braun for administrative approval, as he had informed me during our conversation on July 29.
2. Instead of simply approving Professor Lowery's visit and treating it as another expense, Kregel contacted Mark Braun to question it. As a result of that conversation, Amy Kirkey was told the visit could not go through, resulting in her email of August 26.
3. After seeing my message offering to cover the expenses with my own money, Kregel could have simply instructed Amy to help me provide my credit card details to the hotel, or told me to contact the hotel directly. Instead, he contacted Mark Braun again.
4. Kevin Kregel understands that neither he, nor Mark Braun, nor anyone else can dictate how I choose to spend my personal funds, and that I am free to speak with whomever I choose. Instead of respecting that freedom, he chose to provoke Mark Braun into attempting to stop Professor

Lowery's visit, as evidenced by Braun's email above.

5. Kevin Kregel has no oversight or responsibility over the Center. It is difficult to see why he would contact Mark Braun twice to prevent this visit, even challenging my personal autonomy, except as a deliberate attempt to undermine the Center.

Regarding Mark Braun's motives, I considered two possibilities: that he was influenced by Kevin Kregel into acting to prevent the trip, or that he was independently interested in undermining the Center's progress. I believed the first possibility was more likely, though I could not rule out the second.

My thoughts at the time, also recorded in that same document, were as follows.

My thinking at the time, August 29, 2025.

I hoped for two things: that Kevin Kregel would be told to stop trying to interfere with the Center, and that Mark Braun would write to everyone he had copied on his email, stating that he had misunderstood the situation and that the trip was fully approved using Center resources.

I lacked the authority to make these arrangements myself, but I confirmed that, barring alternative funding, I would personally cover the costs of Professor Lowery's visit if his personal plans remained unchanged, and that he would be in Iowa City from September 2–12, 2025 as planned. I believed this reflected my own assessment of the visit's value, and I hoped the Board of Regents would be receptive to hosting both of us and assisting in developing documents for the Center and its Advisory Council.

I set out several further points on which I believed it was essential to reach a mutual understanding going forward.

First, Mark Braun's email used the terms "cadence" and "order." However, the law does not imply a specific sequence for these actions. While it includes deadlines, such as for the appointment of the Advisory Council, it does not mandate a strict order of operations.

Second, the legislators established the Center outside the University of Iowa specifically to prevent administrators from that institution from interfering in its affairs. This is a critical aspect of the bill.

Third, Section 10 of House File 437 stipulates that "the director of the center shall have the sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process." I interpreted this to mean the legislators intended to preclude anyone other than the Director from second-guessing decisions of this kind, even on significant matters like hiring, and that for less critical issues, it is evident the Director's decisions should not be subject to review.

Fourth, I acknowledged that I was not the permanent director, but served as interim director. Nevertheless, I did not believe my actions would have long-term implications that the Advisory Council could not reverse later if it wished, and I did not believe the Board of Regents, in selecting me, intended for all my decisions to be second-guessed.

Fifth, I deeply appreciated and welcomed the guidance provided by Mark Braun and the Board of Regents' staff regarding procedures and regulations, support that was invaluable given my limited familiarity with these rules at the time. However, I understood this assistance to be advisory in nature, with the ultimate decision resting with me, and I remained fully committed to complying with all applicable policies and regulations. I did not anticipate this arrangement causing significant issues, since it aligned with the clear intent of the legislators, while recognizing that the Advisory Council and the Board of Regents retained the authority to remove me at their discretion.

Unfortunately, there was no intervention by Regent Hensley in this matter.

6.8 Amy's Warning and My Decision to Proceed

After sending the email and report mentioned above, I called Amy Kirkey on Friday morning, August 29. We first discussed a meeting in which I decided on the new assistant, and I then asked for the telephone number of the hotel where she had made the reservation, so that I could give them my credit card to secure it. I told her not to worry about that. She gave me the number, evidently taken aback that I was asking for it, but with a very calm voice and posture. Later that same day, I received another message from Amy Kirkey.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Friday, August 29, 2025, 2:53 pm
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** Two Things
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> 2. **I strongly encourage you to get Mark Braun's approval before you bring your guess to Iowa City, even if you are paying for it out of your own pocket.**

From her email, I was almost certain that she had talked again with Provost Kregel and received the guidance above from him. I conjectured that he had contacted Mark Braun again, which would explain how Braun was aware that I was going forward with the visit.

I ignored this warning. I was going to use my own money for the visit, and Mark

Braun was not entitled to dictate how I spent it.

To emphasize what I said above, I could not accept that he would be allowed to control the Center in this way. If I accepted this precedent, granting him a veto even over how I spent my own personal funds on Center-related activities, he would effectively control everything at the Center, and I would not be able to do anything without his approval. I therefore had to move forward with the visit and demonstrate that I would not be stopped by him. I felt I had to do this because I was offered no other way out of the situation.

6.9 How the Episode Ended

Around this time, David Barker offered to pay for Professor Lowery's travel expenses himself, so that I would not need to. In a phone conversation, he raised the possibility of instead asking Mark Braun whether he would treat the payment as a donation and cover the expenses that way. I rejected this alternative, because it did not address the actual problem, which was Braun's attempt to assert control over the Center. Structuring the payment as a Braun-approved donation would have conceded the very precedent I was trying to avoid, that is, that Braun had the authority to control the center in this way.

Immediately after receiving Amy Kirkey's warning message reproduced above, I sent the following message to Regent Hensley and David Barker. Unlike the earlier correspondence in this chapter, this message was not sent by regular email, but I reproduce it here verbatim since it reflects my thinking at that moment.

Message to Regent Hensley and David Barker, August 29, 2025.

I believe it is crucial to understand the nature of the conversations between Kevin Kregel and Mark Braun. This is essential to determine the extent of Kregel's influence on Braun and Braun's genuine interest in this matter. Specifically, it would be valuable to know whether Kregel forwarded my email about personally funding the visit or if their communication was solely verbal. This is relevant because it clarifies whether Braun was aware of my offer to cover the visit's costs and still chose to send his email. We know Kregel was informed of my offer, but he may not have shared this with Braun. (I suspect Kregel did inform him, but it's possible he did not forward my email, and Braun may not have seen my message to Amy regarding this offer.)

Anyway, the whole thing is very interesting. We must not allow the University of Iowa to establish a precedent of controlling the Center through Mark Braun. This would be against the spirit of the law, and we must firmly prevent it.

Regent Hensley limited her response to informing Representative Taylor Collins of

the matter. Nothing further came of it with respect to Mark Braun: no correction was issued, and no apology was made. I later learned that he was telling Regents that I was "going too fast," framing it as a bad thing.

CHAPTER 7

Hiring Faculty

The Center's ability to offer courses depended on having faculty to teach them, and Iowa Code gives the Director the authority to hire them. This chapter documents my attempt to exercise that authority in the fall of 2025. Within three days of the Center's first inquiry to Human Resources, the process was halted by a directive from the Board office, conveyed through the Provost. The decision shaped everything the Center did afterward, most directly the way its courses had to be organized.

7.1 The Director's Authority over Hiring

Iowa Code § 263C.9 grants the Director authority over hiring.[1]

> § 263C.9(1) *"The director of the center shall have the sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process, and to extend offers for employment, of the Center, and to terminate employment of all staff of the Center in accordance with state and federal law."*

Moreover, in my short-term plan, submitted on July 20 (see Appendix C), I explicitly mentioned that one of the actions I was planning to execute was to hire *temporary* faculty. I emphasize temporary: such faculty could be replaced after one or two years and therefore would not have long-term implications. The Center's ability to offer courses requires hiring faculty.

7.2 Learning the University's Hiring Process

To prepare courses for the spring semester, I asked the Center's Administrative Services Manager, Collin Sawyer, to request a meeting with Human Resources to learn the process for hiring temporary faculty.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 11:25 am
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L

[1] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

> **Subject:** Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Amy,
>
> Can you point me in the right direction regarding creating/recruiting for non tenure track faculty positions for the Center? Just need some guidance regarding our internal HR processes for this.
>
> Thanks!
>
> Collin Sawyer

Amy redirected Collin to Alaina Hanson, the Faculty HR Director.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 2:06 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Hi Collin,
>
> Let me introduce you to Alaina Hanson (copied above). She is the Faculty HR Director and should be able to guide/give you some direction.
>
> Amy

Alaina asked Collin to clarify what type of position the Center had in mind.

> **From:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 2:10 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Thanks Amy.
>
> Collin,
>
> I am happy to help you with this. Do you wish to create a position for a temporary faculty position (visiting/adjunct) or a more permanent position like an instructional faculty position (instructional track-non tenured)?
>
> Thanks,
>
> Alaina Hanson

Collin replied that the Center was looking for permanent, non-tenured instructional positions, and asked about the general process for various appointment

types.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 2:22 pm
> **To:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Hi Alaina,
>
> I believe the positions will be permanent instructional faculty position non tenured.
>
> That said I am looking for information regarding the process of creating positions in general so I can report back to our director with options/timelines etc. so it may be beneficial for me to know what is typical for various types of appointments.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Collin Sawyer

Alaina responded with a detailed explanation of the standard faculty search process and timeline through the university's `jobs@uiowa` system.

> **From:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 2:35 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Collin,
>
> Ok that sounds good. Process wise, if you are doing a search for a regular faculty member, you will use the jobs@uiowa system that is located in Self-Service. To initiate a search you'll initiate a "Requisition" that has the search details including job description, required qualifications, desired qualifications, salary range, etc. You will also attach an external ad to that requisition which you will post to external sources. You can begin reviewing applications immediately, but you can't close the requisition until 10 days have passed. You would then submit a request to interview "Pre-Interview Report" which lists the candidates you wish to interview. Once you have conducted your interviews, you will submit a "Search and Selection Summary" which is the request to offer. Attached to that form you'll need a draft offer letter, letters of recommendation, and a brief justification for hire.
>
> I can walk you through these steps in a meeting as well if you wish. We are currently revising our recruitment manual, so I can pull snips of that as well to help with the process.
>
> The general timeframe:
>
> - Create requisition (through workflow within 1–3 days of initiation)

> - Job on job line for at least 10 days
> - Request to interview/conduct interviews (as long as this takes you as a Center, it all depends on schedules)
> - Request to hire (Search and Selection Summary), through workflow 1–3 days depending on if there are needed edits
> - Offer made to candidate
>
> You will need to use the jobs@uiowa system any time you are hiring a faculty member for at least 50% effort for at least 1 year. If you wish to hire someone for less than 50% or less than 1 year, you would only need to post a temporary ad (3 day ad) in a separate system within Self-Service.
>
> If you wish to appoint an adjunct to do additional work or teach a class here or there, you don't need to run a search for them at all. If they aren't affiliated with the university, you would need to post the 3-day ad (as stated above).
>
> I'm not sure what your background is with faculty HR related processes, but I am happy to go over these in more detail if you wish.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Alaina Hanson

Collin thanked her for the information and said he would consult with me before following up further.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 2:45 pm
> **To:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Thank you for the information! This is very helpful to us.
>
> Let me run this by our director Luciano and I will reach out with further questions regarding the specifics if necessary.
>
> Thanks again,
>
> Collin Sawyer

Collin's initial reply mentioned permanent positions, but after discussing the matter with me, he clarified that the Center wished to hire four faculty members at less than 50% time, consistent with the temporary appointments described in my short-term plan, and asked to schedule a meeting.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 3:44 pm

> **To:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Cc:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Alaina,
>
> After reviewing your information, I think we will be looking at hiring four (4), less than 50%-time faculty members. We are a brand new center and we have not hired any faculty members yet so we appreciate your assistance to us in this matter.
>
> Let me know when you have a moment for a Teams meeting so can go over a few questions we have and get your advice to get us started.
>
> Thanks again,
>
> Collin Sawyer

7.3 The Process Halted

At this point, however, the process stalled. Alaina reported that she had met with Associate Provost Barrett Thomas to discuss how hiring should work for the Center, given that it was not housed within an academic college like the university's other centers, and that this question would first need to be resolved with Provost Kregel and the Board Office.

> **From:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Date:** Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 8:42 am
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I; Thomas, Barrett
> **Subject:** RE: Non Tenure Faculty Recruiting
>
> Collin,
>
> Thanks for your message. I had a meeting this morning with our Associate Provost for Faculty, Barry Thomas, to discuss how the center will operate since it is its own entity and not housed within an academic college, as our other centers are. He is meeting this afternoon with Provost Kregel to get additional information from the board office on how the center will operationally hire faculty.
>
> This needs to be figured out prior to meeting so we know if the center can directly hire faculty, or if the faculty need to have what we call an academic home (which is a home department in an academic college).
>
> I will be in touch after Barry has had a chance to touch base with Provost Kregel and the board office.
>
> Please let me know if you have any questions at this point.
>
> Thank you,

> Alaina Hanson

Two days later, Alaina informed us that the Provost had directed the Center to hold off on hiring entirely, effectively bringing the process to a halt.

> **From:** Hanson, Alaina R
> **Date:** Friday, October 3, 2025
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I; Sawyer, Collin M
>
> Luciano and Collin,
>
> I wanted to share a quick update regarding next steps. **Provost Kregel was able to connect with the Board and at this time, please hold off on taking any steps toward hiring.** If you have questions in the meantime, please direct them to Mark Braun.
>
> Additionally, the Board Office is currently awaiting the draft bylaws for the Center.
>
> Thanks for your understanding and please let me know if you need any further clarification.
>
> Best regards,
> Alaina Hanson

(Emphasis added.)

In other words, when I requested to hire temporary faculty, an action already included in the short-term plan I submitted to the Regents on July 20, the Executive Director of the Board, through the Provost, denied me the authority that § 263C.9(1) gives the Director. I informed Regents Hensley and Barker, as well as Representative Collins, of this decision.

7.4 Consequences for the Center's Courses

Without the ability to hire faculty, the Center had no instructors of its own. Nor could I fill the gap myself: my teaching obligations remained with the Tippie College of Business, so I could not simply take on the Center's courses. The only remaining option was to organize courses taught by a series of guest lecturers, each responsible for a few sessions.

This arrangement constrained the Center's choices considerably. Courses built from several lecturers are harder to coordinate, harder to schedule, and harder to present to students as a coherent offering than courses taught by a single instructor over a full semester. Some of the difficulties the Center later faced in recruiting students were made worse by this constraint.

Rather than complain, I accepted the constraint and looked for a way to offer

courses despite it. The lecturer model allowed the Center to bring distinguished scholars to Iowa students in its first year, something that would not have happened had I waited for the question of hiring authority to be resolved.

CHAPTER 8

The Bylaws and the Dispute over Expenditures

Bylaws define who holds authority within an institution, and for a center created to be independent of the university that houses it, that question was decisive. This chapter documents how the Center's bylaws were developed in the fall of 2025, the cooperation I offered throughout, and the one point on which the Board Office and I could not agree: who would control the Center's expenditures.

8.1 The Center's Authority over Its Bylaws

Iowa Code § 263C.4 makes the Center responsible for preparing its own bylaws, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents.[1]

> § 263C.4 "The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board."

As the Center's chief officer, the Director was responsible for preparing them. The role of the Board Office, and of Board Counsel in particular, was to review and comment on the bylaws prepared by the Center. This chapter describes how the bylaws were developed between October and December 2025: how my first draft was rejected, how I revised it to incorporate many of the Board Office's suggestions, and how the one provision on which I did not yield, authority over the Center's expenditures, became the central dispute of the process, and remains unresolved.

8.2 The First Draft and Its Rejection

On October 7, 2025, I sent Board Counsel Aimee Claeys and Executive Director Braun the Center's draft bylaws, together with the date Regent Hensley had set for the Advisory Council's first meeting. I sent it at 5:45 pm, four minutes after Board Counsel had written to me, in a message I had not yet read, that she had "yet to receive a copy of your proposed bylaws" (see Section 9.1).

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:45 pm

[1] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

> **To:** Aimee Claeys
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Bylaws
> **Attachment:** Draft bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Hi, Aimee and Mark,
>
> Attached is the draft of the bylaws for the Center for Intellectual Freedom, prepared in accordance with Iowa Code 263C.4. Please review and share any feedback.
>
> Additionally, Regent Christine Hensley has scheduled the inaugural Advisory Council meeting for Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 4:00 PM Central Time. I've notified the council members to save the date and will provide the Zoom link and agenda soon.
>
> I look forward to your input.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Ten minutes later, Board Counsel replied:

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:55 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Re: Bylaws
>
> Thank you. I encourage you and Regent Hensley to reach out to the Board Office to ensure that the CIF Advisory Council is meeting its **legal obligations.** I am concerned that you are presently creating **unnecessary risk.**
>
> Aimee

I read this message as a warning that the Board Office might accuse me of acting unlawfully, although it did not say what the risk was. I shared my concern with Regent Hensley the following day.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 5:40 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** FW: Re: Bylaws
>
> This email from Aimee mentions "you are presently creating unnecessary risks." I understand this as a threat that the board may conclude that I am somehow breaking some law, and they would persecute me for that. She says to get in touch with the board office after I did exactly that. I have no idea what these "unnecessary risks" are.

> Best,
> Luciano.

I was concerned that the Board Office would create obstacles that would make it impossible to hold the inaugural event in December. This concern prompted Regent Hensley to request a meeting with the Governor.

Board Counsel's assessment of the draft came on October 13.

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Monday, October 13, 2025, 3:25 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun; Stephanie Griffin; Rachel Boon; Sherry Bates; Keith Saunders
> **Subject:** Re: Bylaws
>
> Regent Hensley and Professor De Castro: I have reviewed this draft document a number of times, and am confident that it does not represent a form of bylaws that should be presented for consideration by the CIF Advisory Council and/or the Iowa Board of Regents. I cannot recommend Board approval of the current form and structure. I am happy to have further conversations with the drafting team, but it is not a productive use of my time to attempt to red-line the current draft into a workable form.

The message did not identify a single specific error in the draft. The next day, Board Counsel sent Regent Hensley a draft of her own.

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 4:02 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Luciano de Castro; Mark Braun; Stephanie Griffin; Rachel Boon; Sherry Bates; Keith Saunders
> **Subject:** Re: Bylaws
> **Attachment:** Preliminary draft of the proposed CIF bylaws
>
> Regent Hensley: Attached is a preliminary draft of the proposed CIF bylaws. There are a number of sections that need to be fleshed out following further collaboration but I wanted to give you a sense of how I am proposing the bylaws be restructured. I welcome a call with you, Professor De Castro and others to discuss the rationale for the bylaws being structured in this fashion. Stephanie can set up a zoom.

Board Counsel's draft was incomplete, and it contained provisions that I considered undesirable and, in some cases, inconsistent with the statute. See my comments in Appendix D.2. After I flagged those provisions the following morning,

in comments sent to Regent Hensley, Board Counsel circulated a revised version that incorporated much of my original draft. At no point in this exchange were any significant errors or omissions identified in the draft I had submitted.

8.3 Revising the Draft

On Tuesday, October 21, I sent a new draft to Executive Director Braun and Board Counsel, incorporating many of her suggestions. The exchange that followed that afternoon was cordial and constructive.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 3:38 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun; Aimee Claeys
> **Subject:** New draft of bylaws
>
> Hi, Mark and Aimee,
>
> I'm sending a new version of the bylaws, incorporating many suggestions from Aimee.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 3:43 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: New draft of bylaws
>
> Thank you, Professor De Castro. I will review tomorrow and let you know if I see any significant issues. I appreciate you considering some of my proposed revisions. Are you and Regent Hensley still hoping to present these for Board of Regents approval during the November meeting?

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 3:55 pm
> **To:** Aimee Claeys
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** RE: Re: New draft of bylaws
>
> Yes, this is the plan.
>
> As Mark said in our previous meeting, I understand that there is some flexibility with respect to the deadline and we still have a couple days to finalize this.

> Best regards,
> Luciano.

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 3:57 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: Re: New draft of bylaws
>
> Excellent. I will begin drafting a shell docket memo. Let us know when you identify a date for the Advisory Council meeting at which these will be considered, assuming that is still the plan.

Two days later, Board Counsel returned the draft with comments from Executive Director Braun and Chief Academic Officer Rachel Boon, and asked for the final version for the Board's November docket.

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Thursday, October 23, 2025, 8:12 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley; Stephanie Griffin; Rachel Boon
> **Subject:** Re: Re: New draft of bylaws
>
> Professor De Castro: The attached contains additional comments from Executive Director Braun and CAO Boon. I have nothing further to add beyond what I included in my original recommended bylaws. I am working on a docket memorandum for the November meeting, so please provide the final proposed bylaws as soon as reasonably possible.

I replied that night, after incorporating most of the suggestions. Some of the comments, however, revealed a fundamentally different understanding of the Center's relationship with the University, and I explained in an attached document why I could not adopt them.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, October 24, 2025, 1:45 am
> **To:** Aimee Claeys
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley; Stephanie Griffin; Rachel Boon
> **Subject:** RE: Re: New draft of bylaws
>
> Hi, Aimee and Rachel,

> Thank you for your feedback. I noticed that the document contains comments only from Rachel, so I will address my response to her.
>
> Rachel,
>
> I've incorporated most of your suggestions into the revised document. However, I couldn't implement a few, which are detailed in the annexed document.
>
> I am glad you made those comments, because they prove beyond any doubt the importance of retaining the Articles I've advocated for. As I previously emphasized, ambiguity in these provisions could lead to confusion in future interactions between the Center and the University, resulting in significant additional work for all involved.
>
> Your comments validate my concerns about this risk, and I'm grateful for this. Notably, in some critical areas, your understanding of the issues is very different from mine. In my responses to your comments, I explain why I believe certain suggestions should not be adopted and why my proposed approach better supports the Center's operations while aligning with applicable law.
>
> Thank you for your collaboration.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The comments I could not adopt included several provisions that would have created serious problems for the Center's operation:

1. The Board Office suggested providing that "all finalists [to the search of a permanent director] may have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at the University, at the rank of Professor." The accompanying comment explained: "Highly qualified individuals may come from federal or state government roles, first amendment attorneys, judges, high profile 1st amendment experts who have not been in a faculty role." This contradicts Iowa Code § 263C.8(2), which states: "The director shall have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at a regents institution."
2. With respect to the creation of courses by the Center, the Board Office wanted to add the language "subject to existing university and Board procedures for approval of such programs." This seems a minor requirement, but it would give the University the ultimate authority over any course the Center created, contrary to legislative intent.
3. The Board Office proposed to remove the Center's tenure authority, making tenure department-based instead. Since departments could block any appointment, this would have prevented the Center from hiring tenure-eligible faculty, also contrary to legislative intent.
4. Disputes between the Center and the University are inevitable. The Center proposed that such disputes be mediated by the Chair of the Advisory Council, with unresolved matters referred to the Board. The Board Office insisted that

disputes be resolved by the Executive Director, who, as described in Chapter 6, had already shown a disposition to favor the University's interests.

8.4 The Central Dispute: Authority over Expenditures

8.4.1 The Executive Director's Approval Requirement

The most contentious issue in the negotiations concerned authority over the Center's expenditures. It had been present from the start. On July 29, 2025, the day I first met Executive Director Braun, he told me that the University requires approval for expenditures, and commented: "It seems just so natural that I would be the person approving the expenses" (Section 4.2). At the time, I viewed this as a routine administrative arrangement. I later came to understand that it was, in practice, a mechanism for controlling the Center's operations. Every expenditure of the Center came to be treated as subject to his approval, including a parking permit for a guest lecturer costing $11.25, which required an inter-departmental requisition signed by the Executive Director:[2]

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Monday, May 4, 2026, 9:23 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Docusign Inter-Departmental Requisition Form
>
> All,
>
> Please review and sign the Parking and Transportation Inter-Departmental Requisition Form.
>
> This requisition is to prepay for a guest lecturers parking at the IMU parking ramp.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Collin Sawyer
> Administrative Services Manager – Center for Intellectual Freedom

The University repeatedly insisted on this requirement. On the same day I submitted the first draft of the bylaws, the University's Director of Finance and Budget Operations wrote to the Center's Administrative Services Manager:

> **From:** Suzanne Stratton
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 1:39 pm
> **To:** Collin Sawyer
> **Subject:** Follow Up

[2]The amount appears on the DocuSign requisition form circulated for signature on May 4, 2026.

> I just wanted to follow up after our meeting today, if you ever have any questions on policy, spending, balances, etc. please don't hesitate to reach out to me. Happy to help in any way I can. I also want to reiterate that **we should not be spending money on events or travel without receiving prior approval from Mark Braun**, if there is ever a time where money is spent prior to approval we will need to address that quickly to get the proper approval.
>
> Thanks!
> Suzanne Stratton
> Director, Finance & Budget Operations
> Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

The same requirement extended to the Center's private donations. The University of Iowa Center for Advancement (UICA) declined to respond to the Center's staff on matters related to the balances of or deposits to its gift account, requiring all such communication to pass through Suzanne Stratton. When I asked to serve as the account's controller, UICA referred me to her without offering any alternative. The "intent language" defined for the account read:

> To be used to support the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the discretion of the Director of the Center, with expenditures subject to prior **approval by the Executive Director of the Board of Regents**.

8.4.2 The Provision in the Bylaws

To settle the question, I sought explicit language in the bylaws vesting authority over the Center's expenditures in its Director. The draft of October 18, 2025, contained a provision stating that the authority for the use of funds resides with the Director. The justification was straightforward: as the University's Director of Finance and Budget Operations confirmed in an October meeting, most expenditures at the University of Iowa are managed at the college level, with the sole exception of deans' travel. The provision would simply apply the same standard to the Center. The Board Office rejected it.

After intense negotiations, I sent revised bylaws on October 30. They were included in the agenda for the Board of Regents meeting of November 11–13, 2025,[3] whose agenda item stated:

> Iowa Code 263C.4 also requires that bylaws be established for the Center, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents. Interim Director De Castro prepared the proposed bylaws contained in Attachment A.

[3] *Meeting Agenda, November 11–13, 2025*.

8.4.3 The Altered Attachment

The version posted as Attachment A, however, differed from the version I had submitted, as Figure 8.1 shows. In Article XI (Finance), Section 1, the version altered by the Board Office (Figure 8.1b) differs from the one I submitted (Figure 8.1a): the paragraph is centered rather than justified, and it adds, in a different font, the sentence "**Approval authority for expenditures is with the Executive Director of the Board.**" This was precisely the point on which the Board Office and I disagreed, and it would have given the Executive Director ultimate control over the Center's funds.

Article XI – Finance

Section 1. Any moneys appropriated to the Center, and any private and external donations to the Center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the Center.

Section 2. The Director may require additional funding to operate the Center, which shall be provided by the Regents institutions, subject to approval of the Board.

Section 3. The Director of the Center shall propose an annual budget and provide an annual report of expenditures to the Board.

(a) Article XI as prepared by the Center and submitted by its Director.

Article XI – Finance

Section 1. Any moneys appropriated to the Center, and any private and external donations to the Center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the Center. Approval authority for expenditures is with the Executive Director of the Board.

Section 2. The Director may require additional funding to operate the Center, which shall be provided by the Regents institutions, subject to approval of the Board.

Section 3. The Director of the Center shall propose an annual budget and report that is subject to the approval of the Advisory Council and the Board.

(b) The document as altered by the Board Office.

Figure 8.1: Comparison of the Center's bylaws, before and after modification by the Board Office.

Upon discovering the alteration, I wrote to the Executive Director on November 4, asking that the version I had submitted be substituted:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025, 4:54 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Correction to Board of Regents Agenda (Nov 11–13)

> Executive Director Mark Braun,
>
> In the Board of Regents meeting agenda for November 11–13, released today, the following sentence was included:
>
> > "Interim Director De Castro prepared the proposed bylaws contained in Attachment A."
>
> This statement correctly reflects Iowa Code § 263C.4, which stipulates: "The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board." In other words, the authority to establish the bylaws rests with the Center, not the Board Office or any other party.
>
> However, the statement is factually incorrect: the bylaws in Attachment A are **not** the ones I prepared.
>
> As you know, I have made numerous efforts to accommodate your suggestions. Since the bylaws I previously submitted have not been included, I formally request that you replace Attachment A with the file attached to this email, which contains the **final version** of the bylaws proposed by the Center for consideration and approval by the Board of Regents.
>
> Respectfully,
> Luciano

The agenda document was never corrected. As of the date of this report, the version posted on the Board of Regents website for that agenda item remains the one modified by the Board Office, not the one submitted by the Center.

8.5 The Outcome

At its November 13 meeting, the Board decided to require the Advisory Council's approval of the bylaws before acting on them. The Advisory Council approved them, with amendments, at its first meeting on November 18 (Section 5.5), and the Board approved them unanimously at its December 3, 2025 meeting,[4] without the sentence added to Article XI, Section 1. The approved bylaws are available on the Center's website.[5]

The record of these weeks shows how I approached the bylaws. Board Counsel's first response to my draft was to declare it unworkable without identifying a single specific error, and then to propose her own restructuring. Rather than reject her draft in turn, I studied it and adopted many of her suggestions, and I did the same with the comments of the Chief Academic Officer: as I wrote on October 24, I incorporated most of them. I declined only a few, and explained in writing

[4] *Meeting Agenda, December 3, 2025*.
[5] *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*.

why each would harm the Center's operation or conflict with the statute. The provisions I defended were not matters of preference; they concerned who would control the Center's courses, its faculty, its expenditures, and the resolution of its disputes with the University, the very questions on which, as the rest of this report shows, the Center's independence would depend.

On the most important of these questions, however, the outcome was only partial. Removing the sentence the Board Office had added did not give the Director authority over the Center's expenditures; it simply left the question unaddressed. In practice, the Executive Director continued to approve the Center's expenditures, as the following chapters show, and the question of who holds final authority over them became the central issue of the reorganization plan discussed in Chapter 19.

Takeaway. I adopted most of the Board Office's suggestions for the bylaws and defended only the provisions essential to the Center's independence. On the most important of these, authority over expenditures, the Board Office altered the Center's submitted bylaws before they reached the Board, never corrected the record, and retained in practice the control it had failed to obtain in writing.

CHAPTER 9

The Inaugural Event

This Chapter describes the many challenges I encountered in organizing the Inaugural Event.

9.1 Training of Advisory Council Members

In early October, I learned that Advisory Council members were required to complete Iowa Open Meetings training by the end of September. Board Counsel Aimee Claeys informed me that a lawyer from an outside firm could provide the training on the first day of the inaugural event (Friday, December 5):

> **From:** Aimee Claeys
> **Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025, 9:49 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Stephanie Griffin; Rachel Boon; Josh Lehman
> **Subject:** [External] Fwd: Ahlers Training
>
> Regent Hensley and Professor De Castro: Ahlers & Cooney is available to provide the required Chapter 21/22 training on December 5. Additional information is included in the e-mail below. Once you have the tentative agenda organized, please forward so we can work this training into the schedule and confirm with Ahlers.
>
> Feel free to call me if you have any questions.
>
> Aimee Claeys
> Board Counsel
> Iowa Board of Regents

At that point, I was still planning the inaugural event and wanted to explore the possibility of moving the training to a more convenient time. Therefore, a few days later, I asked whether the training could be conducted on the following day:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:23 pm
> **To:** Aimee Claeys
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Fwd: Ahlers Training

> Hi, Aimee,
>
> Thank you for this. Could you please see if they could also do on Saturday, Dec 6.
>
> We still don't have a defined program, but having the flexibility to schedule this to Saturday might be helpful.
>
> Thank you,
> Luciano.

Her reply was as follows:[1]

> **From:** Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 5:41 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun; Rachel Boon
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Fwd: Ahlers Training
>
> **No, I am not going to ask** an outside law firm to conduct a training on a weekend.
>
> The fact that you do not have a plan for this event is **problematic.** I also have yet to receive a copy of your proposed bylaws, which is equally **problematic.** I am concerned that you will not be able to meet any of the November BOR meeting deadlines that I communicated on our last call.
>
> Aimee

It should be noted that I had had a plan for the event since July 20, 2025. It was included at the end of the document titled "A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action," distributed to the Regents on that date and reproduced here as Appendix C. Obviously, when I prepared this plan, I did not know that training for the Advisory Council would be necessary. Moreover, small adjustments to the plan of an event such as this are normal until a few days before it takes place. I ultimately decided not to include the training in the inaugural event. Instead, it was conducted as part of the first meeting of the Advisory Council.

The "November BOR meeting deadlines" mentioned above were communicated in a meeting on September 24, 2025. In this meeting, Board Counsel Claeys stated that the Board Office needed to receive the bylaws by Friday, October 24. Since the above email was sent on October 7, it came 17 days before the deadline she had announced only two weeks earlier.

[1] As elsewhere in this report, the bold emphasis in emails was added.

9.2 Difficulties with the Board

Following the difficult exchanges with Board Counsel described in the previous chapters, I called Regent Hensley on October 8 to inform her that I could not organize the inaugural event under these conditions, since the Board Office's approach would consume so much of my time and energy as to make the task impossible.

As a result, on October 13, 2025, a meeting was convened with Executive Director Braun and Regent Hensley, at which it was agreed that expenditures related to the event would be approved expeditiously. After the meeting, Regent Hensley called me to ask my assessment of the outcome. I replied that I was not comfortable, and that organizing the event would be "hell," but that I would proceed as she wished, knowing that the Board Office would continue to create obstacles. This prediction was correct, as documented below.

9.3 Email Summarizing Outstanding Issues

On November 25, 2025, I became aware of an email sent by Executive Director Braun to Regent Hensley summarizing outstanding issues related to the inaugural event. I had not been told of any of these issues beforehand. Some of them were real, such as the late catering order, which I acknowledge in Subsection 26.4.4. But all of them could have been raised with me directly and resolved at the operational level; instead, they were reported to a regent, without copying the person responsible for organizing the event.

> **From:** Mark Braun
> **Date:** November 25, 2025, 8:16 am
> **To:** Chris Hensley
> **Subject:** CIF Update: November 24, 2025
>
> Chris,
>
> Per our conversation yesterday, below are some outstanding updates and issues regarding the CIF Inaugural Event.
>
> **November 24, 2025: CIF Update**
>
> The contract for the rental of Old Capitol has not yet been signed by CIF (sent to CIF on Nov 13).
>
> The catering order was submitted on Friday, November 21. IMU Catering noted that a two-week notice is generally not acceptable but they will provide the service requested; however, there will be limited menu choices due to the order delay. The Thanksgiving holiday break is compounding this problem.
>
> A transportation company has been contacted for Dec 5 and Dec 6 (for shuttle between Old Capitol and IMU). It is unclear if there is a contract at this point.

> Security: UI Public Safety is working with Pentacrest Museum staff to plan for this event. Also, an outside vendor (Best) will be hired, as they will be responsible for controlling entry points and any ID checks that are necessary.
>
> UI's chief procurement officer has signed a speaker "event agreement" with Central Park Speakers (dated Nov 20, 2025). The invited speaker is Christopher Rufo and the agreement is for a speaking engagement on Dec. 6. The fee listed is $50,000, plus $4,000 for travel. The agreement is proceeding through UI workflow and should be to ED Braun for approval within the next few days.
>
> Alcohol: A UICA account has been established for CIF. As of 12:00 PM today (Nov 24), there are no funds in the account (zero balance). This is the account that will need to be used to pay for alcohol that is planned to be served on Friday and Saturday evening. An alcohol order has been submitted to IMU catering. Alcohol will be available for the Friday evening reception/dinner, the Saturday afternoon reception, and the Saturday evening dinner. Wine, beer and a variety of liquors are included in the order. We cannot use the appropriation to pay for alcohol.

Responding to the concerns raised in this email was time-consuming during the most demanding phase of event preparation.

9.4 Interference Regarding the Open-Meeting Designation

Another significant point of conflict concerned whether the inaugural event should be classified as a public meeting subject to Iowa's Open Meetings law. This determination was made by the Board Office **without any coordination** with me, even though I was responsible for all aspects of event planning.

After the decision was communicated, but before the event took place, I consulted Alexander Lee, J.D., Agency Counsel at the Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB). Mr. Lee confirmed my interpretation: the inaugural event did not qualify as an open meeting of the Advisory Council. Following our phone conversation on December 3, I sent Alexander Lee a written summary of the key points we had discussed regarding open meetings requirements for the inaugural event and the Advisory Council.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 2:39 pm
> **To:** Alexander Lee
> **Subject:** Follow-up and confirmation of our conversation, Open Meetings guidance
>
> Hi, Alexander,
>
> Thank you again for the very helpful conversation earlier today. To make sure I understood everything correctly, here is my summary of the key points:

> 1. Public access and pre-registration
>
> We may encourage pre-registration and reserve seats for invited guests and pre-registered attendees. However, pre-registration cannot be a condition of entry. Once reserved seats are filled, we must admit walk-ins on a first-come, first-served basis until the venue reaches its capacity, after which additional attendees may be turned away.
>
> 2. Advisory Council sessions
>
> The Advisory Council was created by HF 437 (attached) primarily to conduct the search for a permanent director. The vast majority of the event program consists of national-level panels and presentations by external speakers about Universities in general and other civic institutes. These are topics over which the Advisory Council has no authority. These portions therefore do not constitute Council business and are not subject to Chapter 21.
>
> I didn't mention explicitly this in our conversation, but there is only one session (Saturday 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.) specifically about the Center for Intellectual Freedom. The plan is to talk about the rationale and the process for creating the Center. There will be no deliberation or direct discussion about the search for a permanent director. While no formal Council business is planned, a majority of Advisory Council members will be in attendance. To err on the side of transparency, we will treat this one-hour session as an open public meeting.
>
> 3. Executive Committee and closed sessions
>
> The Executive Committee is likely subject to open-meetings requirements when a quorum discusses Council business. A closed session is permissible (for example, when interviewing candidates), and the presence of a lawyer is not required for this. (The presence of a lawyer is required, for instance, if the discussion involves actual or impending litigation.)
>
> Did I capture this accurately? Many thanks again for your time and guidance. It is greatly appreciated.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano
>
> Luciano I. de Castro
> Professor of Economics and Interim Director
> Center for Intellectual Freedom

Alexander Lee replied the same afternoon, confirming my understanding on each point and providing additional statutory detail.

> **From:** Alexander Lee
> **Date:** Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 4:24 pm

To: Luciano de Castro
Subject: RE: [External] Follow-up and confirmation of our conversation, Open Meetings guidance

Good afternoon,

I'll address each point separately:

1. You're correct that pre-registration can't be a condition of entry and, as stated over the phone, nothing in Chapter 21 appears to prohibit the registration/reservation system you discussed. As for the capacity issue, Iowa Code § 21.3(1) requires all meetings (except for valid closed sessions) to be held in open session, meaning "all members of the public have access." Iowa Code § 21.4(1)(b) goes on to say that meetings must be held "at a place reasonably accessible to the public." Based on these, a governmental body must make at least reasonable efforts to ensure access, including in the selection of a venue. However, it would not be a violation if the governmental body acted reasonably and there simply was not room for every person who wished to attend. In other words, you should try to accommodate if you are expecting a large crowd, but most of the meeting spaces I've visited in working with governmental bodies are still the kinds of places which could only fit a few dozen people, and public access would not require a government body to rent a concert venue if their available public meeting spaces were insufficient to satisfy high demand.

2. If members are not deliberating on policy-making duties, there is no meeting, and therefore Chapter 21 would not apply. If members are merely present while someone else provides information, or if members discuss something else other than their policy-making duties, there would not be a meeting. Theoretically, members could even present to the public without engaging in deliberation, and this would not be an issue either (e.g. we had a case earlier this year in which a school board provided a presentation to the public to encourage potential candidates to run for an open position, where they discussed what it was like to serve on the school board in general terms from a prepared powerpoint; as they were only presenting information, there was no deliberation and therefore no meeting).

3. If you were holding a closed session, you would need to include it on your agenda for the meeting, and either two-thirds of the council or all council members present would need to vote in favor of closure in order to enter a closed session. They would also need to cite at least one closed session justification from the Code. You're correct that a closed session could be held to interview a candidate for the director position, assuming the candidate asks for a closed session and the purpose was to avoid reputational injury to the candidate. No lawyer would be required; this is only for Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(c), which allows closure "[t]o discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of the governmental body in that litigation."

Best,

> Alexander Lee, JD
> Agency Counsel
> Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB)

This exchange confirmed that the Board Office's position on the open-meetings classification of the inaugural event was incorrect, and that the approach I had already planned to take was consistent with Iowa's Open Meetings law. On December 4, I sent the following summary to Regent Hensley:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, December 4, 2025, 12:44 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** FW: Re: Follow-up and confirmation of our conversation – Open Meetings guidance
>
> Dear Chris,
>
> Before the inaugural event, I won't have time to formally challenge the Board Office's interpretation, and that's not my usual approach anyway. **When I encounter an obstacle, I prefer to find a practical way forward rather than get stuck in disputes**.
>
> That said, I wanted to briefly update you on a few points regarding the open-meetings and livestreaming issues, so you have the full picture.
>
> 1. Livestreaming misunderstanding
>
> Josh Lehman informed Nicholas (UI) that he should not livestream the event, based on his reading that it was "not required" for an in-person meeting. He appears to have conflated "not required" with "not allowed."
>
> My original intent was not primarily compliance-driven; I simply wanted to preserve a historic record of the session describing the Center's creation. This miscommunication nearly prevented us from recording this historic moment. Fortunately, I was able to make alternative arrangements (details in a separate e-mail).
>
> 2. Open-meeting classification
>
> Both the attorneys who trained us and, more importantly, a counselor at the Iowa Public Information Board confirmed that the inaugural event does not qualify as an open meeting of the Advisory Council. The Board Office's contrary position was incorrect. See below my email to Alexander Lee, Agency Counsel of the Iowa Public Information Board, and his reply to me.
>
> 3. Communication pattern
>
> On several occasions, **the Board Office have chosen not to copy or contact me directly**, even when the matters concerned plans I was leading. Instead, they have routed decisions or concerns through you.

> I believe direct communication with the individual responsible for both organizing events and making day-to-day operational decisions for the Center is far more efficient and professionally appropriate. For my part, whenever I have updates or responses for the Board Office, I address them directly, as I did in three separate emails since Friday.
>
> **I raise this not to create conflict, but because clearer and more direct communication channels will save everyone time and reduce the risk of future misunderstandings.**
>
> Thank you for your continued support.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The highlighted language after point 3 above, regarding the Board Office's failure to copy the Center's director on communications, was repeated on several other occasions. This issue is discussed in further detail in Chapter 12 below.

9.5 The President and the Provost Did Not Attend

Although the Governor of Iowa attended our inaugural event, neither the Provost nor the President did. On November 24, 2025, I personally invited President Wilson, sending my note directly to her office.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, November 24, 2025, 12:44 pm
> **To:** President Barbara Wilson
> **Subject:** Invitation to the Reforming Universities Summit, Saturday, December 6 (Old Capitol)
>
> President Wilson,
>
> I hope this email finds you well.
>
> It is my pleasure to invite you to the inaugural event of the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa: the Reforming Universities Summit on Saturday, December 6, from 1:30–6:45 p.m. in the historic Old Capitol Building in Iowa City.
>
> We anticipate a lively and well-attended discussion with Iowa legislators, policymakers, business and community leaders, academics, and other key stakeholders. A draft agenda is attached (panelist names are still being finalized, so they are not yet listed).
>
> I sincerely apologize for the very short notice. The past few weeks have been entirely consumed with launching the Center, and I have only now been able to extend personal invitations to a few individuals whose presence would mean a great deal, you very much among them. I truly hope your schedule might still allow you to join us.

> It would be a genuine honor to have you there. Please feel free to let my assistant, Collin Sawyer, know if you're able to attend.
>
> Warm regards,
> Luciano

President Wilson's office replied the same afternoon, declining on the grounds of a scheduling conflict.

> **From:** Sondgeroth, Tracy N
> **Date:** Monday, November 24, 2025, 1:57 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** RE: Invitation to the Reforming Universities Summit, Saturday, December 6 (Old Capitol)
>
> Professor de Castro and Collin,
>
> Thank you very much for extending the invitation to President Wilson. Unfortunately, she will be unable to attend, as she will be traveling during that time and is not scheduled to return until late in the evening on December 6.
>
> Best wishes for a wonderful event.
>
> Thank you,
> Tracy
>
> Tracy Sondgeroth
> Assistant to the President

On the same day, Monday, November 24, 2025, I sent Provost Kevin Kregel an invitation identical to the one I sent President Wilson on Monday, November 24, 2025, 12:44 pm, including the same apology for the short notice. The next day, his office replied that he would not be able to attend.

> **From:** Andrews, Kathryn A
> **Date:** Tuesday, November 25, 2025, 12:05 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Collin Sawyer
> **Subject:** FW: Invitation to the Reforming Universities Summit – Saturday, December 6 (Old Capitol)
>
> Professor de Castro,
>
> Provost Kregel thanks you for the invitation. However, he has a prior commitment and will not be able to attend.

> Regards, Kathy
>
> Kathy Andrews
> Administrative Services Director, Office of the Provost

Two days after the event, at Regent Hensley's request, I forwarded her both of these exchanges for her records.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025, 1:24 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** RE: Invitation to the Reforming Universities Summit, Saturday, December 6 (Old Capitol)
>
> Hi, Chris,
>
> As requested, please find below the invitation I sent to President Wilson and the reply I received.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

Neither the Provost nor the President sent any representative for the Inaugural Event. Their absence was noted by Chris Rufo, the main speaker at the Inaugural Event.

CHAPTER 10

The "Unaccounted" Monitors

Just a few days before the Inaugural Event, and in the middle of all the efforts to make it happen, I had to deal with a serious accusation: that there were **missing monitors** in the Center.

10.1 The initial message to Regent Hensley

Executive Director Braun sent Regent Hensley the following message without first raising the matter with me:

> **From:** Mark Braun
> **Date:** November 25, 2025, 8:16 am
>
> IT provided two computers and 15 monitors to CIF. On Nov 21, there were only three of those monitors present in the CIF space in Calvin Hall. CIF staff were told that they needed to provide the location of the other 12 monitors, as they are UI-tagged property. On Nov 24, seven of the missing monitors were returned to Calvin. **There are still five monitors not accounted for.** In addition, one monitor was dropped (off site) and damaged. It was sent to Surplus.

This matter was raised directly with a Board member rather than with me, clearly implying that I had mismanaged University property. In fact, IT's accounting was incorrect: the Center received only 11 monitors, not 15. All 11 were accounted for.

10.2 My initial defense

On November 28, 2025, following the report that IT had informed Executive Director Braun that 15 monitors had been delivered to the Center, I wrote to Regent Hensley with a detailed accounting of the Center's actual monitor purchases and inventory.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, November 28, 2025, 5:36 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Kregel, Kevin C

Subject: Clarification on Monitors

Dear Regent Hensley,

(cc: Provost Kregel and Executive Director Braun)

Thank you for our recent conversation. You relayed that Executive Director Braun had been informed that 15 monitors were delivered to the Center for Intellectual Freedom. To ensure complete clarity, Collin Sawyer and I immediately reviewed all relevant records.

Summary of facts:

1. I approved and can document the purchase of only 7 monitors (documentation attached). Collin and I reviewed twice my entire workflow and found no approved order for more than 7 monitors.

2. University IT delivered a total of 11 monitors to the Center. Although I wanted the Center to count with more than just 7 monitors, the additional 4 were delivered in advance of the formal purchase orders and most initially without asset tags.

3. The 11 monitors are fully accounted for as of today:

- 8 currently at the Center (3 at my desk, 3 at Collin's, 2 in the common area; photos attached)
- 2 at my home (expressly authorized by IT for remote work), one of them without asset tag.
- 1 accidentally damaged during transport and returned to IT (with no asset tag).

The annexed spreadsheet contains the corresponding serial numbers and asset tag numbers when available.

We have no record or evidence that our unit ever received 15 monitors, and no one contacted me directly with any concern before this matter was escalated to the Board of Regents.

I welcome any audit, inventory, or further questions at any time. Collin and I are happy to provide any additional information or documentation required.

I would appreciate clarification on where the number 15 came from and on the procedure IT follows for assigning monitors to units and tracking inventory.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best regards,
Luciano

10.3 The confirmation from the IT department

To establish this fact, I wrote the following to the IT department.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 4:29 pm
> **To:** Benjamin Held
> **Subject:** Quick confirmation on the monitors
>
> Hi Ben,
>
> I spoke with Zach and Eric yesterday, and they told me that we only ever had 11 monitors in total, and everything is now accounted for (including the 2 that are at my house).
>
> Just want to double-check: is that correct?
>
> Thanks!
> Luciano

Since I did not receive a response, I wrote again:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, December 12, 2025, 2:34 pm
> **To:** Benjamin Held
> **Subject:** RE: Quick confirmation on the monitors
>
> Hi, Ben,
>
> I didn't hear back from you on this issue. Could you please confirm that everything is now clarified and we received only 11 monitors?
>
> Thank you,
> Luciano.

Then he replied:

> **From:** Benjamin Held
> **Date:** Friday, December 12, 2025, 2:50 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: Quick confirmation on the monitors
>
> Yes, we are squared away on the number of monitors. Zach was working still with Collin to update the inventory for specific locations of devices.
>
> Ben

10.4 Follow-up and request for an apology

After receiving the admission from the IT department that they had made a mistake in the number of monitors, I wrote again, this time directly to Provost Kregel and Executive Director Braun, quoting Braun's original email to Regent Hensley and formally requesting a written retraction and apology.

From: Luciano de Castro
Date: Friday, December 12, 2025, 4:10 pm
To: Mark Braun; Kregel, Kevin C
Cc: Christine Hensley; Sawyer, Collin M
Subject: RE: Clarification on Monitors

Provost Kregel and Executive Director Braun,

On November 25 Mark Braun sent the following email to Regent Hensley:

> IT provided two computers and 15 monitors to CIF. On Nov 21, there were only three of those monitors present in the CIF space in Calvin Hall. CIF staff were told that they needed to provide the location of the other 12 monitors, as they are UI-tagged property. On Nov 24, seven of the missing monitors were returned to Calvin. There are still five monitors not accounted for. In addition, one monitor was dropped (off site) and damaged. It was sent to Surplus.

I understand that Provost Kregel has provided this information to Mark Braun. It suggested that we had caused twelve Center monitors to "disappear" and later "returned" them. This accusation implies serious mismanagement or dishonesty.

At no time was I contacted for clarification. As I informed in the email below, I have approved the purchase of only 7 monitors, but IT delivered 11 monitors to us. All 11 monitors have always been accounted for (see attached files).

Raising unsubstantiated allegations of this nature directly with a Regent, without basic verification, is a grave breach of professional conduct and has damaged my reputation.

I therefore request from both of you:

1. An immediate written retraction of the false statements sent to Regent Hensley and any other party;

2. A formal written apology from each of you acknowledging that the allegations were unfounded.

Please send both the retraction and the apologies to me, copied to Regent Christine Hensley.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this serious matter.

> Sincerely,
> Luciano De Castro

10.5 Hensley's comment

A few days after my request for an apology from both the Executive Director and the Provost, Regent Hensley sent me the following email:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, December 15, 2025, 10:41 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Kevin Kregel; Christine Hensley; Collin Sawyer
> **Subject:** Re: Clarification on Monitors
>
> Good morning Luciano
>
> Catching up on emails and want to respond to this email.
>
> Appreciate your follow-up, however, I want to point out that if there is an apology, Mark should not be included as he was passing on information he received from the University. Hopefully there will be a response clarifying how this happened.
>
> Thanks,
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

Regent Hensley's reply sought to shield Mr. Braun from responsibility, on the grounds that he had merely passed on information he received from the University. But that was precisely the problem. Mr. Braun did not ask me what had happened before relaying the University's account to the Chair of the Advisory Council. Had he done so, the matter could have been settled in minutes: as the exchange with the University's IT staff on Friday, December 12, 2025, 2:50 pm confirms, all eleven monitors were accounted for. Instead, unverified information suggesting misconduct by the Center's director went directly to the person responsible for overseeing him. Passing on such information without first checking it with the person concerned is not a neutral act. It is difficult to see this episode as anything other than an attempt to use the incident to criticize me and to damage my reputation.

10.6 Provost's response

Four days later, Provost Kregel replied at length, copying Regent Hensley and Mark Braun, offering an account of how the monitor count had become confused and defending his decision to route the matter through Braun as a supervisory chain of command issue.

From: Kregel, Kevin C
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 2:29 pm
To: Luciano de Castro
Cc: Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
Subject: Re: Clarification on Monitors

Professor De Castro,

Below is a factual response to your recent message and a more detailed explanation of the contents of the message Executive Director Braun sent to you. An IT Manager who is supporting the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) has provided the workflows for CIF technology orders (attached), and he highlighted the relevant orders.

CIF has purchased 11 monitors (10 are active). The current locations of these monitors:

- 8 in CIF
- 2 in De Castro home
- 1 dropped, damaged and sent to Surplus

At one point in August, there were 15 monitors assigned to CIF's inventory. Because of the delay in receiving items from Dell, IT fulfilled a portion of the monitor orders with four monitors (same model) from an order previously placed for the UI's Office of Strategic Communication and then backfilled that order once items arrived. This arrangement was done to help get the Center up and running as soon as possible.

On November 20, the IT team observed that only three of the monitors that had previously been delivered to the CIF location in Calvin Hall were present. Seven monitors were unaccounted for at that point. Because of this situation, IT was unable to maintain an accurate inventory, which led to confusion about the assignment of 11 versus 15 monitors to CIF.

IT provided a list of the missing items to Mr. Sawyer at his request on November 20. Per UI policy (see below), IT needed to know where items had been moved to, and who each item should be assigned to, so that they can update this required information in the central inventory system.

IT staff are required to conduct the following actions per University of Iowa policies:

"At a minimum, the following information will be recorded: date of acquisition, description of equipment, serial number, employee responsible for the device, and location where equipment is installed or deployed."

This policy is not specific to CIF. The IT manager noted that it is important for any department/unit to inform IT staff if they are going to remove non-mobile items from a set location, especially if those items are going to leave campus, so that they can update those records to reflect that relocation per UI policy.

On Monday, November 24, the seven monitors were returned to Calvin and they have now been included in the inventory. The location of those seven monitors

> prior to their return was not provided to the IT staff.
>
> In this specific situation, I directed information regarding this situation to Executive Director Braun, who is your supervisor in your current interim director role. This is a standard practice at the UI. Supervisors are responsible for supervising their direct reports and units. It is a practice I employ with all the deans and directors who report to me.
>
> The tech inventory for CIF is now up to date, and the records have been updated appropriately. Overall, I am appreciative of the IT staff keeping our inventory up to date as they have spent a significant amount of time supporting the technical needs of the CIF.
>
> As the Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Iowa, I have a responsibility to ensure that all university policies, BOR policies, Iowa Code and federal regulations are followed.
>
> Regards,
>
> Kevin Kregel
>
> Kevin C. Kregel, PhD
> Executive Vice President and Provost
> Professor and Collegiate Fellow
> The University of Iowa

10.7 Collin's comments

I forwarded Kregel's response to Collin Sawyer for his reaction, since he was directly implicated in the exchange.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 2:40 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** FW: Clarification on Monitors
>
> Hi Collin,
>
> Please have a look and see if you want to comment anything about this. If you do, please let me know. Of course, please do not reply directly to any of them.
>
> Best,
> Luciano.

Collin replied with detailed line-by-line comments (reproduced here in italics) disputing several of Kregel's claims, most pointedly the assertion that 15 monitors had ever legitimately been assigned to the Center, and questioning why Provost Kregel and his office had any role in reviewing the Center's IT inventory at all, given that the Center reported to the Board of Regents, not to the Provost.

From: Sawyer, Collin M
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 4:17 pm
To: Luciano de Castro
Subject: RE: Clarification on Monitors, My understanding.

See my comments in red.

Professor De Castro,

Below is a factual response (*It is not factual in the sense that we do not agree with several of his interpretations*) to your recent message and a more detailed explanation of the contents of the message Executive Director Braun sent to you. An IT Manager who is supporting the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) has provided the workflows for CIF technology orders (attached), and he highlighted the relevant orders.

CIF has purchased 11 monitors (10 are active). The current locations of these monitors:

- 8 in CIF
- 2 in De Castro home
- 1 dropped, damaged and sent to Surplus
- (*This is accurate, it looks like Kathy ordered (4) monitors for us on our behalf and therefore were not in Lucianos workflow*)

At one point in August, there were 15 monitors assigned to CIF's inventory (*How is this possible when the e-Procurement records only show 6 monitors being requested through August 29th*). Because of the delay in receiving items from Dell, IT fulfilled a portion of the monitor orders with four monitors (same model) from an order previously placed for the UI's Office of Strategic Communication and then backfilled that order once items arrived. This arrangement was done to help get the Center up and running as soon as possible. (*How does this explain why there were 15 monitors assigned to CIF? Regardless we only should have ever had 11 monitors in our inventory at any time.*)

On November 20, the IT team observed that only three of the monitors that had previously been delivered to the CIF location in Calvin Hall were present. Seven monitors were unaccounted for at that point. Because of this situation, IT was unable to maintain an accurate inventory, which led to confusion about the assignment of 11 versus 15 monitors to CIF. (*How do 'missing' monitors explain why 15 monitors were assigned to us to begin with. It doesn't. It did however get them to review their incorrect inventory for us and accuse us of 'missing' more monitors than were ever delivered.*)

IT provided a list of the missing items to Mr. Sawyer at his request on November 20. (*I was provided with a list of their inventory for us, not what was missing. This list showed 13 monitors assigned to us at this time. Again, this is impossible and an error on their part.*) Per UI policy (see below), IT needed to know where items had been moved to, and who each item should be assigned to, so that they can update this required information in the central inventory system. (*We told them you were taking monitors home for work from home and Eric said they would update their inventory*)

> IT staff are required to conduct the following actions per University of Iowa policies:
>
> "At a minimum, the following information will be recorded: date of acquisition, description of equipment, serial number, employee responsible for the device, and location where equipment is installed or deployed."
>
> This policy is not specific to CIF. The IT manager noted that it is important for any department/unit to inform IT staff if they are going to remove non-mobile items from a set location, especially if those items are going to leave campus, so that they can update those records to reflect that relocation per UI policy.
>
> On Monday, November 24, the seven monitors were returned to Calvin and they have now been included in the inventory. The location of those seven monitors prior to their return was not provided to the IT staff.
>
> In this specific situation, I directed information regarding this situation (*Why is Kevin even involved with this and privy to our IT inventory information? From my understanding we are not part of his department and our IT support/HR support etc. is being given to us by provost staff as an administrative function and paid from our budget to facilitate our existence here at the University of Iowa. We do not report to or are beholden to anyone in the provost office hierarchy*) to Executive Director Braun, who is your supervisor in your current interim director role. This is a standard practice at the UI. Supervisors are responsible for supervising their direct reports and units. It is a practice I employ with all the deans and directors who report to me. (*Again, what does Kevin have to do with us?*)
>
> The tech inventory for CIF is now up to date, and the records have been updated appropriately. Overall, I am appreciative of the IT staff keeping our inventory (*It isn't his inventory, it is the CIF's inventory, who report to the board of regents, not Kevin*) up to date as they have spent a significant amount of time supporting the technical needs of the CIF.
>
> As the Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Iowa, I have a responsibility to ensure that all university policies, BOR policies, Iowa Code and federal regulations are followed (*For units under his authority, which is basically everyone but us at CIF*).
>
> Regards,
>
> Kevin Kregel

10.8 Communication with Regent Hensley

A week later, I forwarded Collin's annotated response to Regent Hensley, along with a draft of the email I planned to send to Provost Kregel, seeking her feedback before sending it.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 1:06 pm

To: Christine Hensley
Subject: FW: Clarification on Monitors, My understanding.

Dear Chris,

I'm forwarding the responses that Collin prepared regarding the Provost's email (his comments are in red). As you'll see, he was understandably upset by the accusations, which are unfounded and damaging to our professional reputation.

Below is the draft email I plan to send to Provost Kregel. I'm sending it first to you, so that you can see the proposed response in advance, in the spirit of transparency, before I send it officially. I'd appreciate your thoughts on the tone and content.

Best,

Luciano.

[Draft email to Provost Kregel:]

Subject: Re: Monitors Provided to the Center for International Finance and Development *[sic]*

Provost Kregel,

Unfortunately, several assertions are inaccurate, which has complicated rather than clarified the situation. I want to summarize the facts that were already established as follows:

1. Your IT department reportedly informed you that 15 monitors were provided to the Center. This information is incorrect: we received 11.

2. At no point did anyone from the IT department mention 15 monitors to us. (When staff came to apply asset tags to the monitors we received without tags, they referenced only 13.)

3. Neither you nor Mark Braun contacted me to verify the details before escalating the matter to the Board Office.

I deeply regret that this matter consumed the valuable time of a Regent who generously volunteers for this important public service. While only the Regents have oversight authority over the Center, we can best support them by resolving issues professionally at our operational level. In this instance, that would have meant contacting us directly and cooperatively to clarify any discrepancy internally and efficiently. I also regret that your email appeared to suggest that my assistant, Collin Sawyer, had not handled matters properly. This characterization was unfounded and understandably upsetting to him.

Wishing you happy holidays.

Best regards,
Luciano

She found its content and tone appropriate, and suggested only a closing paragraph emphasizing that the Center's success would also be the University's success.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 1:22 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: Clarification on Monitors, My understanding.
>
> Luciano I appreciate having the opportunity to review. I believe the content and tone are all good. I would suggest adding a final paragraph.
>
> "The Centers success will also be the U of Iowa success, so it is important we all work together to ensure that success."
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

I accepted her suggestion the same day. Even after an episode in which unverified information had been used against me, my response was to seek cooperation, in conciliatory terms.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 2:56 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** RE: Re: Clarification on Monitors, My understanding.
>
> Great, thank you, Chris.
> I'll add that.
>
> Best,
> Luciano.

10.9 Conciliatory message to the Provost

After the above exchange, I sent the following email to the Provost:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 3:01 pm
> **To:** Kevin Kregel
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** RE: Clarification on Monitors
>
> Provost Kregel,
>
> Unfortunately, several assertions are inaccurate, which has complicated rather than

> clarified the situation. I want to summarize the facts already established as follows:
>
> 1. Your IT department reportedly informed you that 15 monitors were provided to the Center. This information was incorrect: we received 11.
> 2. At no point did anyone from the IT department mention 15 monitors to us. (When staff came to apply asset tags to the monitors we received without tags, they referenced only 13.)
> 3. Neither you nor Mark Braun contacted me to verify the details before escalating the matter to the Board Office.
>
> I deeply regret that this matter consumed the valuable time of a Regent who generously volunteers for this important public service. While only the Regents have oversight authority over the Center, we can best support them by resolving issues professionally at our operational level. In this instance, that would have meant contacting us directly and cooperatively to clarify any discrepancy internally and efficiently. I also regret that your email appeared to suggest that my assistant, Collin Sawyer, had not handled matters properly. This characterization was unfounded and understandably upsetting to him.
>
> The Center's success will also be the U of Iowa success, so it is important we all work together to ensure that outcome.
>
> Wishing you happy holidays.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

I never received an apology. I had been accused, in front of the Board Office, of mishandling University property. When the accusation proved unfounded, the Provost's response was not to acknowledge the error of his own staff, but to suggest that my assistant had mishandled the matter. I nevertheless closed my reply on a conciliatory note, emphasizing that the Center's success would also be the University's success. That message received no response whatsoever. It is also worth recording that, in all this time, I never met with the Provost: he never invited me to a single conversation about the Center.

What I took from this episode was that, when information reflecting badly on the Center reached the University's administrators, their response was to pass it to the Board rather than check it with me, and that no one would correct it once it proved false.

Takeaway. An unverified claim that the Center had mishandled University property was escalated directly to a regent without first being checked with the Center's director. When the claim proved unfounded, no retraction or apology was issued.

CHAPTER 11

How the University Administrators Capture the Board

The monitor episode described in the previous chapter illustrates a pattern that recurs throughout this report. Information about the Center originated with the University, passed through the Board Office, and reached a regent without anyone checking it with the Center's Director. The regent then received the University's account as fact. When the account proved false, no one was held responsible.

This chapter explains why this pattern occurs. The second lesson in the Executive Summary concerns the degree to which university administrators, rather than the Board of Regents, are in charge. This is not, in my view, primarily a matter of the character of individual regents. It results from the structure within which they work, a structure that gives university administrators control over the information the regents receive, an advantage in expertise that the regents cannot match, and a range of incentives that reward cooperation and penalize resistance. Under these conditions, even well-intentioned regents tend, over time, to see their role as serving the universities rather than overseeing them.

11.1 Four Structural Problems

11.1.1 No Independent Channel of Information

In any organization, problems that cannot be communicated to those with the authority to correct them tend to grow until they become severe or public. The Regents institutions provide no independent, protected channel through which faculty, staff, or students can bring serious concerns to the Board of Regents.

The universities do have ombudsman offices, but these are subordinate to the same administrators whose conduct may be at issue, and they have neither the authority nor the incentive to confront them. In my own experience with the University of Iowa ombudsman office, initial receptivity gave way, on more than one occasion, to the conclusion that nothing could be done. One person who had led such an office described the situation to me simply: administrators protect each other.

Faculty, even tenured faculty, rarely take their concerns beyond their own units, because administrators control many of the conditions of their work: teaching schedules and assignments, teaching assistants and other resources, annual evaluations and the salary increases that depend on them, and influence over promotion, tenure, and leadership appointments. Each of these can be used to reward con-

formity or to penalize dissent. Faculty who understand this, as most do, hesitate to complain formally. And even a faculty member willing to write directly to the regents would find that the message is handled by the Board Office, and that the regents must then rely on administrators to interpret it.

11.1.2 A Board Office Aligned with Administrators

Nearly all the information that reaches the regents passes through the Board Office and its Executive Director. The Board Office has a natural interest in smooth operations and in avoiding conflict with the institutions it coordinates. One reliable way to achieve this is to align closely with university administrators and present their positions favorably. The Executive Director, who controls the flow of information to the Board, can decide what is shared, how it is framed, and which details are left out.

The episodes in this report show this mechanism at work. The University's objection to Professor Lowery's visit reached the Board Office through the Provost (Chapter 6). The University's account of the monitors reached Regent Hensley through the Executive Director, unverified (Chapter 10). The comments on the market assessment that the Executive Director forwarded to the regents appear to have originated with the University (Chapter 15). The question of copyright over the Center's planned book was handed to the University's lawyers (Chapter 14). And the plan to restructure the Center was developed by the Board Office together with the University, without the Center's participation (Chapter 19). In each case, the Board Office acted less as an independent staff serving the regents than as a conduit for the University's preferences.

11.1.3 The Complexity of Universities

Universities are extraordinarily complex institutions, with academic, administrative, financial, and cultural dimensions that are difficult to evaluate without substantial academic experience. Most regents are accomplished in business, civic life, or public service, but few have pursued academic careers or served as faculty or academic administrators.

This is not a flaw in itself. The regents are meant to represent the people of Iowa, not to reproduce the academic class that governs the universities. But it places them at a serious disadvantage in relation to the full-time staff of the Board Office and the senior administrators of the universities. Administrators can invoke internal policies, accreditation standards, and procedural requirements that the regents have no time to verify; they can use specialized language and disciplinary arguments that sound authoritative and are difficult for non-specialists to challenge. The regents are then left to rely on the very administrators they are supposed to oversee to tell them what is reasonable. The University's comments on the market assessment, which several professors of finance and economics recognized as irrelevant to a study of demand, are an example of arguments that a regent without

academic training would have had difficulty evaluating (Chapter 15).

11.1.4 Incentives That Reward Cooperation

University administrators also control a range of subtle but effective incentives. They decide who is invited to university events, ceremonies, dedications, and receptions. In Iowa, invitations to major athletic events, with premium seating and access to private receptions, carry particular social value. Administrators also organize or control access to private gatherings, such as dinners and donor events, where they can build rapport with regents and frame issues in their own terms.

By extending or withholding such invitations, administrators can create a quiet system of rewards and penalties. A regent who asks inconvenient questions may find himself or herself excluded from meetings and events; a regent who cooperates enjoys continued access. A single regent acting alone has little leverage to resist this. The cumulative effect is a governance dynamic in which the preferences of administrators prevail, with little sustained resistance from those charged with overseeing them.

11.2 A Regent's Attempt to Engage the Provost

The following exchange shows how these dynamics operated in the case of the Center. At the end of December 2025, after the monitor episode, Regent Hensley asked Provost Kregel to include the Center's Director in the University's Council of Deans, where academic decisions affecting the Center would be discussed.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** December 31, 2025
> **To:** Kevin Kregel
> **Subject:** Council of Deans Request
>
> Good morning Kevin,
>
> I am respectfully requesting that the Executive Director of the newly established Center for Intellectual Freedom be included, as appropriate, in the Council of Deans.
>
> As you know, the Center was created to advance core academic values, open inquiry, intellectual diversity and academic freedom, including curriculum.
>
> Allowing the Centers Director to participate would ensure the Center's work remains fully aligned in the University's academic mission and governance structure.
>
> I realize the model for the Center is unique and we are working to maximize its impact.
>
> Thank you for considering this request. Would welcome a conversation.

The request was modest. It asked only that the Director be included "as appropri-

ate," and its stated purpose was to keep the Center aligned with the University's academic mission and governance. The Provost replied three days later.

> **From:** Kevin Kregel
> **Date:** January 3, 2026
> **To:** Christine Hensley
>
> Regent Hensley,
>
> As you may know, the University of Iowa's Council of Deans is composed of just the deans (along with the University Librarian). Each member of the Council reports directly to me in my capacity as the university's Executive Vice President and Provost. On occasion, I invite individuals to participate in a portion of a meeting to address issues of relevance to the deans (e.g., finance and operations, human resources, federal and state relations). Our meetings, however, are closed to ensure candid, confidential discussion.
>
> If there is a circumstance in which it would be useful for the deans to engage with the CIF's executive director during a Council of Deans meeting, I would invite them to participate.
>
> Regards,
> Kevin

The reply was courteous in form, but it declined the request. The Provost did not accept the conversation Regent Hensley had offered, and he reserved to himself the decision of whether the Center's Director would ever be invited. Two and a half months later, he would inform the Center that, because it reports to the Board of Regents, it "cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa" (Section 13.2). The reasoning was consistent: the Center would be excluded from the University's academic governance because it was not subordinate to the Provost, and it would be prevented from functioning as an academic unit because it was excluded from that governance.

What followed is more revealing. According to Regent Hensley, who told me of these developments, she was later advised not to communicate directly with the University's President or Provost. When the Board Office arranged a meeting with President Wilson about the Center, she was not invited, and, as she understood it, the President had asked specifically that she not attend. She also told me that, at that meeting, the University complained that Collin Sawyer had been asking "inconvenient" questions about a vendor that had declined to work with the Center because of "misalignment." I do not know who conveyed this information to her; presumably it was one of the participants in that meeting.

A regent had made a reasonable request on behalf of the Center the Board oversees. The response was not a discussion of its merits, but her exclusion from communication with the University's leadership.

11.3 The Case of Regent Barker

The experience of Regent David Barker illustrates how the structure described above operates in practice. Regent Barker, an economist and real estate businessman, served on the Board from 2019 until October 20, 2025, when he resigned to become U.S. Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education (Miller 2025). More than any other regent, he pressed the Board to exercise real oversight of the universities. Three episodes from the public record show how that effort was received.

11.3.1 The DEI Directives

Regent Barker was one of the three members of the study group that prepared the Board's recommendations on diversity, equity, and inclusion in 2023, including the recommendation that the universities develop an initiative in civic education (Chapter 2). When the Board softened that recommendation at its meeting of November 16, 2023, replacing "develop" with "explore," Regent Barker was one of two regents who voted against the amended language (Draisey 2023). The Board then left the implementation of the directives to the universities themselves, without ongoing supervision by the regents. As Chapter 2 shows, the University of Iowa used that latitude to do nothing on civic education and to rename its DEI requirement without changing it. Regent Barker returned to the subject at the Board meeting of July 30, 2025. Referring to a Fox News report broadcast the day before, he argued that the Board still had work to do on these issues. He recalled that, when the directives were adopted, then-President Richards had announced that the study group would be discontinued, and said that he did not have confidence that the universities would do what needed to be done. He added that he had repeatedly asked President Sherry Bates to have the Board follow the universities' compliance with the directives, and that she had declined. President Bates thanked him for his comments and moved on without further discussion.

11.3.2 The Property and Facilities Committee

Regent Barker was the only member of the Board with professional experience in real estate development and construction, and in 2024 he served on the Board's Property and Facilities Committee, which reviews the universities' capital projects (committee agenda, November 2024). In that role, he questioned the largest facilities project in the history of the state: a new inpatient tower for University of Iowa Health Care, with a budget target of $1.5 billion, rising to about $2.2 billion with equipment (*UIHC to Have 'Honest Conversation about Feasibility' of $1.5B Inpatient Tower* 2025). According to *The Gazette*, he had been questioning the project's scope, scale, and justification for months, including at a closed meeting of the committee on the tower in February 2025 (*Regent Questions UIHC Justification for New Patient Tower Next to Kinnick* 2025).

On May 19, 2025, the Board ratified new committee assignments. Regent Barker was no longer a member of the Property and Facilities Committee; a newly ap-

pointed regent took his seat (appointments to committees, May 19, 2025). As the same document states, committee appointments are made by the Board President, subject to ratification by the Board. In June 2025, now outside the committee, Regent Barker questioned the project publicly at a meeting of the full Board, asking whether federal changes could make it unfeasible and raising its impact on the surrounding area (*UIHC to Have 'Honest Conversation about Feasibility' of $1.5B Inpatient Tower* 2025).

His skepticism was borne out. In September 2026, University of Iowa Health Care abandoned its plans for the tower, at least for the present, in favor of renovating and expanding its existing facilities (*University of Iowa Health Care Nixes Plans for New $2B Inpatient Tower* 2026).

A plausible explanation for the change in committee assignments is that a regent who questioned a priority of the University's leadership was moved away from the committee where his questions carried the most weight. Other explanations are possible, however, and fairness requires noting them. Committee assignments are revised each May, after new regents begin their terms, and Regent Tjaden had just joined the Board. In the same reassignment, Regent Barker was named chair of the Investment and Finance Committee and vice chair of the Audit/Compliance Committee. He had also been nominated for his federal position earlier that month. The public record establishes the sequence of events, not the reasons for them, and I offer the explanation above as an interpretation, not as an established fact.

11.3.3 The Center for Intellectual Freedom

Finally, Regent Barker had done more than any other regent to bring the Center for Intellectual Freedom into existence, as Chapter 3 describes. After House File 437 was signed in June 2025, the Board's President, Sherry Bates, placed Regent Hensley in charge of its implementation and removed Regent Barker from that work. He had been nominated for his federal position, but his confirmation was then uncertain, and in fact he remained a regent for more than four months afterward (*Iowa Regent Barker's U.S. Assistant Secretary Service on Hold Due to Shutdown* 2025). Moreover, he remained a member of the other Board Committees. During that time, the Center's most committed advocate on the Board had no formal role in shaping it.

11.3.4 What the Case Shows

Taken together, these episodes show how much depends on the Board President's power over committee assignments and responsibilities. That power determines which regents examine which questions, and therefore which questions are examined seriously. A regent who presses the universities can be outvoted, as Regent Barker was in 2023; he can be moved away from the subject he knows best, as happened in 2025; and he can be excluded from the work he cares about most. None of these steps requires any open confrontation, and each can be explained in routine

terms. Their cumulative effect, however, is to ensure that the regents most willing to exercise oversight have the fewest opportunities to do so.

I believe this is how regents learn that cooperation with the University is expected. Those who press too hard find themselves removed from responsibilities, cut out of communication, and excluded from meetings: in effect, kept outside the circle in which decisions are made. For anyone who values the visibility and influence the position confers, this is a painful outcome, and the lesson is quickly absorbed. Over time, the Board comes to see the universities' leadership as partners to be accommodated rather than institutions to be overseen. This explains, I believe, why the Board's response to the obstacles documented in this report was, at almost every stage, to accommodate the University rather than to enforce the law that created the Center.

11.4 A Problem for the General Assembly

The problems described in this chapter do not depend primarily on any individual regent. They arise from the structure of the Board itself, and they will persist, whoever its members are, until that structure changes. Only the General Assembly can bring about that change.

The central difficulty is that the Board's governance concentrates influence at the points where university administrators can most easily reach it. The Board elects its own President, who appoints the members of its committees and thereby determines which regents examine which questions. The Board depends on a staff, the Board Office, whose daily work brings it into close and continuous contact with university administrators, and which controls much of the information the regents receive. And the regents themselves, who serve part-time and without academic training, depend on those same administrators to interpret the matters they are asked to decide. The General Assembly, by contrast, has no direct role in the Board's governance once its members are appointed and confirmed. Its laws reach the universities only through a Board whose structure, as this report documents, tends to accommodate the institutions it is supposed to oversee.

The consequence is that legislation alone is not enough. As the experience of the Center shows, a statute can establish an institution, define its authority, and set out its purpose in detail, and still be implemented on terms the universities prefer, because the body charged with implementing it does not see enforcement as its role. Unless the General Assembly also addresses the structure through which its laws are carried out, future reforms are likely to meet the same fate.

There are several ways the General Assembly might strengthen the Board's independence from the institutions it governs. It could give the legislature a role in the selection of the Board's President, for example by requiring Senate confirmation of the President, or by having the President appointed by the Governor or by the legislature's leadership rather than elected by the regents themselves. It could es-

tablish legislative seats on the Board, voting or non-voting, so that the legislature has a direct view of the Board's deliberations. It could give the Board an independent source of expert advice on academic matters, such as the Academic Council described in the next section. Or it could require regular reports to the legislature on the implementation of laws directed at the universities, with the Board accountable for any failure to carry them out.

Each of these approaches raises questions, including, for some of them, questions about the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches, and I do not attempt to resolve them here. My purpose is only to identify the problem and to urge the General Assembly to address it. Whatever the means, the goal should be the same: a Board of Regents that governs the universities on behalf of the people of Iowa, rather than one that represents the universities before them.

11.5 The Need for Independent Academic Advice

These problems cannot be solved by appointing different regents alone, because any regent would face the same structure: the same dependence on the Board Office for information, the same disadvantage in expertise, and the same incentives. What the regents lack is a source of expert advice on academic matters that does not depend on the universities or on the Board Office.

For this reason, I have proposed the creation of an Academic Council to advise the Board of Regents, composed of distinguished scholars from research universities outside Iowa who have no institutional ties to the Regents institutions. The Council would be purely advisory; the Board would retain all its authority. But it would give the regents something they do not have today: independent, expert judgment on academic matters, and a protected channel, through the universities' ombudsman offices, through which concerns could reach the Board without being filtered by the administrators whose conduct may be at issue. Because its members would be respected academics themselves, its advice could not easily be dismissed as political interference in academic affairs. The full proposal, including suggested statutory language, is presented in Appendix J.

Takeaway. The Board of Regents depends on the Board Office for its information, on university administrators for its understanding of academic matters, and on the goodwill of those same administrators for many of the rewards of service. Under these conditions, regents who resist the University are sidelined, and the Board comes to accommodate the institutions it is supposed to oversee. An independent Academic Council would give the regents the expert, unfiltered advice they currently lack.

Chapter 12

Communications Routed Around the Director

Since November 2025, Executive Director Braun has substantially reduced direct communication with me, preferring instead to communicate exclusively with Regent Hensley. I raised this issue in multiple messages, but the behavior continued unchecked.

12.1 Discussion with Regent Hensley

I raised this concern explicitly in the email I sent on Thursday, December 4, 2025, 12:44 am; see Section 9.4. For convenience, I reproduce here only the relevant part:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, December 4, 2025, 12:44 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** FW: Re: Follow-up and confirmation of our conversation – Open Meetings guidance
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> 3. Communication pattern
>
> On several occasions, **the Board Office have chosen not to copy or contact me directly**, even when the matters concerned plans I was leading. Instead, they have routed decisions or concerns through you.
>
> I believe direct communication with the individual responsible for both organizing events and making day-to-day operational decisions for the Center is far more efficient and professionally appropriate. For my part, whenever I have updates or responses for the Board Office, I address them directly, as I did in three separate emails since Friday.
>
> **I raise this not to create conflict, but because clearer and more direct communication channels will save everyone time and reduce the risk of future misunderstandings.**
>
> Thank you for your continued support.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The concern in this email was concrete: the Board Office had decided how the inau-

gural event would be classified under the open meetings law without consulting me, although I was responsible for organizing it (see Section 9.4).

On December 4, Regent Hensley replied:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Thursday, December 4, 2025, 6:28 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: Follow-up and confirmation of our conversation – Open Meetings guidance
>
> Thanks Luciano — appreciate this information. Very helpful.
>
> I will visit with Mark this morning and ask that all communication from the Regent office always include both of us, regardless of the content.
>
> Looking forward to the next couple of days. Will be very enlightening!
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

Unfortunately, the practice of not involving me in communications regarding the center continued. Executive Director Braun sent an email on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 11:18 am concerning intellectual property policies at the University solely to Regent Hensley, without copying me; the email is reproduced in Chapter 14 below.

12.2 First Communication to the Board President Cramer

Again on March 5, 2026, Braun sent a letter to Collin Sawyer rather than to me:

> **From:** Brynn Stroup, on behalf of Mark Braun
> **Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2026, 3:59 pm
> **To:** Collin Sawyer
> **Subject:** Center for Intellectual Freedom Appointments
> **Attachment:** Letter from Mark Braun to Collin Sawyer, March 5, 2026
>
> Dear Mr. Sawyer,
>
> On behalf of Executive Director Mark Braun, please find the attached letter regarding Regents Steve Lacy and Christine Hensley's appointments as the Board of Regents representative to the Center for Intellectual Freedom.
>
> If any contact details have changed, kindly let me know.
>
> Best regards,
> Brynn
>
> ---
>
> *Attached letter:*

> March 5, 2026
> Mr. Collin Sawyer
> Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Dear Mr. Collin Sawyer:
>
> It is my pleasure to notify you that Regents Steve Lacy, Christine Hensely [*sic*], and Robert Cramer have been appointed to serve as the official Board of Regents representatives to the Center for Intellectual Freedom. This appointment was approved by the Board of Regents on February 25, 2026.
>
> The Board of Regents appreciates and welcomes the continued collaboration between our organizations and looks forward to working together in the future.
>
> Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.
>
> Kindest Regards,
> Mark Braun
> Executive Director

I wrote to Regent Cramer asking that the Executive Director be directed to include the Center's Director in all future communications involving the Center.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Sunday, March 8, 2026, 9:55 pm
> **To:** Robert Cramer
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Steve Lacy; Mark Braun; Richard Lowery; James R Lowery Jr
> **Subject:** Request for Guidance
> **Attachment:** 26.02 Center for Intellectual Freedom Letter.pdf
>
> Dear Regent Cramer,
>
> I hope this message finds you well.
>
> Executive Director Braun recently forwarded the attached letter from the Board of Regents directly to my assistant, Collin Sawyer. The subject matter is institutional in nature and pertains directly to the relationship between the Center for Intellectual Freedom and the Board of Regents.
>
> This is not the first occasion in which Mr. Braun has failed to include me in communications concerning the Center. I previously raised this concern with Regent Hensley and asked that Mr. Braun be kindly reminded to route such matters through me as the current director.
>
> I believe that the appropriate professional practice is that institutional and operational issues concerning academic units should be addressed to the unit's designated leader in the first instance. This helps ensure clear lines of authority and accurate information flow.

> With that in mind, I respectfully ask that you consider instructing Mr. Braun to act professionally and include me directly in any future communications or matters involving the Center, with the exception of the ongoing search for a permanent director.
>
> Thank you very much for your attention to this matter and for your continued support of the Center.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

I received no reply from President Cramer. Despite my repeated efforts to raise the issue, Mr. Braun's conduct was, to the best of my knowledge, never addressed.

On April 8, 2026, I learned that Braun instructed the University to change the Center's URL, which was a change that I had requested. However, I was never included on this order and only discovered it after the fact, once I insisted on learning the outcome.

12.3 Second communication to President Cramer

The following correspondence was directed to Collin Sawyer without any prior communication with me:

> **From:** Carolann Jensen
> **Date:** Wednesday, September 9, 2026, 3:33 pm
> **To:** Collin Sawyer
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Transition
>
> Mr. Sawyer -
>
> Attached are three documents regarding the transition of your position to the Iowa Board of Regents.
>
> Please review the documents and let me know if you have any questions.
>
> Thank you,
> Carolann

The documents concerned the transfer of Collin Sawyer's position, as an employee of the Center, to the Board of Regents. Although I supervise him, I was neither copied nor informed; the email was copied instead to Executive Director Braun and Regent Hensley. After learning about this, I wrote the following email to President Cramer, copying all members of the CIF Committee of the Board of Regents:

From: Luciano de Castro
Date: Friday, September 18, 2026, 5:02 pm
To: Robert Cramer
Cc: Steve Lacy; Christine Hensley; Thomas P. Gallanis; Richard Lowery
Subject: Recurring Issue with Communications Bypassing Center Director

President Cramer,

I am writing to follow up on a matter I first raised on March 8 (copy attached for reference),[a] when I informed you that Mr. Braun had been sending communications concerning the Center directly to Mr. Collin Sawyer, my subordinate, without including me. As noted in that email, this was not an isolated occurrence, and it does not reflect appropriate professional practice when a supervisor is bypassed on matters concerning their own staff.

To my knowledge, no corrective action was taken following that email.

I am writing now because the same pattern has recurred, in a more significant form. As shown in the email below, Carolann Jensen contacted Mr. Sawyer directly regarding his position as an employee of the Center. I am his supervisor, yet I was neither copied nor informed, while Executive Director Mark Braun and Regent Hensley were included.

I want to flag this not simply as a matter of professional courtesy, but as a potential procedural concern. HF 437 states:

> "The director of the center shall have the sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process, and to extend offers for employment, of the center and to terminate employment of all staff of the center in accordance with state and federal law."

Given this provision, it is my view that this practice runs counter to the intent of the statute, even if it may not violate its letter.

I am informing you of this recurring unprofessional conduct by board staff, which I now believe may also carry potential legal implications. What action, if any, is taken is naturally a matter for your judgment.

Best regards,
Luciano

[a] This is the email I sent on Sunday, March 8, 2026, 9:55 pm, reproduced above.

Once again, I received no reply from President Cramer, nor from Regents Hensley or Lacy. By this point, the pattern was clear: despite repeated notice, the regents took no visible action to correct these practices by the Board Office. Whatever their intentions, their silence had the effect of tolerating them.

CHAPTER 13

The Center's Status within the University

Although House File 437 established the Center as an independent academic center reporting to the Board, the University continued to treat it as a department under the Office of the Provost. This chapter documents two practical consequences of that classification, the difficulty of obtaining a simple web address and the Provost's position that the Center could not offer courses as an academic unit, and the exchanges that followed when I sought to resolve them in the spring of 2026.

13.1 The Center's URL

The URL issue traced back to a webform request Collin Sawyer submitted to the Office of Strategic Communication on March 6, 2026, asking that the Center's website address be changed from the assigned subdomain to the simpler "cif.uiowa.edu."

> **From:** Office of Strategic Communication
> **Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026, 1:33 pm
> **To:** Montgomerie, Jessica L
> **Cc:** Huston, Kelly S
> **Subject:** Webform submission from: Contact Us
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> Subject: Web
>
> Message: I am submitting a concierge request to change the Center for Intellectual Freedom website URL from intellectualfreedom.center.uiowa.edu to cif.uiowa.edu.
>
> If this url name is in violation of any url naming policy I request a variance to accommodate this request.
>
> In addition, if a redirect could be set up for our courses page to ensure our existing QR codes will redirect to the new URL that would be appreciated.
>
> Please reach out to me with any questions or if further assistance is needed.
>
> Thanks

Jeneane Beck of the Office of Strategic Communication replied to Collin the same day, explaining the university's domain naming policy, advising against the change for search-engine and analytics reasons, and stating that any exception would re-

quire a request from the Board Office.

> **From:** Beck, Jeneane M
> **Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026, 4:31 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** RE: Webform submission from: Contact Us
>
> Hi Collin,
>
> Thanks for chatting a few moments ago. As I shared, OSC is very careful to apply the domain name policy consistently to ensure it reflects the hierarchy of the university and supports a sustainable, long-term strategy of content organization and SEO.
>
> That means CIF needs to use one of the pre-approved domain paths:
>
> *.center.uiowa.edu
>
> *.sites.uiowa.edu
>
> If a shorter name is your goal we could switch to 'cif.center.uiowa.edu' or 'cif.sites.uiowa.edu' but honestly, we would advise against the change.
>
> Michael tells me your current site is ranking well in google search and you may unintentionally destroy that equity by changing domains. Most of your traffic is coming from organic search and traffic that finds their site through organic search stays for a long time (1:19s engagement). Traffic that visits "direct" (meaning they type in the full URL) has a very low engagement (0:18s). So, we would advise against optimizing for "short URL". The sticky visitors use Google.
>
> If Director De Castro is set on 'cif.uiowa.edu', I would recommend reaching out to the Board Office. If the Board directs us to grant the policy exception, that gives us a backstop with other campus partners who requested similar exceptions and were denied.
>
> Thanks again for the conversation.
>
> Jeneane
>
> Jeneane Beck (she/her/hers)
> Assistant Vice President for External Relations

Collin forwarded this exchange to me on March 17.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 1:59 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** FW: Webform submission from: Contact Us

Two days later, I forwarded the whole exchange to Regent Hensley and Professor

Lowery, explaining the background of the issue and asking for advice on how to proceed, since the current URL was, in my view, needlessly cumbersome.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, March 19, 2026, 3:50 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery; James R Lowery Jr
> **Subject:** Fw: Webform submission from: Contact Us
>
> Hi Chris and Richard,
>
> When I hired someone to develop our website, which took 2 months to complete, I was told that the University didn't want to give us a simple URL. Since I didn't want to ruffle feathers and just wanted to get the website running as soon as possible, I agreed and moved on.
>
> However, the URL they gave us is cumbersome. I cannot remember it myself and prefer to Google the Center every time I need to go to the website:
>
> `https://intellectualfreedom.center.uiowa.edu/`
>
> I thought that even for a marketing campaign, for instance, on a bus running on campus, it would be much more convenient to have something simple and easily memorable like cif.uiowa.edu.
>
> In the last few weeks, I asked Collin to make the effort to adapt the URL to this simple one: "cif.uiowa.edu". You can see their response below. (A commented: I didn't ask to invalidate the current url, but only to point to the new one.)
>
> Please advise how to proceed.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Five days later, having heard nothing further, I followed up with Regent Hensley, noting that despite her having told me the matter "was resolved," I had received no actual communication about the URL.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 10:02 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery; James R Lowery Jr
> **Subject:** RE: Webform submission from: Contact Us
>
> Hi, Chris,
>
> You mentioned yesterday that this issue "was resolved," but I wanted to let you know that I have not received any communication regarding the url matter.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

I also submitted a formal request to change the Center's URL to a simpler address such as `cif.uiowa.edu`. The University replied that it would not make the change without a direct order from the Board Office. We tried multiple follow-up requests, but no action was taken. Regent Hensley formally raised the matter in her April 6, 2026 email:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** April 6, 2026
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Three Open Items
>
> Mark,
>
> Per our discussion there are three different items I want to make sure we have closure on.
>
> - URL and request to change
> - Listing of CIF courses in the University catalog
> - Research and intellectual policy (wanting to write a book with various chapters written by professors attending the inaugural event)
>
> Appreciate your response to the above.

No response from Executive Director Braun had been sent to me as of April 9, 2026. He replied only to Regent Hensley on April 8, as further detailed below.

13.2 Courses at the University

I was able to offer courses in the Spring 2026 semester only because I identified a supportive contact in University College who agreed to host the courses through that unit. However, that contact has made clear that this arrangement is not sustainable in the long term, and the Center must ultimately be authorized to offer courses independently.

To explore that authorization process, I asked Collin Sawyer to request a meeting with the relevant University office. Instead of scheduling a meeting, Provost Kregel sent the following email directly to Sawyer, without copying me:

> **From:** Kevin Kregel
> **Date:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:20 am
> **To:** Collin Sawyer
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Kathryn Andrews
> **Subject:** FW: CIF Admin: Subject Code & MAUI Workflow Creation

> Collin,
>
> The request you sent last week to multiple Office of the Provost units has been forwarded to me for review.
>
> Because the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) is an entity of the Board of Regents, **it cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa.** Academic units operate within a structure that reports to deans and ultimately to the provost, and CIF's current placement does not align with that framework.
>
> If CIF is considering additional course offerings in the future, I recommend coordinating directly with Executive Director Braun (copied here).

It is useful to compare this position with the statutory text. House File 437, section 263C.2, states:[1]

> § 263C.2(1) *"A center for intellectual freedom is established as an **independent academic center under the board at the university**."*

The Provost's position that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit" is difficult to reconcile with this statutory description of the Center as an "independent academic center . . . at the university."

Moreover, House File 437 *mandates* that the Center offer courses:[2]

> § 263C.3(5) *"The center **shall offer** at least one three-semester credit hour course in American history and civil government."*

The Provost's email therefore effectively denies the Center the ability to fulfill its lawful obligation.

On March 19, 2026, I forwarded Provost Kregel's email to Regent Hensley and Professor Lowery, providing context on why the Center's course offerings depended on an informal, unsustainable arrangement with University College.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, March 19, 2026, 10:29 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery
> **Cc:** James R Lowery Jr

[1] Boldface in this and subsequent statutory excerpts has been added for emphasis and does not appear in the original text of the law.

[2] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

> **Subject:** Fw: CIF Admin, Subject Code & MAUI Workflow Creation
>
> Chris and Richard,
>
> I wanted to bring to your attention the email below from Provost Kriegel, originally addressed to Collin, who forwarded to me.
>
> Just for context, I was able to offer the courses this semester only because I found support from someone in the University College who agreed to host them through their unit. However, he has already made clear that this arrangement is not sustainable long-term, and the Center must eventually offer the courses independently.
>
> This is precisely why I asked Collin to investigate the process for the Center to offer courses directly. Please review the position outlined below.
>
> Best regards,
>
> Luciano

I have informed the Regents of this problem and have repeatedly asked the Board for a formal position on the question. No solution was presented until the end of August 2026. I was only told that a plan had been discussed between the Board Office and the University of Iowa, without my participation. See Chapter 19 for more on this.

13.3 Other Issues

On April 6, 2026, Regent Hensley wrote to Mark Braun listing three outstanding items requiring closure: the Center's URL, the listing of CIF courses in the University catalog, and the research and intellectual property policy concerning a proposed book.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026, 1:23 pm
> **To:** Braun, Mark
> **Cc:** Luciano I De Castro Filho
> **Subject:** Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark per our discussion there are three different items I want to make sure we have closure on.
>
> - URL and request to change
> - Listing of CIF courses in the University catalog
> - Research and intellectual policy (wanting to write a book with various chapters written by professors attending the inaugural event).
>
> Appreciate your response to the above.

> Sent from my iPad

The following day, Braun forwarded the message to Peter Matthes, asking him to follow up by phone.

> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 6:48 am
> **To:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Subject:** [External] FW: Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Give me a call when you have a few minutes.

On April 8, Peter Matthes replied to Braun, reporting that the URL issue had been resolved with a policy exception, that the course catalog issue could be addressed informally through MyUI, and that the intellectual property question regarding the book remained unresolved.

> **From:** Matthes, Peter S
> **Date:** Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 8:52 am
> **To:** Braun, Mark
> **Subject:** Re: [External] FW: Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark,
>
> The issue regarding the URL for CIF has been resolved and they will receive an exception to our URL policy.
>
> Regarding the course catalogue, MyUI is the de facto course catalogue. That means that courses can, in practice, be added at any time since it is an online entity. University College allows courses to be added this way. For example, their "special topics" courses, such as the CIF courses, are unique and designed to be flexible so that students can access one SH courses as needed.
>
> The process within other colleges and departments are different and they have specific processes that vary from department to department and college to college. The variances are important due to the different requirements from accreditors, licensing boards, and educational needs.
>
> We are still working on the intellectual property question regarding a book.
>
> Thanks
>
> Pete

Braun forwarded this reply to Regent Hensley the same morning, describing it as an update on two of the three items.

> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Date:** Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 8:56 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** FW: Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Update on 2 of the issues we discussed

However, Mark Braun did not write to me: he wrote only to Regent Hensley. On April 13, having received no response from Braun, I wrote directly to him and Regent Hensley, attaching a proposal that I believed addressed two of the three items, and noting that the third, concerning policies I had submitted in February, appeared to have no objections given the lack of any response.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:34 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark,
>
> A week has now passed since Regent Hensley's email. To date, I have not received any communication from you regarding the three points on which she requested closure.
>
> I understand that resolving these matters may be challenging. To help move things forward, I have attached a proposal that addresses many of the issues we are currently facing and, specifically, two of the three points raised in Regent Hensley's email.
>
> The only point not covered by this proposal relates to the policies. Since I sent the three policies on February 17 (a total of just six pages), and I have not received any comments, I assume there are no objections and that we can proceed with their approval.
>
> Once I receive your feedback on the attached proposal, I will be happy to draft an additional policy if needed.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano
>
> P.S. I am also copying Professor Lowery, the other officer of the Advisory Council, as well as Regents Cramer, Tjaden, and Lacy, who serve on the Center's Advisory Council.

Regent Hensley forwarded the chain to me on April 17, noting that the book and copyright issue remained the only outstanding item.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Friday, April 17, 2026, 1:53 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Fw: [External] FW: Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Two of the three items. The outstanding item is the issue of the book and copyright issues.

I replied three days later, explaining in detail why the proposed course arrangement through University College was not a viable long-term solution, why I believed the University lacked authority to define the Center's policies, and how the entire set of problems traced back to the Center being treated as a department subordinate to the Office of the Provost rather than as an independent unit.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 20, 2026, 5:56 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Cc:** Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** RE: [External] FW: Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> I want to reiterate what I shared with you yesterday: the proposed "solution" regarding courses is not viable.
>
> My contact in the University College (UC) has already confirmed that the offering this semester was strictly temporary. We will not be permitted to continue offering courses through UC for three reasons:
>
> 1. UC does not wish to continue the arrangement, they told me the solution that worked for this Spring was a temporary one;
>
> 2. Even if we could continue using UC, the courses would be designated as their courses, not ours. In particular, this implies that the courses would ultimately be controlled by UC rather than by the Center; and
>
> 3. this arrangement does not align with the legislators' intent in creating the Center and directly offering courses to students.
>
> As matters currently stand, the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) cannot offer any courses going forward. The Provost's email of March 17 explicitly states that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa" and, therefore, is not permitted to offer courses. He further recommends: "If CIF is considering additional course offerings in the future, I recommend coordinating directly with Executive Director Braun (copied here)." That email was sent more than a month ago, and no progress has been made.
>
> On the matter of timelines, the policies were submitted to the Board Office two

> months ago. The email below makes clear that approval of these policies was delegated to the University of Iowa. Peter Matthes notes that "We are still working on the intellectual property question regarding a book." This raises a serious question: Why does the University of Iowa have authority to define the Center's policies? In my view, this is highly inappropriate and contrary to the law. If the legislators had intended the University to dictate how the Center should operate, they would not have granted it independence from the University.
>
> Finally, notice that the resolution regarding the URL is merely an "exception." This "exception" is only necessary because the solution I proposed in my previous message was not adopted. I have attached that proposal again for reference. It is important to understand this issue. Right now the Center for Intellectual Freedom is considered a department subordinated to the Office of the Provost. As a department subordinated to the office of the Provost, it cannot offer courses or have the URL I requested. Had the Center been treated as an organization on par with the Library and the University College, which seems much more natural given the bill that created the Center, no exception would have been required. It would have been standard procedure. Additionally, we could offer our own courses, as the University College can. This is why I said that the proposal would solve these two issues.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano
>
> P.S.: Copying Richard Lowery on this as well.

Chapter 14

The Planned Book and the Policies It Required

Even before the Inaugural Event, I was already planning to compile a book that would collect the thoughts of the scholars who would be featured at the conference. I announced this plan during the conference, and the announcement was reported in the press. (Draisey 2025).

Shortly afterward, I received a phone call from Regent Hensley asking who would retain the copyright of the book. The question surprised me. I have organized books before, and this question had never been raised. Organizing an academic book is a considerable amount of work, undertaken to advance knowledge, not for profit. Edited academic volumes typically generate little or no income for their editors; often there are no royalties at all, and when there are, they are modest compared to the effort involved. Moreover, in academic publishing, the copyright of each chapter ordinarily belongs to its author until it is transferred to the publisher, and in my experience the university is not involved in that negotiation.

I asked Regent Hensley why she was raising the question. She explained that Mark Braun had asked her about it. I replied that, as is usual, I understood the copyright of each chapter would belong to its author, and that of the volume as a whole to me as editor, not to the University. She said she would take this back to Mr. Braun and follow up with me.

That conversation began a long process that led me to prepare policies to protect the copyright of those whose work the Center supports. This chapter describes that process, the controversy that followed throughout the spring, and how the University and the Board Office ultimately prevented the book from going forward as I had planned.

14.1 The Board Office Consults the University's Lawyers

Regent Hensley's question about the copyright of the book did not remain a question. In January 2026, it was taken to the University of Iowa's Office of the General Counsel. I learned of this only on February 1, 2026, when Regent Hensley forwarded me a chain of emails that showed how the matter had been handled. Because this chain is important for what follows, I reproduce each message in the order in which it was sent.

The chain begins with a message from Erin Feltes, Deputy Counsel in the University's Office of the General Counsel, sent on January 12, 2026, to Provost Kevin Kregel and to three members of the Board Office staff, including Board Counsel

Aimee Claeys. It contained links to three University policies: the Intellectual Property Policy, the Authorship Policy, and the policy on Ethics and Responsibilities for University of Iowa Staff, which addresses the unauthorized use of University resources.

> **From:** Feltes, Erin
> **Date:** Monday, January 12, 2026, 3:05 pm
> **To:** Kregel, Kevin C; Claeys, Aimee; Griffin, Stephanie; Boon, Rachel
> **Cc:** Marquardt, Rachel A D
> **Subject:** UI Policies
>
> Hi all,
>
> Here's the link to the UI Intellectual Property Policy – section 4 specifically addresses copyright determinations.
>
> https://policy.uiowa.edu/administrative-financial-and-facilities-policies/university-iowa-intellectual-property-policy#UniversityofIowaCopyrightPolicy
>
> Here's the link to the UI authorship policy, which outlines how authorship is determined, particularly when there are multiple authors: https://policy.uiowa.edu/community-policies/research#UniversityofIowaAuthorshipPolicy
>
> Finally, here's the link to the Ethics and Responsibilities for University of Iowa Staff policy, which includes statements regarding the unauthorized use of University resources: https://policy.uiowa.edu/human-resources/ethics-and-responsibilities-university-iowa-staff
>
> Let us know if you have any questions or need further information from us.
>
> Thanks,
> Erin
>
> Erin Feltes
> Deputy Counsel, Office of the General Counsel

Two minutes later, Board Counsel Aimee Claeys forwarded the message to the Executive Director of the Board, Mark Braun.

> **From:** Claeys, Aimee
> **Date:** Monday, January 12, 2026, 3:07 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Fwd: UI Policies
>
> Just FYI.

The next day, Mark Braun forwarded the chain to Regent Hensley, without comment.

> **From:** Mark Braun
> **Date:** Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 11:18 am
> **To:** Chris Hensley
> **Subject:** Fwd: UI Policies
>
> *[Forwarded the messages above without additional text.]*

Almost three weeks later, Regent Hensley forwarded the chain to me, explaining how it had originated.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Sunday, February 1, 2026, 12:44 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Fwd: UI Policies
>
> Here are the links to the Intellectual Policies for the University. This came about when I was discussing the Inagural event with Mark and the first report you sent to me. No other emails.
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

The form of Erin Feltes's message, which offers further information if needed, indicates that it answered a request, and the chain shows that the request involved the Board Office: the message was addressed to Board Counsel and two other members of the Board Office staff, and Board Counsel passed it to the Executive Director within minutes. Regent Hensley's note connects the matter to her conversations with Mark Braun. I have not seen the request itself, so I cannot say precisely who made it or how it was worded. But the essential facts are documented. To answer a question about the Center's book, the Board office turned to the University's lawyers, who responded with University policies, and the Provost was included in the exchange from the start.

This point matters for what follows. As shown in Section 14.5, the Board Counsel later maintained that the Center is subordinate to the Board of Regents, not to the University, and that it is therefore governed by Board policy, not by University policy. In January 2026, however, her office handled a question about the Center by seeking the advice of the University's General Counsel and referring to University policies. Whatever the formal position, in practice the Board Office treated the University as the authority on how the Center's work should be governed.

14.2 Why the University's Copyright Policy Was a Concern

When I read the policies Erin Feltes had sent, one provision stood out. The University's Copyright Policy generally disclaims ownership of scholarly works, but it makes an exception for the works listed in section V-30.4b(2)(b), of which the University "has ownership, or the right to obtain ownership by assignment." Among them are "works created in the context of carrying out administrative duties for the university."[1] My concern was that the University could argue that I was organizing the book because I was the Center's director, and that organizing it was therefore an administrative duty. On that reading, the usual protection for scholarly work would not apply, and the copyright of the book could be claimed by the University.

Money could not explain the interest in the copyright. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, edited academic volumes generate little or no income. This was not a patent on a drug that could bring the University millions of dollars. Neither the University nor I had any financial reason to care who held the copyright.

What the copyright would give its holder was control over the book: whether, when, and how it could be published. If the University held the copyright, it could delay the book's publication, impose conditions on it, or even prevent it indefinitely. That was my concern. It would make little sense to ask distinguished scholars to contribute chapters, and to invest the considerable work of organizing the volume, without any assurance that the book would ever be published. I was not willing to take that risk. Securing the copyright for the authors and the editor was therefore essential to ensure that the book could be published without interference.

At the time, in February 2026, this concern was a matter of anticipation. I had not yet experienced the episode of the market demand assessment in April, when the Board Office asked twice that the release of the report be postponed (see Chapter 15). That later episode showed that the concern was not unfounded: the University and the Board Office could seek to delay the publication of work commissioned by the Center when they disagreed with its content.

The solution seemed simple. The Center's bylaws, approved by the Advisory Council and by the Board of Regents, provide in its Article VIII:[2]

> **Section 6.** The Director shall develop policies and procedures for the Center, subject to the approval of the Advisory Council and the Board.
>
> **Section 7.** The Center's policies and procedures shall be consistent with state and federal law and with the policies of the Board. In the absence of specific Center policies, applicable University policies shall govern to the extent they are consistent with Iowa Code 263C and these bylaws.

[1] University of Iowa Operations Manual, Part V, Chapter 30, Intellectual Property Policy, section V-30.4b(2)(b)(ii); see also the illustrative Case C7 in section V-30.4d. Link to the provision.

[2] *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*.

The word "shall" in Section 6 was, in fact, inserted at the request of the Board Office. And Section 7 made clear how the Center could protect its work: University policies govern only in the absence of specific Center policies. By adopting its own policies, the Center would no longer be subject to University policies in those matters, provided its policies were consistent with state and federal law and with the policies of the Board. I decided to do exactly that.

14.3 Policies

In the following days, I developed three new policies for the Center:

1. Development, Approval, Amendment, and Management of Policies
2. Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression
3. Content Development and Intellectual Property

These policies can be found in Appendix E. The third policy is of particular practical importance, as it directly relates to the book announced during the inaugural event. For developing those policies, I consulted members of the Advisory Council's Scholar Committee, who confirmed that universities do not typically assert copyright over books published by faculty; in academic settings, intellectual property concerns are generally limited to patents and commercially valuable inventions, rather than scholarly publications.

I sent to Mark Braun the Center's initial proposed policies for review on February 17, 2026:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 5:01 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** Draft Policies for the Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Mark,
>
> Please find attached the initial proposed policies for the Center for Intellectual Freedom.
>
> Best,
> Luciano.

Two weeks later, having received no response, I followed up directly.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:56 am
> **To:** Mark Braun

> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** Re: Draft Policies for the Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Mark,
>
> Do you have any comments on the policies?
>
> Best,
> Luciano

Another three weeks passed with no reply. On March 24, I wrote again, this time to Regent Hensley, noting that more than a month had gone by without any comments on the policies.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 10:33 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** RE: Draft Policies for the Center for Intellectual Freedom
>
> Hi, Chris,
>
> I would like to let you know that until this moment I did not receive any comments on the policies sent on Feb 17.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

On April 6, 2026, Regent Hensley wrote to Mark Braun asking for closure on three pending matters concerning the Center. One of them was the policies, which she described in connection with the book, confirming that the two questions were understood as linked from the start.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026, 1:23 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Cc:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark per our discussion there are three different items I want to make sure we have closure on.
>
> URL and request to change
> Listing of CIF courses in the University catalog
> Research and intellectual policy (wanting to write a book with various chapters written by professors attending the inaugural event).

> Appreciate your response to the above.
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

A week later, having seen no response from Mark Braun, I wrote to him again. I attached a proposal addressing two of the three items and noted that, more than seven weeks after I had sent the policies, I had received no comments on them.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:34 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark,
>
> A week has now passed since Regent Hensley's email. To date, I have not received any communication from you regarding the three points on which she requested closure.
>
> I understand that resolving these matters may be challenging. To help move things forward, I have attached a proposal that addresses many of the issues we are currently facing and, specifically, two of the three points raised in Regent Hensley's email.
>
> The only point not covered by this proposal relates to the policies. Since I sent the three policies on February 17 (a total of just six pages), and I have not received any comments, I assume there are no objections and that we can proceed with their approval.
>
> Once I receive your feedback on the attached proposal, I will be happy to draft an additional policy if needed.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano
>
> P.S. I am also copying Professor Lowery, the other officer of the Advisory Council, as well as Regents Cramer, Tjaden, and Lacy, who serve on the Center's Advisory Council.

The Board Office never commented on the policies. Having received no objections in nearly two months, I placed them before the Executive Committee, which approved them at its meeting on April 30, 2026. A few days after that meeting, on May 7, 2026, Regent Hensley informed me by phone that the policies would not be presented for approval at the Board's June meeting. Two days later, I wrote to her to confirm my understanding of the call. On the policies, I explained what the decision meant for the book (excerpt):

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Saturday, May 9, 2026, 5:12 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Clarifications regarding the Thursday May 7 call
>
> Chris,
>
> I wanted to follow up on our call last Thursday to confirm my understanding of the points we discussed.
>
> 1. Policies: You indicated that the policies will not be approved at the Board of Regents (BoR) meeting in June. As I previously explained, this means I will not be able to proceed with the book project. Given the amount of time that has passed, I will now need to inform the authors that the book has been cancelled.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*

Regent Hensley replied within half an hour.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Saturday, May 9, 2026, 5:35 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Clarifications regarding the Thursday May 7 call
>
> Luciano I will respond to all of your items Monday. I want to visit with Mark and others to ensure I respond correctly.

The reply is brief, but it is revealing. My email did not raise new questions; it summarized decisions Regent Hensley had herself communicated to me two days earlier. Yet before confirming them in writing, she wanted to consult Mark Braun to ensure she would respond "correctly." The chair of the Advisory Council, a regent, did not consider herself in a position to answer the director of the Center without first seeking the guidance of the Board's Executive Director. This illustrates the influence the Board Office exercised over decisions concerning the Center, a pattern discussed in Chapter 11.

Her response came on Monday, May 11, with Mark Braun copied. On the policies and the book, she wrote (excerpt):

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, May 11, 2026, 8:09 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun

> **Subject:** Response to Your Email
>
> Good morning Luciano
>
> Following are responses to your email detailing our conversation of last week.
>
> You are correct, the policies will not be on the Board agenda in June. However there is no reason you cannot move forward with the book.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*

Regent Hensley was right that nothing formally prevented me from moving forward with the book. But moving forward without the Center's policies meant doing so under the University's Copyright Policy, including its provision on works created in carrying out administrative duties. Moving forward would have meant asking distinguished scholars to contribute their work without assurance that it would be published free of interference, which was precisely the risk the policies had been designed to remove. Whether that risk could be removed in some other way is the subject of the next section.

On June 3, 2026, Regent Hensley circulated a draft agenda for the upcoming Advisory Council meeting, asking for my input.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Wednesday, June 3, 2026, 7:48 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Draft Agenda for June 8 Meeting with Advisory Council
>
> Good morning Luciano
>
> Here is a proposed draft agenda for Monday. Please review and provide your comments. We need to get this to Josh at the Regent office so he can post tomorrow.
>
> Call to order (remind members this is an open meeting)
> Roll Call
> Approval of Agenda
> Approval of January minutes (Collin needs to attach)
> Executive Director Search (Professor Lowry and Professor Gallonis)
> Board Member Update (Hensley)
> Legislative Update (Hensley)
> Core Curriculum
> Appropriations
> Spring Course Debrief (Luciano)
> Summer Schedule and Activities (Luciano)
> Fall Schedule (Luciano)
> Speaker Series
>
> Any other items you want to add to the agenda?

I replied the same afternoon with a revised version of the agenda, restructured and expanded with several additional items.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, June 3, 2026, 1:49 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Draft Agenda for June 8 Meeting with Advisory Council
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> This is my suggestion of agenda. If you agree, I can ask Collin to send it to the Advisory Council members with the relevant documents and send it to Josh.
>
> Agenda:
>
> 1. Approval of Agenda
> 2. Approval of January minutes
> 3. Executive Director Search (Professor Lowery)
> 4. Board and Legislative Update (Hensley)
>   (a) Members of the Advisory Council
>   (b) General Education Requirements Bill (HF 2800, division XVIII)
>   (c) Appropriations
> 5. Center Updates (Professor de Castro)
>   (a) Market Assessment Report
>   (b) Policies
>   (c) Spring Courses
>   (d) Courses and other activities for the Fall
>   (e) Speaker series
>
> P.S.: Tom Gallanis cannot attend the meeting.

The following morning, Regent Hensley asked that the Policies and Procedures item be removed from the agenda, on the grounds that it was on hold pending the hiring of a permanent director.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Thursday, June 4, 2026, 7:39 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Draft Agenda for June 8 Meeting with Advisory Council
>
> Luciano I would take off the Policy and Procedures. They are on hold until the Permanent Director is hired. Everything else is fine.
>
> I would add to the agenda at the beginning that this is an open meeting and will be live streamed.

I responded the same morning, explaining that the Center's bylaws obligated me to develop such policies and that the Advisory Council was itself required to approve them, and I proposed that the item remain on the agenda for the sake of transparency, even if the Board ultimately chose to decline or defer its own approval.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, June 4, 2026, 10:27 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Draft Agenda for June 8 Meeting with Advisory Council
>
> Chris,
>
> The bylaws state that "The Director shall develop policies and procedures for the Center, subject to the approval of the Advisory Council and the Board" (Article VIII, Section 6). The word "shall" was added at the suggestion of the Board Office.
>
> In keeping with this duty, I prepared those policies. They were placed on the agenda of the last two Executive Committee meetings and were approved at the most recent one.
>
> As the section above specifies, the Advisory Council must also approve these policies. My understanding is that, as a matter of transparency, the members of the Advisory Council need to be informed both that this obligation has been fulfilled and that a decision has been made (and by whom) to put the policies (and other Center initiatives) on hold.
>
> The Board of Regents is, of course, free to handle the policies as it sees fit. It may decline to approve them or remove them from its agenda, but that is a separate decision.
>
> If we were to take out the policies from the agenda, how would the Executive Committee justify not mentioning this subject in the Advisory Council meeting?
>
> Following your other comments, and thinking that you should speak first before passing to others, I updated my suggestion for the agenda as follows:
>
> Agenda:
>
> 1. Roll call and notice of an open meeting
> 2. Approval of Agenda
> 3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting (November 18, 2025)
> 4. Advisory Council membership updates
> 5. Board and Legislative update
>   (a) General Education Requirements Bill (HF 2800, division XVIII)
>   (b) Appropriations
>   (c) Vision of the Board of Regents for the Center
> 6. Executive Director Search (Professor Lowery)

> 7. Center business and updates (Professor de Castro)
>   (a) Spring Courses
>   (b) Market Assessment Report
>   (c) Policies, procedures and proposals
>   (d) Courses and other activities for the Fall
>   (e) Speaker series
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The policies were included in the agenda as suggested, but they never advanced further. They were approved by the Executive Committee in their third meeting on April 30, 2026, as mentioned in Subsection 5.6.3 and in the email above (sent on Thursday, June 4, 2026, 10:27 am), but they were never submitted to a vote of the Advisory Council or presented to the Board. At the Advisory Council meeting on June 8, Regent Hensley informed the council that, apart from the director search and the work on the new general education courses, everything else would be on pause except the speaker series.[3]

Under Article VIII, Section 7 of the bylaws, University policies govern in the absence of specific Center policies. With the Center's policies on hold, the University's Copyright Policy, including its provision on works created in carrying out administrative duties, remained the governing rule, and the protection I had sought for the authors of the book was never put in place. The question that remained was whether the authors of the book could be given the protection the policies would have provided by other means, as discussed in the next section.

14.4 "No Reason You Cannot Move Forward"

In her email of May 11, partially reproduced above (email Monday, May 11, 2026, 8:09 am), Regent Hensley stated that "there is no reason you cannot move forward with the book." This was not the first such assurance. She had already written that she had "confirmed you can move forward with the book" (Section 15.5), in the same email in which she asked that the market assessment be withheld for another week, sent on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 12:03 pm. Regarding this point, I replied to her May 11 email as follows:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, May 11, 2026, 10:48 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** RE: Response to Your Email
>
> Chris,

[3] "Iowa Board of Regents expands oversight of UI's Center for Intellectual Freedom".

> We have discussed the book copyright issue multiple times. You first alerted me to Mark Braun's warning and forwarded the university lawyers' email on the matter, containing the university policies that would give the University authority to assert the copyright. To resolve this, I prepared the Center policies in February, which were approved after I raised the issue again at the April 30 Executive Committee meeting. I consistently stated that I could not proceed with the book without these protections.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*

On May 12, 2026, Regent Hensley insisted once more that I could proceed with the book, subject to University trademark restrictions, and separately asked why I had not planned to compensate the Center's corporate lecturers, which was another running issue.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 10:47 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Response to the Book
>
> Luciano I did review the policy and also had another discussion with Marj. There is no reason you can not move forward with the publishing of the book. As indicated before you would not be able to use University trademarks and if you would want to use the University of logo you would need to get permission.
>
> Also my question on paying the corporate lecturers?

I replied to the last question, about the payment about corporate lecturers, on the following day. This is discussed in Subsection 17.1.2. I also responded with a detailed, numbered account of the copyright issue, pointing to the earlier attempt to delay the release of the CSI market assessment report.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 5:47 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Why I cannot work in the book
>
> Chris,
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> I want to make another attempt to clearly explain the copyright concerns I have raised since December.
>
> 1. Mark Braun informed you that the University may have a claim to the copyright

of the book I proposed to organize.

2. Mark Braun asked the University's legal team to outline its copyright policies and forwarded those to you.

3. Upon reviewing those policies, I recognized that the University could assert copyright over the book on the grounds that I developed it while serving in an administrative capacity.

4. This matters because such control would give the University the ability to block or indefinitely delay publication of content it did not approve.

This is not speculation. There is a documented precedent: the University objected to the market assessment demand report, communicated that objection to Mark Braun, who then twice instructed you to block its release. That report is the exclusive responsibility of the director and is a requirement established by HF 437. Therefore, the University had no standing to interfere. Yet it attempted to suppress the publication and nearly succeeded. The report was released only because CSI operates as an independent entity and decided to publicize it.

5. In anticipation of this dynamic, I proposed policies that would protect the book from similar interference. Rather than engaging with those policies, about which he did not provide a single word as comment in three months, Mark Braun delegated to the University the task of working "on the issue of the copyright." I have an email from Peter Mattes proving this.

6. Mark Braun has told you on multiple occasions that I may proceed with the publication, and you have passed this along. Yet, as you acknowledge in this email, you do not fully grasp what is at stake. For the record, the issue has never been the use of the University logo, which I never had any intention of using. What matters is that no written commitment has been provided confirming the University will not assert copyright. If they have said this to you, I did not see it. In fact, you have stopped forwarding their communications altogether.

7. Without a written guarantee, proceeding would be imprudent. After all the work involved in producing this book, the University could claim copyright after the fact, arguing that permission to 'go ahead' meant only permission to compile a work they would ultimately control. I would have no recourse and no protection. To state this plainly: I could invest the time and effort to organize this book, only for the University to subsequently block its publication. I have no interest in contributing my time and expertise to a work that may never see the light of day.

If Mark Braun and the University truly have no intention of asserting copyright, the simplest way to demonstrate this is for Mark Braun to sign and return the following statement:

> "I, Mark Braun, in my capacity as Executive Director of the Board of Regents, hereby affirm that neither the University of Iowa nor the Board of Regents will assert any copyright claim over any intellectual work produced by Luciano de Castro in his capacity as Interim Director of

> the Center for Intellectual Freedom. Professor de Castro shall retain full and exclusive copyright over all articles he authors and all books or other intellectual works he organizes in that capacity. The University's copyright policies shall not apply to such works, and Professor de Castro shall have the unconditional right to publish, disseminate, and release any such works at his sole discretion."
>
> If Mark Braun signs this statement, I am willing to consider resuming this work despite the five months that have already been lost. If he does not, I will inform the contributing authors that I am unable to organize the book.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The statement I proposed was broad, covering not only the book but all intellectual work I might produce as interim director. Had the Board office considered it too broad, it could have proposed narrower language limited to the book. It did neither. If the Board Office was as confident as Regent Hensley conveyed that there was "no reason" I could not move forward, confirming that confidence in writing should have been straightforward. Instead, the only response was a further verbal assurance, relayed again through Regent Hensley, as described in the next section.

14.5 The Claim That the Center Falls Under Board Policy

On May 14, 2026, Regent Hensley reported that she had spoken directly with the Board of Regents' Legal Counsel, who had assured her that I could proceed with the book because the Center would be subjected to the Board's policy, not the University's intellectual property policy.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Thursday, May 14, 2026, 5:53 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Book Question and Response
>
> Luciano I have had indepth conversations with the Legal Counsel at the Regents office and they assure me you are able to move forward with the book. As you are a separate academic unit you fall under board policy. The board policy strongly encourages faculty, students and employees of Regent institutions to seek to retain intellectual property rights to the articles and report that they publish in scholarly journals and equivalent types of publications.
>
> A question for you is will the faculty be compensated? If so how much and how is that determined.
>
> I will be in Iowa City today but will try to connect in between graduations.

I replied the same day, explaining why a verbal assurance was not sufficient given the documented history of the issue, and pointing to written evidence showing that University Legal Counsel, not only the Board Office, had been actively engaged with this same copyright question for months.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, May 14, 2026, 1:58 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Book Question and Response
>
> Chris,
>
> Thank you for your email. I want to address several points carefully.
>
> **On Legal Counsel's assurances**
>
> I appreciate that you have spoken with the Regents' Legal Counsel. However, verbal assurances are not sufficient here. I sent a written statement yesterday precisely to create a formal record. If the Board Office is confident in their position, the logical next step is to put that confirmation in writing. Oral statements are easily misremembered or later disputed, which is why I am asking them to formalize their position before I proceed.
>
> **On which policies apply to the Center**
>
> The claim that only Board policy applies is difficult to reconcile with the documentary record. On February 1st, you forwarded me an email (email-01.pdf) containing links to University intellectual property policies. That communication originated with Erin Feltes of University Legal Counsel, was forwarded to Amiee Claeys, then to Mark Braun, and then to you. If University policies do not apply to the Center, the Board Office's own decision to have University Legal Counsel prepare and distribute those policy links is difficult to explain.
>
> Furthermore, Pete Matthes wrote on April 8: "We are still working on the intellectual property question regarding a book" (see email-02.pdf). This document shows that the Board Office have asked the University staff to engage with this copyright question from December through April. This is inconsistent with the current assertion that only Board policies apply and the University has no role in this matter.
>
> **Next steps**
>
> In summary, the record documented in this email demonstrates precisely why verbal communication alone cannot serve as a basis for moving forward. Oral assurances are subject to change and, in this case, are already inconsistent with previous written exchanges.
>
> I will be writing to them directly to request written confirmation. If they stand behind what they have told you, providing it in writing should be straightforward. Until that confirmation is received, I am not in a position to proceed.
>
> Thank you,

> Luciano

The assurance relayed from the Board's Legal Counsel was difficult to reconcile with the record in three ways. First, in January, the Board Counsel's own office had sought the guidance of the University's General Counsel on University policies regarding this same question (Section 14.1), which would have been unnecessary if only Board policy applied. Second, the Center's bylaws, approved by the Board itself, provide that in the absence of specific Center policies, applicable University policies govern (Article VIII, Section 7); with the Center's policies on hold, the University's Copyright Policy remained applicable by the Board's own rules. Third, the Board policy Regent Hensley cited encourages authors to retain the rights to articles they publish in scholarly journals. It concerns the relationship between authors and publishers, not whether the University may claim ownership of a work, and so did not answer the question I had raised. Neither the Board Office nor its Legal Counsel ever responded to my request for written confirmation.

Takeaway. The Center's policies were submitted in February, approved by the Executive Committee in April, and then set aside without the Board office ever commenting on them. When I asked for a written guarantee instead, none was given. Throughout, the Board Office did not engage with me directly: its positions reached me as verbal assurances, relayed by Regent Hensley, which shifted from the University's policies to the Board's and were never put in writing. A matter that required a decision by the Board Office, whether to review the policies, approve them, or provide a written commitment, was instead handled through a single regent who, acting alone, could not bind the Board or commit its office in writing. The result was that a scholarly book, announced at the Center's inaugural event, was never organized.

CHAPTER 15

The Two Reports Presented in April

This chapter discusses two reports that were finalized and presented in April 2026: a report on the obstacles I was facing at the Center, and the market assessment report that the Center commissioned from the Common Sense Institute (CSI).

House File 437, section 263C.9, directs the Director of the Center to conduct a market assessment to determine course demand and the number of faculty required to meet the Center's needs.[1]

> § 263C.9(2) *"The director shall conduct a market assessment to determine course demand and the number of faculty required to meet any unmet needs of the center and may conduct additional market assessments as needed."*

Acting under this authority, I commissioned the Common Sense Institute (CSI) to conduct such an assessment. Section 15.1 discusses some difficulties to obtain data and resources to conduct this study. I shared the draft report with Regent Christine Hensley on April 7, 2026. One of the report's conclusions was that a general-education requirement would benefit the Center. What followed was a month-long effort, involving the University administration, the Executive Director of the Board of Regents, and Regent Hensley herself, to delay and, ultimately, to attempt to prevent the report's publication. Sections 15.2–15.6 document that sequence of events using the relevant correspondence. Section 15.7 discusses the report about the obstacles I was facing in the Center, that was also discussed on April 9, 2026.

15.1 Approval of Research Expenses for the Market Assessment

To complete the market demand assessment on an accelerated timeline, the Center needed two modest additional resources: student research assistants, and enrollment data from the University, which the University would provide only at a charge for staff time. On January 27, 2026, I wrote to Regent Hensley and Richard Lowery to explain the approach and ask for their feedback.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 10:24 am

[1] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** Market Demand Assessment Update and Next Steps
>
> Dear Chris and Richard,
>
> I am writing to update you on the market demand assessment and to get your feedback on our approach.
>
> We hired CSI to conduct the assessment for $18,600. While this is a relatively modest amount, the goal is to produce a focused report on an accelerated timeline so that the findings can inform the Board of Regents and the University in time to plan instructional resources, including faculty, for the Fall semester.
>
> At the same time, I want to ensure that the report is as strong as possible. To support this, I would like to hire Research Assistants to contribute to the study. We already have resources allocated for student support across multiple Center projects, and our bylaws allow us to employ students in this capacity.
>
> In coordination with CSI, the work is being divided so that they focus on collecting data from other centers, while we use our own resources to gather information from within the University of Iowa, particularly regarding existing courses. To support this effort, we contacted the University to obtain student enrollment data. They indicated that compiling the data will require staff time billed at $75 per hour. I believe this information is important for the credibility and usefulness of the study and recommend proceeding, even if it requires several hours of work on their end. I would be surprised if the total exceeded 20 hours.
>
> Do you agree with this approach? I would appreciate any suggestions you may have.
>
> In any case, I wanted to keep you informed of these efforts to complete the study as quickly as possible while maintaining good quality, and to seek your input.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Regent Hensley replied the next morning that she was inclined to support the request, but would not approve it until she received a financial statement for the first six months, projections for the following six, and a plan of work.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 7:11 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Market Demand Assessment Update and Next Steps
>
> Luciano I would like to visit re: this request.
>
> My initial thoughts are I would support but cannot at this time until I have the

> following:
>
> Actual financial statement for the first six months, projected for the next six months and your plan of work for the next six months.
>
> Let me know a time that works for you. Thanks
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

I agreed to prepare the documents, but asked for the one piece of information needed to plan them properly: the time horizon over which the Center's $1 million appropriation could be spent.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 10:57 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Re: Market Demand Assessment Update and Next Steps
>
> Ok, Chris, I'm happy to prepare this.
>
> To do this effectively, I need one key piece of information: what is the actual time horizon we should plan for regarding the $1 million? I was previously told that the funds do not need to be spent until June 2026, but I'm unclear on the outer limit. Should we be planning through December 2026, June 2027, or another date? The answer directly affects resource allocation.
>
> I understand that the Board Office is pressing for these details, but I hope by now there is sufficient confidence that I handle Center resources responsibly.
>
> Finally, I just want to underscore that finalizing the report soon is important to requesting additional university resources, including to hire personnel.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The following morning, Richard Lowery, then a member of the Advisory Council, replied to both of us. He considered the expense reasonable and necessary, and expressed concern about what the conditions placed on its approval revealed.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Thursday, January 29, 2026, 8:30 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Re: Market Demand Assessment Update and Next Steps
>
> Luciano,

> This seems like a perfectly reasonable expense and probably necessary to fulfill the legislative mandate. I do think the university is being unreasonable in refusing to be more cooperative about providing data, given the legislative mandate. I see this as just more evidence that they are trying to undermine the center.
>
> I am concerned that we are in a situation where even minor things like this need to be cleared at the regents level, and I am concerned that if the board office is conditioning approval of expenses on increasingly detailed reports, they are continuing to interfere in inappropriate ways. It is clear at this point that the board office and the provosts office are trying to create the false impression of financial mismanagement by Luciano, driven by their hostility to the mission of the CIF. I have seen this game before and I know my concerns along these lines are shared by other academic members of the advisory council.
>
> I think more important than financial statements or approval for minor expenses, there needs to be a serious effort to get the provost and executive director to cease efforts to undermine the center. I think this is an existential problem for the project.
>
> Best,
> Richard

I sent the requested budget on January 29, 2026, and the research assistants and the University's enrollment data were approved afterward.

15.2 The CSI Report and the University's Comments

On April 7, 2026, I sent Regent Hensley the draft report on market demand prepared by the Common Sense Institute (CSI). Ben Murrey (CSI) made an earlier presentation of the report in a meeting at the Capitol on April 9. Regent Hensley's first assessment of the report was positive: she described it as a "good report from CSI" as described in the following:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Friday, April 10, 2026, 5:54 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Follow up to Yesterday
>
> Excellent meetings yesterday. I enjoyed Professor Bauerlein. Good report from CSI. Will visit with you later today on their potential presentation.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

As we will see in the rest of this chapter, her assessment changed only later, after the Board Office had reviewed the draft and raised objections to it.

She forwarded the report to Executive Director Braun. Although I have no direct proof, I suspect that he shared the report with the University of Iowa and forwarded their criticisms back to her. On April 19, she forwarded Braun's reply, which contained a list of comments. From the language used in these comments, it appears they originated with the University rather than the Board Office itself.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Sunday, April 19, 2026, 11:18 am
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** [External] Fw: Initial thoughts about the market survey
>
> *[Forwarded message:]*
>
> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2026, 1:24 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Cc:** Cramer, Robert ; Tjaden, Kurt
> **Subject:** Initial thoughts about the market survey
>
> - The market assessment examined similar centers around the country which is a useful exercise, but the projections for faculty and funding needs are missing key aspects of things like joint faculty appointments, the GEF funding model for tuition-generating units, and the administrative spending norms for academic units to ensure efficiency and focus on instructional costs.
> - The analysis of University of Iowa data was limited to enrollment in any core course requirement versus any elective course. There was no analysis of existing or prior UI enrollment in courses related to the stated focus areas of CIF (American history, American government, foundational texts from free societies, foundations of informed citizenship, etc.). Departments such as History, Political Science, Philosophy and Economics all have courses that align with those areas. Understanding the existing demand for these subject areas at the UI is critical to a full market assessment and a factor that every other department on campus includes in their degree or course justifications.
> - The report states that CIF has "full curricular authority", but no single academic unit at the university has "full curricular authority" when it comes to general education courses. All general education courses have a specific, cross-departmental structure and approval process they must meet in order to be listed as gen eds.
> - In suggesting that requiring courses will increase the demand, they do not account for how this will also increase costs to students who now have flexible options for fulfilling general education categories such as social sciences and humanities (and thus regularly transfer in community college courses or AP courses from high school).
>
> Not to mention part of the rationale in demand is if the legislature passes a bill that requires us to do it demand will go up…

15.3 My Response

I replied point by point on April 20, concluding that none of the comments raised substantive concerns about the quality of the report.

> **From:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Date:** Monday, April 20, 2026, 3:21 pm
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Fw: Initial thoughts about the market survey
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> I have responded to each of the comments below. In summary, there is nothing in them that is substantive or relevant to the quality of the report. Please see my detailed responses.
>
> I am also copying Richard Lowery, a professor of finance, who can help assess the technical merits of the report and determine whether these comments would justify any postponement of its release.
>
> I also informed CSI that you had requested they not release the report at this time, even though I consider it complete. They have agreed to postpone the release for one week. However, they raised an important concern: it appears the report has already been shared with individuals outside the Board Office. They worry that this delay could give those who oppose its publication time to prepare a narrative aimed at discrediting the report. This would be detrimental to CSI's work, and they are understandably concerned. I am just sharing their perspective, as I believe it deserves consideration.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

My point-by-point responses to the University's comments were as follows.

Comment: The market assessment examined similar centers around the country which is a useful exercise, but the projections for faculty and funding needs are missing key aspects of things like joint faculty appointments, the GEF funding model for tuition-generating units, and the administrative spending norms for academic units to ensure efficiency and focus on instructional costs.

Reply: Joint faculty appointments are nearly impossible to predict. It will depend on the hiring decisions of the director, and the will of the departments to accept joint appointments. GEF funding model, administrative spending and instructional costs are part of the supply side, not demand. The study is about market demand. It is not about supply and its related characteristics such as costs.

Comment: The analysis of University of Iowa data was limited to enrollment in any core course requirement versus any elective course. There was no analysis of existing or prior UI enrollment in courses related to the stated focus areas of CIF (American history, American government, foundational texts from free societies, foundations of informed citizenship, etc.). Departments such as History, Political Science, Philosophy and Economics all have courses that align with those areas. Understanding the existing demand for these subject areas at the UI is critical to a full market assessment and a factor that every other department on campus includes in their degree or course justifications.

Reply: The study did include the Departments (and courses) mentioned, and their course demand was taken into account, although not in the way suggested above. All universities hosting the Centers we studied have similar departments. However, not a single one of them cited demand from these other departments as a relevant factor in determining course enrollment. In fact, similarity of courses, or even overlap in course content, ranks low in terms of predictive power for enrollment. Even if we were to pursue this approach, it would require estimating similarity between existing courses and courses that do not yet exist. This raises a fundamental question: how can one reliably determine how similar those future courses would be? Therefore, to accurately assess demand for the Center's courses, we must look at the actual demand for similar centers, which is precisely the approach we have taken.

Comment: The report states that CIF has "full curricular authority", but no single academic unit at the university has "full curricular authority" when it comes to general education courses. All general education courses have a specific, cross-departmental structure and approval process they must meet in order to be listed as gen eds.

Reply: This comment is very similar in tone and substance to statements made by the Provost in an email dated March 17. This raises questions about the origin of these comments. Such a view does not appear to originate from the Board Office, as it conflicts with the legislation that established the Center, as well as the bylaws approved by the Board of Regents, both of which grant the Center full curricular authority.

Comment: In suggesting that requiring courses will increase the demand, they do not account for how this will also increase costs to students who now

have flexible options for fulfilling general education categories such as social sciences and humanities (and thus regularly transfer in community college courses or AP courses from high school).

Reply: As observed above, the study is about market demand, which does not include costs. Costs belong to the supply side, but this study is not about supply. This issue is completely out of the scope of this study.

Comment: Not to mention part of the rationale in demand is if the legislature passes a bill that requires us to do it demand will go up…

Reply: The report's conclusions are based on the experiences shared by directors of several other similar centers. CSI is simply reporting what they found. They did not fabricate the connection to the requirement. In fact, it would be inappropriate for them to omit this connection, as it was clearly emphasized by the interviewees.

15.4 Professor Lowery's Assessment

Professor Richard Lowery, copied on the exchange, replied the same day, objecting to any delay in the report's release.

From: Richard Lowery
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026, 4:07 pm
To: De Castro Filho, Luciano I
Cc: Christine Hensley; Collins, Taylor [LEGIS]
Subject: Re: FW: [External] Fw: Initial thoughts about the market survey

Most of these comments from the board office are, to be as charitable as possible, nonsense. Several focus on the supply side (costs and such), which is tautologically not relevant for a market *demand* report.

I object in the strongest terms to delaying the release of the report at the request of the Board Office or Provost. Both the board office and the provost clearly want the center to fail, we should not be making unilateral concessions to people whose objectives are diametrically opposed to ours.

15.5 The Second Delay Request

Regent Hensley did not reply to these points. On April 28, eight days after my April 20 email, she asked that publication of the report be delayed by another week.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 12:03 pm
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** [External] Follow up to our Conversation Yesterday
>
> Luciano I have confirmed you can move forward with the book. If you want to use any UofI trade marks then you will need to follow their policy.
>
> **As for the Market Assessment we want to wait on that for another week or so.**
>
> Let me know if questions.

The bolded sentence above (emphasis added) is where Regent Hensley asked to hold the report for an additional week.

On July 18, 2026, *The Gazette* reported my account of these events under the headline "Report: UI, regents tried to suppress Common Sense Institute report." Asked to respond, the Board office explained the request to withhold publication as follows:

> "As we had just received a draft of the report, we asked for some additional time to review it before it was made public, to allow us to fully understand the report's methodology and its findings," board spokesman Josh Lehman told The Gazette.[2]

The timeline does not support this explanation. The Board office received the draft on April 7. Mark Braun sent his comments on its methodology on April 16, which Regent Hensley forwarded to me on April 19 (email Sunday, April 19, 2026, 11:18 am), and I answered them point by point on April 20. After that, I received no further comments or questions about the report, and I am not aware of any further review that would have justified an additional postponement. The second request for delay came on April 28, three weeks after the Board office received the draft, and it gave no reason at all. The explanation offered to *The Gazette* appeared only afterward, in public.

15.6 The Attempt to Prevent Publication

I called Regent Hensley to ask the reason for this additional delay. She gave no reason and simply insisted that CSI not publish the report. Since the law gave the Director the mandate to prepare the report, I had the authority to determine when it was ready for distribution, and I informed her that, in my assessment, it was. Transmitting her request to CSI was embarrassing for me: CSI is an independent entity, holds the copyright to the material it produces, and its release decisions were not mine to control. I explained this to her by phone. She was furious, stated

[2] *Report: UI, Regents Tried to Suppress Common Sense Institute Report*.

that this was not appropriate and that CSI should not release the report, and asked for a phone number so that she could contact CSI directly to prevent the release. She did in fact call CSI, which CSI later confirmed. Nevertheless, CSI proceeded to release the report as planned. Because of Regent Hensley's pressure on this matter, I did not participate in the session at which the report was released.

Regent Hensley then asked to see the contract with CSI, apparently to determine whether it contained any clause that would give the Board of Regents power to block the release of the report. She asked the Board Office to locate the contract as well. Indeed, the Board of Regents Office requested a copy of the contract with the Common Sense Institute on Wednesday, April 29, the same day CSI published its report. See the message below.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 1:16 pm
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** FW: [External] Contract for Market Assessment
>
> *[Forwarded message:]*
>
> **From:** Griffin, Stephanie L
> **Sent:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 1:14 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Subject:** [External] Contract for Market Assessment
>
> Collin: We entered into a contract for the market study with Common Sense, Inc. Could you please send me a copy of the contract for our records?
>
> Thank you,
> Stephanie Griffin
> Paralegal
> Iowa Board of Regents

The contract was sent as requested, but it contained no provision giving the Board Office any room to block the release of the report.

Conclusion. These messages show that Regent Hensley made repeated efforts to prevent the release of the report, exactly as the University and the Board Office wanted, even though this was against the interest of the Center, against the interest of the legislators who created it, and despite the fact that the law establishing the Center gave the Director, not the Board of Regents, the authority to conduct this market assessment.

15.7 The Capitol Meeting and the Report Presented

I prepared a report summarizing the difficulties the Center had encountered since its creation, an early version of the concerns documented in this report and discussed in a meeting in Des Moines, on April 9, 2026. The report sent is reproduced in Appendix H. Present were Senator Lynn Evans, Representatives Taylor Collins and Dan Gehlbach, Regent Christine Hensley, and Advisory Council members John Hendrickson, Greg Ganske, and Mark Bauerlein.

During the meeting, after my presentation of the contents of the report, Senator Evans announced that he planned to contact Attorney General Bird and ask her assistance in dealing with the issues that I revealed in my report.

Early the next morning, Regent Hensley wrote to ask for a digital copy of the report, explaining that she wanted to make sure the Executive Director had it.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Friday, April 10, 2026, 5:54 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Follow up to Yesterday
>
> Excellent meetings yesterday. I enjoyed Professor Bauerlein. Good report from CSI. Will visit with you later today on their potential presentation.
>
> Can you please send me a digital copy of the report you presented on issues you have faced. I will need to make sure **Mark has a copy so when the AG contacts him he will know what is in it.**
>
> Thanks
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

I read this message as indicating that the Attorney General's office would review the matters raised in the report, and that Regent Hensley wanted Mr. Braun to be prepared. I later learned from Senator Evans that after the meeting was over and I had left the room, Regent Hensley persuaded him not to contact the Attorney General, proposing instead that the issues be resolved directly by the Board of Regents. Senator Evans agreed. Under this account, Regent Hensley knew, when she wrote the message above, that the Attorney General was not going to contact Mr. Braun.

The following day, she wrote again to ask for the report.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Saturday, April 11, 2026, 12:56 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro

> **Subject:** Digital Copy of the Report you Presented Thursday re: Issues Faced
>
> I don't believe I have received that yet. Can you please send to me. Thanks
>
> *Sent from my iPad*

The effect of the request was that Mr. Braun received, as quickly as possible, a report documenting concerns about his own office. There can be good reasons to share such a report with the person it concerns, who should have the opportunity to respond. But the meeting at the Capitol had been convened because of the obstacles the Center was facing, many of which involved the Board Office, and the first action that followed was directed not at those obstacles but at informing the office responsible for many of them. Within weeks, the Center's activities were suspended, and on the questions that divided the Center and the Board Office, the regents responsible for the Center sided with the Board Office.

I finally sent the report by email on Monday, April 13, 2026, to Regents Cramer, Hensley, Tjaden, and Lacy:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026, 4:04 pm
> **To:** Robert Cramer
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Kurt Tjaden; Steve Lacy
> **Subject:** Summary of Challenges Facing the Center – Report Distributed on April 9, 2026
>
> Dear Regents Cramer, Hensley, Tjaden, and Lacy, and Professor Lowery,
>
> On Thursday, March 19, I participated in a virtual meeting with Regents Cramer and Hensley, and Professor Lowery. During that meeting, Regent Cramer mentioned that he was not fully aware of some of the issues the Center has been facing. This is completely understandable, as I have deliberately chosen, since I became interim Director, to focus on advancing the Center's goals rather than raising every obstacle along the way.
>
> Following that meeting, I prepared a detailed summary of the main difficulties and obstacles I have encountered in these almost nine months. The document includes several supporting messages and communications. Some of these were new even to Regent Hensley, who has been the most directly involved with the Center.
>
> I printed and distributed physical copies of this report during the meeting on April 9, 2026, and left two copies for the Board. At Regent Hensley's request, I am now forwarding the document via email.
>
> As you know, the bill that created the Center requires the Director to present an annual report covering achievements as well as obstacles and challenges. Although I was informed that a full report would not be required at the end of 2025, the attached

> document summarizes the key obstacles that would have been included in such a report.
>
> I respectfully ask that you read the report carefully, as it provides important context regarding the challenges facing the Center. Should you have any questions or if you would like to discuss any of the points raised, please feel free to contact me directly. I will be happy to provide further clarification.
>
> Warm regards,
> Luciano de Castro

The report sent in the email above is reproduced in Appendix H.

Chapter 16

Attempts at Restructuring the Center

After the meeting at the Capitol on April 9, 2026, it became clear that the Center could not continue under the arrangement in which it had operated since its creation, with the Executive Director approving its expenditures and the University treating it as a department under the Provost. Over the following months, the question of how the Center should be organized was taken up in three different ways. In April, the Executive Director proposed appointing a "Director of Administration" to oversee the Center's expenditures and its relations with the University, a plan that did not proceed when the faculty member offered the role declined it. A few days later, I submitted my own proposal to make the Center an independent organizational unit of the University, reporting to the Board. In July, the Board created a committee of three regents to oversee the Center. This chapter describes these three developments. The committee became the foundation of the structure the Board adopted in September 2026, which gave its chair authority over the Center's major expenditures, contracts, and the Director's travel; that plan is discussed in Chapter 19.

16.1 The Plan to Have a Director of Administration

In early April, following a plan developed by Executive Director Braun, an attempt was made to appoint Professor Richard Fumerton as a "Director of Administration" for the Center. I was not involved in the development of this plan and was informed only after it had been finalized, at which point I could offer just a few inputs. The plan was not implemented because Professor Fumerton declined to serve in this capacity.

On April 10, 2026, Mark Braun sent Regent Hensley a draft set of responsibilities for the proposed "Director of Administration" position, the role earlier offered to Professor Fumerton.

> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Date:** Friday, April 10, 2026, 7:48 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Draft Director of Administration
>
> Per our conversation, below are the bullet points we discussed regarding the responsibilities of the Director of Administration for the Center of Intellectual Freedom. This is the starting point for the discussion, this is what our expectations would be,

> if he is amenable, we can flesh this out some more in the future.
>
> - Review and approval of CIF expenditures for the CIF through SUI Workflow, approximately 1 hour per week
> - Serve as the liaison between CIF and the SUI, when questions arise about CIF and university policies, the Director of Administration will be the primary conduit of information between the university and CIF, approximately 3 hours a week
> - Provide advice and counsel to the Director of CIF and the Chair of the Advisory Council about operations and events for CIF, approximately 2 hours per week
> - As a tenured faculty member the Director of Administration may do scholarly research and/or provide instruction in courses developed in CIF, the amount of time is at the Director's discretion
>
> Mark J. Braun, MBA, EdD
>
> Executive Director

The same afternoon, Regent Hensley forwarded this draft to Professor Fumerton, adding two suggestions from her conversation with me: that the title be changed to "Associate Director of Administration," and that the description emphasize ongoing communication between the role and the Director.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Friday, April 10, 2026, 3:31 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Fumerton, Richard
> **Subject:** [External] Fw: Draft Director of Administration
>
> Richard per our discussion please see below. Two comments after visiting with Luciano.
>
> He feels the title should be Associate Director of Administration and also to emphasis that there would be communication between you and the director.
>
> I will follow up with you Monday, but if you would like to discuss this weekend please feel free to call. Also, I would appreciate your thoughts on compensation.

16.2 The Proposal to Change the Center's Organizational Status

In an email sent on Monday, April 6, 2026, 1:23 pm, Regent Hensley asked Mark Braun for closure on three pending matters: the Center's web address, the listing of its courses in the University catalog, and the policies related to the book (the full email is reproduced in Section 14.3). The first two had a common cause. Both arose because the Center was classified within the University as a department under the Office of the Provost, so that its web presence and its courses depended on the Provost's administrative structure.

A week later, having seen no response from Mark Braun, I sent him a proposal to resolve this underlying problem (excerpt; the full email appears as email Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:34 pm).

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:34 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Mark,
>
> A week has now passed since Regent Hensley's email. To date, I have not received any communication from you regarding the three points on which she requested closure.
>
> I understand that resolving these matters may be challenging. To help move things forward, I have attached a proposal that addresses many of the issues we are currently facing and, specifically, two of the three points raised in Regent Hensley's email.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*

I had intended to copy the regents serving on the Advisory Council and Professor Lowery, and forwarded the email to them three minutes later.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:37 pm
> **To:** Robert Cramer
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Steve Lacy; Kurt Tjaden; Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** Fw: [External] Follow up on Various Items for CIF
>
> Dear Regents Cramer, Tjaden, Lacy and Professor Lowery,
>
> I forgot to copy you in the email below. I believe the annexed proposal would be helpful to move the Center forward.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano.

The proposal, reproduced in full in Appendix I, started from the legal framework. HF 437 establishes the Center as an independent academic unit under the Board of Regents, with the authority to offer courses and to grant tenure, which makes it more similar to a college than to a department. Within the University, however, the Center was classified as a department-level entity (Unit 0136) whose parent was the Office of the Provost (Org Unit 02). As a result, all of its administrative, curricular, and operational workflows had to pass through the Provost's office, and

the Center could not offer courses directly, despite the law.

To align the Center's organization with the law, the proposal made four recommendations. First, the Center should be elevated to an Org Unit of its own, within the University's "Other Academic" group alongside the Library and University College, while continuing to report directly to the Board. This would allow it to offer courses in its own name and to have its own web presence at `cif.uiowa.edu`, resolving the two items in Regent Hensley's email, and it would give the Center the prerogatives of a college over its curriculum, academic identity, and administration. Second, rather than building its own human resources, information technology, and finance teams, the Center would contract these services from an established unit through a memorandum of understanding or service-level agreement, replacing its dependence on the Provost's shared services. Third, staff providing these services would be compensated in addition to their existing salaries, preserving a clear client-provider relationship and avoiding conflicts of interest. Fourth, the Registrar's curriculum system (MAUI) would be updated so that the Center owned its academic subject code and its course approvals were routed directly, bypassing the standard college and Provost queues.

I received no response to the proposal. When the Board of Regents acted on the Center's organization five months later, in September 2026, it adopted part of the proposal's framework, designating the Center an independent academic unit, but placed supervisory authority over the director and key operational decisions with its new committee on the Center (see Chapter 19).

16.3 The CIF Committee in the Board of Regents

In July 2026, the Board of Regents formed a new committee to oversee the Center, chaired by Regent Christine Hensley, with Board President Robert Cramer and Regent Steve Lacy as members. Its responsibilities include reviewing the Center's finances, initiatives, priorities, and annual report, and evaluating the director.[1]

On the morning of August 9, 2026, Regent Hensley followed up with me regarding a prior email, an update on Senator Ernst's availability, and a request stemming from her conversation with a potential donor.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Sunday, August 9, 2026, 8:14 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Follow up to earlier email and update on speaker contacts
>
> Good morning Luciano,
>
> Hoping to hear back from you regarding the email I sent to you last Wednesday.

[1] "Iowa Board of Regents expands oversight of UI's Center for Intellectual Freedom".

> Want to make sure you received it.
>
> Also, Senator Ernst's office is still working on her fall calendar and waiting to see what the Senate calendar will be. They are still optimistic she will participate.
>
> Lastly I did visit with [. . .]. He is very interested in the Center and working with us on arranging a speaker. His Foundation has funded Jewish Classical Studies at the Hamilton Center. They are looking for other opportunities.
>
> He asked that we get him information as to the Center, the possibility of having a Jewish studies program and also information re: the Core Curriculum. Can you please put together an executive summary that I can get to him next week?

I replied the same night, explaining that I had not received the earlier email she referenced, asking for clarification on the scope of the requested summary, and providing a detailed update on the Fall speaker lineup.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Sunday, August 9, 2026, 11:11 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Follow up to earlier email and update on speaker contacts
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> Thank you for your message. I did not receive any email from you last Wednesday. Could you please resend it?
>
> I am happy to prepare the executive summary you requested for [. . .]. Just to clarify: should the summary focus on the Center itself, or is it more related to the other speakers we are organizing, particularly in connection with America's 250th anniversary, including the possibility of anti-semitism speaker series?
>
> I also wanted to share a few updates. I had a very productive conversation with [. . .]. He promised to gather more information about the speakers he suggested and to explore the possibility of obtaining donor support to help cover speaker expenses.
>
> Regarding our speaker lineup:
>
> - Bill McClay has agreed to speak on September 10 [. . .]
> - George Mason Professor Todd Zywicki has contacted me to organize a talk related to the 250th anniversary. I am in coordination with the College of Law and the Federalist Society. The details are still being finalized.
> - I will speak with Patrick Deneen tomorrow (Monday) to check his availability and fee.
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

On August 10, 2026, Regent Hensley wrote to me on behalf of the newly established oversight committee, requesting a detailed update on the Fall speaking series.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, August 10, 2026, 6:02 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Steve Lacy; Robert Cramer
> **Subject:** [External] Expectations re: Fall Speaking Series
>
> Luciano to follow up on our previous discussions, I want to clarify what the newly established committee expects. As you are aware, President Cramer and Regent Lacy and myself make up the committee.
>
> We need to have an update on the speakers that you are reaching out to, status as to commitment, expected costs associated with the individual speakers (travel and honorariums).
>
> Also the speakers from the Jewish Community, what is the status.
>
> Please provide all of the requested information by 8/12.
>
> Also are there deadlines within the University we need to be aware of re: publications.
>
> Lastly an update on Collin's work during the summer and has it been completed.
>
> Thanks, looking forward to your response.

I replied on August 12, providing the requested report and raising a question of my own about the reference to publication deadlines, as well as requesting a broader meeting on the Center's operations.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, August 12, 2026, 11:21 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Cc:** Steve Lacy; Cramer, Robert
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Expectations re: Fall Speaking Series
>
> Dear President Cramer, and Regents Lacy and Hensley,
>
> Thank you for the note, and for your willingness to serve on this committee. I appreciate the time and attention you're each putting into this.
>
> Please find attached the draft report with the current status of speaker outreach, including commitment status and estimated costs (honoraria and travel) for each speaker under consideration. The report also lays out our approach to covering these costs through donations, reserving Center resources for support costs only.

> On the question of speakers connected to the Jewish community: Ben Shapiro and Bari Weiss, both currently in our pipeline, would speak to that as well. As the report notes, our Fall calendar is largely full once the currently planned speakers are scheduled, so we don't have much additional room this semester. We can continue to prioritize in the Spring.
>
> I have to admit I wasn't sure what the comment about University deadlines regarding publications was referring to. Could you please clarify what that pertains to?
>
> I'm also resuming operation of the Center more broadly, including working with students to help organize these events going forward.
>
> There's quite a bit more I'd like to walk through with the three of you beyond what's captured in the report. I think it would be valuable to find time for a meeting to discuss the broader life of the Center. Would you be open to that in the coming weeks?
>
> Thank you again, and I look forward to your thoughts.
>
> Best,
> Luciano

Chapter 17

Control over Payments and Salaries

17.1 Payment of Lecturers

On February 11, 2026, Amy Kirkey wrote to ask about anticipated compensation plans for individuals teaching Center courses, having seen a Gazette article about the Center.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 10:55 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** Compensation??
>
> Good morning, Luciano and Collin,
>
> I read this article about the search for the Center's director. For planning purposes, could you please let me know, as soon as you are able, what your anticipated plans are regarding compensation for these individuals?
>
> Any decisions related to salary, stipend, or supplemental pay will require an HR transaction, so having this information in advance will help ensure we can support the process efficiently.
>
> Thank you,
> Amy

I replied the same day, confirming that modest compensation was planned for some lecturers, with details to follow once the course began.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3:16 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** Re: Compensation??
>
> Hi Amy,
>
> Yes, I did commit to providing modest compensation to some (but not all) of the lecturers. We'll prepare a list of those eligible and send it to you for processing.

> That said, since the course does not begin until the end of March, and I believe the lecturers will be fine with payment being processed later, we have ample time to handle this properly.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Amy followed up in late March as the semester approached.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Monday, March 30, 2026, 11:49 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** RE: Compensation??
>
> Hi Luciano,
>
> As we are nearing the end of March, I wanted to check in regarding your plans for compensating individuals teaching your classes this spring. If any payments will be needed, we'll want to know as soon as possible so we can prepare the appropriate offer letters and submit the necessary transactions.
>
> Thanks,
> Amy

On April 2, Collin Sawyer provided the specific payment amounts for three University of Iowa faculty lecturers.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026, 1:00 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** Re: Compensation??
>
> Hi Amy,
>
> Thanks for bringing this to our attention.
>
> The following University of Iowa faculty should receive payments specified below based on a 700 dollar net payment per lecture.
>
> Alex P. Smith (3 lectures)(700) Net 2100
> Timmothy Hagle (2 lectures)(700) Net 1400
> Richard A Fumerton (1 lecture)(700) Net 700
>
> Thanks,
> Collin Sawyer

> Administrative Services Manager, Center for Intellectual Freedom

Amy asked whether the non-UI guest lecturers would also be compensated.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026, 1:55 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M; Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** RE: Compensation??
>
> Thanks, Collin. Do you plan to pay the other non-UI guest lecturers?

The next day, Collin confirmed that Eric Dugdale, a non-UI lecturer, should also be paid, at a rate comparable to the University of Iowa lecturers.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Friday, April 3, 2026, 2:08 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Subject:** RE: Compensation??
>
> Yes,
>
> Please arrange to pay Eric Dugdale a gross payment for two lectures that is roughly equivalent or an average of the gross payment per lecture to our UofI lecturers.
>
> Thanks,
> Collin Sawyer
> Administrative Services Manager, Center for Intellectual Freedom

Eleven days later, Amy informed us that, per Mark Braun, all of these payments were now being held pending direction from the Board of Regents.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 3:44 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Sawyer, Collin M
> **Cc:** Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** FW: Compensation??
>
> Hi Luciano and Sawyer,
>
> I wanted to reach out to let you know that per Mark Braun, we are awaiting direction from the BOR on how to proceed with the payments for the four individuals identified in the email below.

> Best,
> Amy

Nearly a month after payments were first placed on hold, and having received no direction from Mark Braun despite Amy Kirkey's earlier message that one was forthcoming, I escalated the matter directly to Regent Hensley.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, May 8, 2026, 10:54 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** FW: Compensation??
>
> Chris,
>
> I received the email below a few days ago, indicating that Mark Braun would provide direction regarding payment for the professors I enlisted to teach our courses. I was waiting to see if this direction would come, but since I didn't hear anything, I have to refer this to you.
>
> When I invited those professors, I made promises to pay them. To determine the value of those payments, I talked with several individuals, including the Dean of the College of Business. They agreed that the rate of $700 per lecture would be reasonable.
>
> The emails below refer to the first group of instructors that we submitted, to which we need to add one or two more (I am not planning to pay business professionals).
>
> I'm not sure if Mark Braun has already discussed this with you, but these payments need to be processed promptly.
>
> Please let me know if you have any questions.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

On May 13, Collin followed up asking for an update and requesting that two additional lecturers, Stephen Balch and Mark Bauerlein, be paid at the same rate as Eric Dugdale.

> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Date:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 11:15 am
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: Compensation??
>
> Hi Amy,
>
> Do we have any updates regarding this?

> Also, we would like to pay Stephen Balch and Mark Bauerlein for their lectures as well.
>
> Their payment should be the same amount as Eric Dugdale.
>
> Thanks,
> Collin Sawyer
> Administrative Services Manager, Center for Intellectual Freedom

Amy replied that the payments remained on hold pending further direction from Mark Braun.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 12:25 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M; Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** RE: Compensation??
>
> Hi Collin,
>
> To my knowledge, we are holding off on all of these payments until we receive further direction from Mark Braun.
>
> Amy

That same afternoon, I forwarded the entire exchange to Regent Hensley, making clear that I had two separate and distinct requests: immediate release of the withheld payments, and a formal explanation for why the hold had been imposed in the first place.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 1:50 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** FW: Compensation??
>
> Chris,
>
> University HR has just confirmed that the payments have not been released and have been on hold since April 14 (see e-mails below).
>
> I want to be clear that I have two separate requests:
>
> 1. That all withheld payments be processed immediately.
>
> 2. A formal explanation for why the order to hold these payments was issued on April 14.
>
> Releasing the payments alone is not sufficient: I also need a full account of why this hold was put in place.

> Thank you for addressing both points at your earliest convenience.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

17.1.1 Compensation for lecturers

On May 11, 2026, Regent Hensley responded to an earlier conversation, addressing several matters at once. Here I focus on the compensation for guest lecturers.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Monday, May 11, 2026, 8:09 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun
> **Subject:** [External] Response to Your Email
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> Compensation for the faculty is fine, however, I feel all guest lecturers should be paid and not just the UofI faculty. Can you share why you do not want to compensate the others?

17.1.2 Question about the Payment to Corporate Lecturers

On an email sent on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 10:47 am, reproduced above in Subsection 14.4, Regent Hensley asked what was the reason that I made a distinction between the lecturers for the payment. I replied the next morning, asking in turn for an explanation of why Mark Braun had directed HR to hold the lecturer payments, and then setting out my reasoning for compensating professional lecturers while not extending the same payment to corporate Advisory Council members who had volunteered to teach.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 6:03 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Lecturer Payments
>
> Chris,
>
> I am happy to explain my decision-making process regarding the payments. In return, I would appreciate an explanation of why Mark Braun instructed the University's HR department to hold the payments I authorized. This is not the first time he had told the HR department to hold issues regarding the Center. Last year, he told HR that I could not proceed with hiring, which is precisely why I pursued lecturers for our courses instead. I would genuinely like to understand the rationale behind his decision to put a hold on the payment of our lecturers.

> Assuming you will provide that justification, allow me to explain mine.
>
> Professors make their living by teaching. For them, payment is not incidental, it is the basis on which they agree to take on additional teaching responsibilities. When I committed to compensating our professional lecturers, it was because asking them to teach without pay would have been asking them to give for free what constitutes their livelihood.
>
> Corporate lecturers, such as Reynold Cramer and Mike Whalen, are in a different position. They do not make their living from teaching, and a payment of $700 would not have been a meaningful factor in their decision to participate. In fact, I made no such promise to them. They agreed to teach because of the distinction of lecturing at the University of Iowa, and their willingness to support the Center, which made them accept to serve as members of our Advisory Council. This willingness to support the Center extends, I believe, to financial support. Given that disposition, it is reasonable to conclude that they would prefer to contribute to the Center rather than draw from its resources.
>
> As Interim Director, I have the responsibility to make decisions on academic matters of this nature. In doing so, I am mindful of the Center's resources and committed to preserving them whenever possible. I hope this clarifies my decision and the reasoning behind it.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

17.1.3 Bauerlein's complaint

On May 18, 2026, Professor Mark Bauerlein, a member of the Center's Executive Committee, wrote to Regent Hensley and James Jorgensen to report that he had not been paid the honorarium promised for a guest lecture, following the payment freeze described above.

> **From:** Bauerlein, Mark
> **Date:** Monday, May 18, 2026, 7:21 am
> **To:** Jorgensen, James D; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** [External] payment stoppage
>
> Dear Vice President Jorgensen and Regent Hensley,
>
> I write to you to inform you of a serious breach of academic protocol at the University of Iowa.
>
> I am Emeritus Professor of English at Emory University and Visiting Professor at Ohio State. I am author or editor of eleven books. I am also on the Executive Committee of the Center for Intellectual Inquiry at Iowa. Six weeks ago, the Interim Director, Luciano di Castro, invited me to campus to meet with students and to deliver a guest lecture. The honorarium would be $700, which I accepted. A few weeks later, I came to Iowa City, the events went well, and I returned to Columbus.

> On May 7th, however, Professor de Castro informed me that I would not be paid. Apparently, a higher-up has suspended funds for all activities associated with the Center. You may imagine my surprise at this information. I have witnessed many unusual episodes in academia over the decades, but never an invited lecturer who performed his duties and was denied pay.
>
> I ask you for a clarification. Are you aware of this development? Is the University of Iowa willing to back up this decision?
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Mark Bauerlein

Regent Hensley replied within the hour, assuring Professor Bauerlein that he would be paid and apologizing for what she characterized as inaccurate information he had received.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Monday, May 18, 2026, 8:46 am
> **To:** Mark Bauerlein
> **Cc:** Jorgensen, James D; Luciano de Castro; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** [External] Re: payment stoppage
>
> Thank you Mark for your email. I can assure you will be paid, $700 plus your travel expenses. I believe the payments are in process. We are checking on it and I will confirm today. My apologies for you being told that as it is not accurate.
>
> Sent from my iPad

I replied the same morning, clarifying that I had never said the payments would not be made, only that they had been on hold since April 14 without explanation, and noting that Provost Kregel had, that very morning, finally instructed HR to release them.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, May 18, 2026, 9:20 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Mark Bauerlein
> **Cc:** Jorgensen, James D; Mark Braun
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Re: payment stoppage
>
> Dear Mark,
>
> Thank you for your email.
>
> Just to clarify, what I mentioned on May 7 was that the payments were on hold. They have been on hold since April 14 (without any explanation) and remained so until this morning. I was just informed that Provost Kregel has today instructed the

> HR department to proceed with the payments for the lecturers.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

17.2 Collin Sawyer's Salary Increase

On June 18, 2026, Amy Kirkey responded to a series of questions from Collin Sawyer regarding how salary increases for Center staff were being determined under Provost Office policy.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Thursday, June 18, 2026, 3:24 pm
> **To:** Sawyer, Collin M; Lavin, Alexa L
> **Cc:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** RE: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> See my comments below,
>
> *[Forwarded message:]*
>
> **From:** Sawyer, Collin M
> **Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2026, 3:09 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Lavin, Alexa L
> **Cc:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Re: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Hi Amy,
>
> Thank you for the update on this!
>
> I have a few more questions that I hope you can help me with.
>
> 1: Who made the determination for the Office of the Provost to grant a 2% raise across the board for Provost employees?
>
> *The Provost, in consultation with the President, determined the 2% across the board increase for the OP org (N = 300+ people)*
>
> 2: How are raises processed outside of the standard fiscal year adjustment for performance/market adjustment/retention, etc.
>
> *Requests for market reviews can be submitted for review and if staff take on additional duties a career advancement request of 5% can be requested*
>
> 3: How is the 2000-dollar lump sum payment categorized? Is it a Flex Payment for Exceptional Performance payment?
>
> *The $2,000 is part of the Provost Office salary policy and is categorized as a lump sum payment.*

> 4: Who made the determination on the amount of the lump sum payment, and what was their basis for this figure?
>
> *The Provost, in consultation with the President, determined the 2% across the board increase for the OP org (N = 300+ people)*
>
> 5: Who made the determination that CIF P&S employee raises and bonuses would be determined under Provost policy?
>
> *Since CIF is a department under org 02, we included your department under the salary policy for the OP.*
>
> Thanks,
>
> Collin Sawyer
> Administrative Services Manager, Center for Intellectual Freedom

On June 30, I wrote directly to Amy, Collin, and Alexa Lavin, objecting that the Provost Office's salary policy conflicted with the Center's own bylaws, which vest authority over staff compensation in the Director.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, June 30, 2026, 2:53 pm
> **To:** Kirkey, Amy L; Sawyer, Collin M; Lavin, Alexa L
> **Subject:** Re: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Hi Amy,
>
> I hope this email finds you well.
>
> I fully understand that you treated the Center as an organization within the Provost's Office, and I can see how that shaped your approach to the salary adjustments. However, this differs from the framework established by the legislation that created the Center and from the Center's bylaws, which were approved by the Board of Regents.
>
> According to the bylaws, the Director of the Center, whether permanent or interim, has the authority to determine compensation for Center personnel. See Article IX, Section 3 of the Center's bylaws. For this reason, I believe I should have been consulted regarding any decisions affecting the salaries of the Center's staff.
>
> In particular, Collin received an outstanding performance evaluation. If I had been consulted, I would have recommended adjusting his salary from $75,000 to the median zone high of $87,705, as $75,000 currently falls below the median zone low of $76,999.
>
> If it is still possible to implement this adjustment, I would greatly appreciate it.
>
> Thank you for your attention to this matter. I'm happy to discuss it further if that would be helpful.

> Best regards,
> Luciano

The same afternoon, I forwarded this exchange to Regent Hensley and Professor Richard Lowery, asking for their advice on whether to escalate the matter to the Executive Committee or the Advisory Council.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Tuesday, June 30, 2026, 5:07 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Hi Chris and Richard,
>
> I wanted to share with you an email I sent to the HR person who has been assisting me. The original message I received from her was purely informative and did not invite any input from me. After some thought, however, I decided it was important to respond.
>
> To give you some context: according to the Center's bylaws, the Director has authority over compensation for CIF staff. Despite this, the decision regarding Collin's salary for next year was made without any consultation or even prior notice to me. I only became aware of it after Collin inquired about it himself.
>
> I'm writing to keep you informed about this situation and to ask for your advice on how to proceed. Do you think this issue should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee or the Advisory Council?
>
> Thank you in advance for your guidance.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Unbeknownst to me at the time, Emily Campbell of the Provost's Office had, a few minutes later, forwarded my original request to Executive Director Mark Braun, explaining that the Center had inadvertently been assigned the Provost Office's standard raise policy.

> **From:** Campbell, Emily M (Provost Office)
> **Date:** Tuesday, June 30, 2026, 5:21 pm
> **To:** Braun, Mark
> **Cc:** Kregel, Kevin C; Kirkey, Amy L; Stratton, Suzanne E
> **Subject:** FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Hi Mark,
>
> Please see the email below from Luciano with a request to provide Collin Sawyer a

> $12,705 (16.9%) raise for FY27.
>
> Because the CIF is assigned to the Provost Office for administrative purposes, we inadvertently assigned our raise policy to Collin: 2% for all staff + $2,000 one-time payment.
>
> I am attaching the UI salary policy, which allows units to provide an average raise target of 1%–3% across all employees within the unit.
>
> I'm not sure what the salary policy is for BOR staff.
>
> Please let us know how you'd like to proceed with Collin's raise. These are some options:
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*

Mark Braun replied the following morning, denying any increase beyond what had already been offered under the Board's standard policy, and noting that he had consulted Regent Hensley. At this point, I was still not copied on the exchange.

> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Date:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026, 7:49 am
> **To:** Campbell, Emily M (Provost Office)
> **Cc:** Kregel, Kevin C; Kirkey, Amy L; Stratton, Suzanne E; Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** [External] Re: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Emily,
>
> Thanks for the heads up. The Board staff salary policy was a 2% ATB.
>
> What has already been provided for Collin (2% + $2000 one time payment is fine, but I am denying any additional increase).
>
> I have consulted with Regent Hensley about this request and have copied her on this response.
>
> Please let me know if you have any additional questions,
>
> Mark

A few hours later, Amy Kirkey forwarded me this exchange, along with an apology for not having included me in the original salary discussion. This was the first time I learned of Braun's decision.

> **From:** Kirkey, Amy L
> **Date:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026, 11:04 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Braun, Mark J; Kregel, Kevin C; Campbell, Emily M (Provost Office); Stratton, Suzanne E

> **Subject:** FW: [External] Re: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Good morning, Luciano,
>
> I hope you're having a great summer so far, it's hard to believe it's already July!
>
> I want to apologize for not including you in the conversation when the salary decisions were made. That was an oversight on our part, and it certainly wasn't intentional.
>
> Below is the response we received from Mark Braun regarding your request for Collin. I've also attached the University's FY27 salary policy memo for your reference.
>
> Best,
> Amy

Later that afternoon, Professor Lowery replied to my earlier forward, arguing that the University was overstepping its authority and that the matter should be raised with the Executive Committee.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026, 5:49 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> I think this needs to be raised with the executive committee. The university is trying to exercise authority that it should not have.

Regent Hensley responded the next morning, disagreeing with Professor Lowery and stating that the decision had in fact been made at the Regents' level, through the Executive Committee acting in an advisory capacity.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Thursday, July 2, 2026, 11:35 am
> **To:** Richard Lowery
> **Subject:** Re: FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> Richard I disagree. The decision was made at the Regent level. The salary increase was what that pay grade approved and he also received an additional $2,000.
>
> The Executive Committee is advisory to the Regents.

Professor Lowery replied the same day, expressing continued concern that the decision had actually originated at the Board Office level, and specifically with Exec-

utive Director Mark Braun, whom he accused of having previously acted in bad faith on Center matters.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Thursday, July 2, 2026, 12:55 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Re: FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> I suspect that this decision was made at the Board Office level, rather than at the Regents level. Given how consistently Mark Braun has acted in bad faith on center matters [. . .], I do not think this is acceptable.
>
> The Board has ultimate oversight as a body, but all such oversight should be taking place exclusively at formal Board meetings. Beyond that, matters should be decided by the center director with input and advice from the advisory council.

Later that afternoon, I shared with Professor Lowery and Regent Hensley the information I had received the day before from Amy Kirkey, summarizing Mark Braun's decision.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, July 2, 2026, 3:57 pm
> **To:** Richard Lowery; Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Re: FW: CIF P&S Employee Raise
>
> I would like to share some additional information I received yesterday, which may be helpful as you consider this matter. Please see the annexed documents for reference.
>
> Here is a quick summary:
>
> 1. The University made the decision on the salary increase without consulting me.
> 2. After my email, Mark Braun was consulted on the issue.
> 3. In his reply (copying the Provost and Regent Hensley, but not me), he begins by thanking Emily for bringing the matter to his attention. My understanding is that the issue had not been discussed with him previously.
> 4. He observes that the "Board staff salary policy was a 2% ATB".
> 5. He explicitly states: "I am denying any additional increase."
>
> At the end of the email, he notes that he has consulted Regent Hensley regarding this request.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

This episode allows us to observe a few important things:

Takeaway.

- The University did not consult me before deciding on Collin's salary raise, despite the Center's bylaws vesting that authority in the Director.
- Mark Braun ultimately made the final decision on the raise, overstepping the Director's statutory and bylaw-based authority.
- Regent Hensley supported the Executive Director Mark Braun's position rather than the authority granted to the Director.

CHAPTER 18

The New Law and the Shutdown of the Center

18.1 The position of the President

There was uncertainty regarding the approval of the bill that would establish General Education requirements at the University of Iowa and other state universities. On the Board of Regents meeting on April 23, 2026, the President of the Board of Regents made the following public statement about this proposal to include a General Education requirement:

> "Many of our legislative friends agree [...] with us that is better for the board to handle issues than it is to codify them. We in turn, respect the principle of academic freedom and responsibility and prefer that the universities handle the academic issues rather than us. So our chief academic officer, Rachel Boon, is gonna work, we will appoint one of our Regents to work with her to work with the universities, with the leadership and faculty to review our general education requirements. We don't want this to be a a board directed item. We want this to be the universities working through this process. So, this initiative is just to find out where what we're currently doing on general Ed and compare that across departments and across the region system. Just like with our legislators, our goal is building trust with our faculty. We want to work together on this initiative rather than have the legislature mandate changes." President's statement on April 23, 2026.

The statement makes two points. First, President Cramer preferred that the Board, rather than the Legislature, address the question of general education requirements. Second, he made clear what that would mean in practice: the universities, not the regents, would decide. But the universities had always had the authority to make such changes, and had not done so. Leaving the decision with them would therefore place no new pressure on them to act. The Board had followed the same approach in 2023, when it left the implementation of its directives on civic education to the universities, with the results described in Chapter 2. The General Assembly evidently drew the same conclusion: a few days later, it enacted the requirement into law.

18.2 The Approval of the Bill

On the Sunday evening the bill was approved by the General Assembly, May 3, 2026, I understood the significance of the change. Beginning in 2028, every under-

graduate at the University would be required to take courses offered by the Center, which would make it far more consequential than before. I also anticipated how University administrators might react: the period before the requirement took effect would be the moment to secure control over the Center, including over who would lead it. I shared this concern with some of the Center's supporters at the time.

Whether or not such an effort was contemplated, the days that followed brought a decision that weakened the Center at precisely this moment: the suspension of its activities, described in the next section.

18.3 Shutdown of the Center

A few days after the bill was approved, the Regents decided to "shut down" the Center. I was informed of this on a phone call on May 7. I wrote to Regent Hensley on May 9 to confirm my understanding of several points raised during that conversation, including the book project's cancellation, the suspension of new courses, an unresolved travel approval request, the freeze on new expenditures, and the still-unpaid lecturer compensation discussed earlier.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Saturday, May 9, 2026, 5:12 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Clarifications regarding the Thursday May 7 call
>
> Chris,
>
> I wanted to follow up on our call last Thursday to confirm my understanding of the points we discussed.
>
> 1. Policies: You indicated that the policies will not be approved at the Board of Regents (BoR) meeting in June. As I previously explained, this means I will not be able to proceed with the book project. Given the amount of time that has passed, I will now need to inform the authors that the book has been cancelled.
>
> 2. Postponed Issues: You mentioned that the provost's email and all related matters, including the offer of new courses, have been postponed for future resolution. As we discussed before, this effectively means the Center will not be able to offer any new courses for now. I just want to make sure we are fully aligned on this point.
>
> 3. Travel Approval: I would like to confirm whether the Center will cover my upcoming trip for the Department of Education negotiations (May 17–22). During our call, you asked about planned travel and I mentioned this trip, which the Department is not covering. You also referenced the current restriction on new business travel, but was not clear about the decision regarding this trip. Could you please clarify if this trip (including a one-day side visit to a summit in Philadelphia, by train) can be approved and funded by the Center?

> 4. Expenses: I want to update you about initiatives after the "go ahead" on hiring the marketing and grant/donor specialists that was discussed during the Executive Committee meeting on April 30. In that meeting, it was confirmed that, as interim director, I did not need prior authorization for those expenses. After the meeting, I contacted the individuals I intended to hire. Following our call last Thursday (May 7), when you informed me of the decision to put all expenses on hold, I immediately communicated the suspension of new expenses to the providers I was negotiating with. This was quite embarrassing with one of them, as we had already held two working meetings and had begun the project. In any case, I want to confirm that I am following your directions regarding the freeze on new expenditures. The only exception is the student editing work on the videos we have already recorded, which is currently underway and we were planning to continue to do over the summer. Could you please confirm that these expenses will be approved?
>
> 5. In an e-mail yesterday (copied below), I informed that Mark Braun put on hold the payment that I promised to the lecturers that I hired. Please confirm that these payments can proceed.
>
> Thank you for clarifying these points. I appreciate your help in making sure everything is clear.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Regent Hensley replied two days later, addressing several of the points raised in my May 9 email.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Monday, May 11, 2026, 8:09 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Cc:** Mark Braun
> **Subject:** [External] Response to Your Email
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> I have had conversations with several individuals, including professors and with the legislation that was passed and we assume will be signed by the Governor we want to put a pause on courses for the fall semester and focus on speaker series.
>
> A suggestion would include Hope Metcalf and Mihailis. Both are from the law school and I believe would be interested in working with you.

In follow-up emails, I asked whether these suggestions were for including those professors in the administration of the Center, perhaps as Director of Administration, as proposed in the earlier plan, discussed in Section 16.1. However, this was never clarified.

PART IV

Events Surrounding the Resignations from the Advisory Council

CHAPTER 19

The Plan to Reorganize the Center

The Board of Regents scheduled a discussion of the Center at its September 16–17, 2026 meeting, before the Center for Intellectual Freedom Committee at 3:10 p.m. on September 16.[1] Two documents were scheduled for discussion at that meeting: a plan for the independence of the Center, formally titled *Center for Intellectual Freedom: Operational & Financial Management Framework*, and a recommendation on the number of finalists to be submitted by the Advisory Council.

On September 12, 2026, I prepared a critique of these proposals for the Advisory Council, to support its deliberation. This chapter and the next incorporate that critique. This chapter describes how the plan was developed, summarizes its main provisions, and comments on its expenditure and legal-counsel provisions and on the finalist requirement. Chapter 20 addresses its travel provision, which I consider its most substantial defect, and closes with my recommendations.

19.1 How the Plan Was Developed

As documented in the preceding chapters, I shared a report on April 13 with multiple regents, recounting many of the facts described above. That report ran to 18 pages, and I can affirm that it offered only a summary of the problems encountered. All the obstacles it reported show very clearly that the University has repeatedly stood in the way of my efforts to move the Center forward, and used the Board of Regents' authority to do so. To this day, there is no indication that this will stop. On the contrary.

After my report, it became clear that it was necessary to address the issues I raised. However, to my surprise, instead of making the Center the primary driver in defining the necessary framework, I **was completely excluded from any deliberations or meetings** in which that framework was to be discussed. When I asked to be included in those discussions, I was told that *my participation "would not be appropriate."* The Board Office and the University, exactly the two parties that had continuously worked to block the Center's operation, were left *alone* to determine how the Center should operate. The **absolute exclusion** of the Center from any part of this discussion process is, to my understanding, completely unacceptable.

Interestingly, the plan submitted to the Board was not the first that the Board Office and the University had proposed. In early April, a plan developed by Executive Director Mark Braun to appoint Richard Fumerton as "Director of Administration"

[1] *Meeting Agenda, September 16–17, 2026 (University of Northern Iowa)*.

moved forward without my involvement in its development (Section 16.1). I was informed about this plan only after its characteristics were largely settled, and had limited opportunity to weigh in. That particular plan did not proceed only because Professor Fumerton declined the role.

In April, I also submitted my own proposal for reorganizing the Center. Rather than working through that proposal together, the Board Office ignored it, and the process continued to rely solely on Mr. Braun and the University.

On August 18, I was informed that Regent Hensley had received the draft plan developed by Mr. Braun, and that **it would not be shared with me** until Regents Hensley, Cramer, and Lacy had finalized it with Executive Director Braun.

On August 25, 2026, Regent Hensley wrote to me, Professor Lowery, and Professor Gallanis, announcing that the CIF Committee had reviewed a draft transition plan and requesting a meeting to gather our input before the document was finalized for Board approval.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 4:00 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Richard Lowery; Thomas P Gallanis
> **Subject:** Transition Plan for the Center
>
> Good afternoon all
>
> The CIF Committee met this morning and reviewed the draft document. We are finalizing the document based upon our input and will get it to you by late Friday afternoon.
>
> We would like to have a zoom meeting with you on Monday at 11:00 a.m. I realize this is short notice, but we want to have your comments and input before the Executive Committee meeting of the Advisory Council on Tuesday. The document will be on the Regent Board Docket for approval at the September 16 meeting.
>
> When we send the draft to you Friday, we will include the zoom link.
>
> Please call if questions.

Professor Gallanis and Professor Lowery each confirmed their availability for the Monday meeting.

> **From:** Thomas P Gallanis
> **Date:** Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 3:39 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Re: [External] Transition Plan for the Center
>
> Monday at 11am CT works for me. What time on Tuesday is the Exec Comm meet-

> ing?

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 7:17 am
> **To:** Thomas P Gallanis
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley; Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Transition Plan for the Center
>
> Monday works for me.

The next day, I replied confirming my own availability, but also took the opportunity to lay out my concerns about the process by which the Center's future had been shaped so far.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, August 27, 2026, 3:22 pm
> **To:** Richard Lowery; Thomas P Gallanis
> **Cc:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Re: Transition Plan for the Center
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> Monday at 11:00 a.m. works for me.
>
> In thinking through my reply to your email, I found myself reflecting on the process that has brought us to this point, where the Board is now proposing a solution to the problems I raised earlier about how the Center should operate. On reflection, I think it's part of my duty to share how I see this, so that it's at least something you can consider as you determine the future moves for the center.
>
> The Center for Intellectual Freedom is the only center in the country not subordinated to a dean, provost, or president of the university that houses it. That structure was a deliberate choice by the General Assembly, reflecting a clear intent that the University not be in a position to influence the Center's direction. I think it was a wise choice, since over the past year as interim director, the University has repeatedly stood in the way of my efforts to move the Center forward, starting with hiring.
>
> The response, when I raised those problems, was to work primarily with the University and Board Office to build a framework that would allow the Center to operate, with a number of meetings on the Center's future taking place without me. When I asked to be included in those discussions, I was told my participation "would not be appropriate." That exclusion is the part that concerns me most, because I don't think it served the process well.
>
> In early April, a plan developed by Mark Braun to appoint Richard Fumerton as

> "Director of Administration" moved forward without my involvement in its development. I was informed about this plan only after its characteristics were pretty much settled, and had limited opportunity to weigh in. That particular plan didn't proceed only because Professor Fumerton declined the role.
>
> After that, on April 13, I submitted my own proposal for reorganizing the Center. Rather than working through that proposal together, the process again relied primarily on Mark Braun and the University, and I wasn't part of the discussions that shaped it.
>
> On August 18, I was informed that you had received the draft plan developed by Mark Braun, and that it would not be shared with me until you and Regents Cramer and Lacy had finalized it. I now understand I'll see it tomorrow, ahead of Monday's discussion. I want to be honest that this sequencing makes it hard for me to feel I'll have meaningful input before the document is set, and it risks putting me in the position of raising concerns only after the substance has already been decided.
>
> I wanted to share these concerns, both about the process itself and about how it sits alongside the legislature's intent in establishing a center independent of university control. I appreciate you taking the time to consider this, and I look forward to speaking Monday.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The following morning, Mark Braun sent Regent Hensley an updated draft of the transition plan.

> **From:** Braun, Mark
> **Date:** Friday, August 28, 2026, 7:18 am
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Updated Draft for Monday's discussion
>
> Mark J. Braun, MBA, EdD
> Executive Director

Regent Hensley forwarded the draft to me, Professor Lowery, and Professor Gallanis, inviting written questions in advance of the Monday call and clarifying that any Board action would not occur until the September 16–17 meeting.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Friday, August 28, 2026, 1:46 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro; Richard Lowery; Thomas P Gallanis
> **Cc:** Cramer, Robert ; Lacy, Stephen M
> **Subject:** Fw: Updated Draft for Monday's discussion

> All please find attached the Transition Plan for the Center for Intellectual Freedom. We would appreciate your comments and we can answer questions on our call Monday.
>
> If you are able and would like to submit questions via email before Monday we can be better prepared to address them.
>
> Please keep in mind, the Advisory Council (Executive Committee) is advisory only. We plan to take action on the final document at our meeting September 16/17.

In other words, while the Board Office and the University had worked on this plan *for months*, and the CIF Committee of the Board of Regents (Regents Hensley, Cramer, and Lacy) *had ten days* (from August 18 to 28) to consider it, Professors Lowery, Gallanis, and I **were not given even a single full business day** to analyze it.

Professor Gallanis replied as follows:

> **From:** Thomas P Gallanis
> **Date:** Friday, August 28, 2026, 2:44 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Luciano de Castro; Richard Lowery
> **Cc:** Cramer, Robert ; Lacy, Stephen M
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Updated Draft for Monday's discussion
>
> Dear Chris,
>
> Thank you for sending this. The document raises so many questions that it would be impossible for me to write out all of the questions.
>
> I am as concerned about what the document says as about what it does not say. Some crucial issues seem to be unaddressed, such as whether the CIF is an academic unit and whether it can be the tenure-home of the director and of the tenured or tenure-track faculty members of CIF.
>
> I look forward to our meeting on Monday, but almost certainly one meeting will not suffice to resolve the matter.
>
> With warmest regards,
> Tom

Notice that the email already anticipates that a single meeting would not be enough. During the Monday, August 31, 11 a.m. meeting, the three of us expressed concern with the framework and stated that it was not satisfactory. We were also informed that crucial academic matters would be addressed only later, since a separate plan, covering, among other things, the issues raised in Section 13.2, was still under development and would not be ready until November. The three regents disregarded these warnings and criticisms. No further meeting was scheduled, and no further discussion took place before the Board meeting.

19.2 The Proposed Operational and Financial Management Framework

The draft framework sets out proposed administrative, financial, human-resources, procurement, and facilities arrangements for operating the Center as a financially distinct unit of the Board of Regents housed at the University of Iowa. I received a draft of this proposal only on August 28.

The version considered and approved by the Board of Regents at its September 16–17, 2026 meeting is available on the Board's website.[2] It covers signature and approval authority, budgeting and accounting, banking and treasury, human resources and payroll, procurement and travel, information technology, facilities, and trademark usage.

The plan essentially places Regent Hensley, as Chair of the CIF Committee of the Board of Regents, in the role previously occupied by Executive Director Mark Braun. It frames the Chair, rather than an institutional officer of the Center, as the Director's supervisor of record and as the holder of key approval authorities over the Center's finances and operations. The major difference from the previous arrangement is that the Director now has expenditure authority up to $25,000. Three provisions stand out:

- **Expenditure approval.** The draft assigns the Chair of the CIF Committee "the Board's signature authority for any purchase $25,000 and above," and likewise gives the Chair signature authority for CIF contracts with external vendors of $25,000 and above.
- **Director's travel.** The draft provides that trip requests of the Director are approved by the Chair of the CIF Committee, while the Director in turn approves the travel of other CIF employees.
- **Legal counsel.** The draft provides that legal review of CIF contracts is to rest with Board counsel, or the Attorney General, rather than with counsel retained by or for the Center itself.

Under the draft, the Chair, an individual regent rather than a vice-president-level institutional officer of the kind the Board's own 2016 review recommended for its universities (see Chapter 20), would hold ongoing, case-by-case approval authority over both the expenditure and travel categories above. This arrangement is, to my knowledge, without precedent. I am not aware of any other case in which a regent approves individual purchases or travel requests for an academic unit. Doing so places the regent in an executive role within that unit, which is difficult to reconcile with the governing role that regents ordinarily exercise as members of the Board.

[2] *Center for Intellectual Freedom: Operational & Financial Management Framework*.

19.2.1 Expenditure Approval

It is reasonable that the Regents, or a committee of Regents, exercise some level of control over the largest expenditures. As the discussion below shows, however, the Board's own practice for the three universities is narrower than that framing might suggest: Board-level approval attaches only to capital improvement project budgets above a specific threshold, not to ordinary purchases or contracts of any size.

For the ordinary acquisition of goods and services, Board policy imposes no dollar limit above which Board approval is required at all. Purchases are instead routed through competitive-bidding tiers handled entirely at the institutional level: purchases up to $25,000 may be delegated to individual department purchasers, purchases between $25,001 and $50,000 proceed through an informal competitive bid, and purchases above $50,000 proceed through a formal competitive bid process.[3] At none of these tiers is Board approval required; Board policy states expressly that such purchases "need not be reported to or approved by the Board of Regents," provided there is no unusual circumstance requiring the Board's special attention.[4]

The one area of university spending for which Board policy does set an explicit dollar threshold for Board-level approval is capital improvement project budgets: new construction, additions, and major renovations. There, project budgets up to $1 million are reviewed and approved by the institution itself; budgets between $1 million and $3 million are reviewed and approved by the Board Office (Board staff, not the Board); and only budgets exceeding $3 million require approval by the Board itself.[5] It is this $3 million capital-project threshold, rather than any limit on ordinary purchases or contracts, that marks the point at which a university's own spending decisions require the Board's own approval.

Measured against this structure, the plan's proposed $25,000 threshold is strikingly low. It is the same figure at which a university department purchaser may act alone, with no Board or Board-Office role whatsoever, and it is two orders of magnitude below the $3 million point at which the Board itself, rather than the Board Office or the institution, becomes involved in a university's spending decisions. It is reasonable that the Center's threshold be lower than a university's, since the Center is a far smaller unit; but it should be set at a value that reflects that difference in scale, on the order of six figures, for example, rather than one that places the Center's Director under tighter day-to-day control than any university administrator is subject to.

[3] *Board Policy Manual § 2.2 (Business Procedures): Purchasing*.
[4] *Board Policy Manual § 2.2 (Business Procedures): Purchasing*.
[5] *Board Policy Manual § 2.3 (Property and Facilities): Project Descriptions and Budgets*.

19.2.2 Legal Counsel

It is not reasonable to require that the Center use the counsel of the Board Office. As documented in Part III, the Board Office has acted deliberately against the interests of the Center. Like the other units subordinate to the Board, the Center should be able to retain its own legal counsel and should not be restricted to working with counsel that has shown itself to be openly adversarial to the Center's interests.

19.3 The Question of Tenure

During the meeting of August 31, 2026, Professor Lowery and Professor Gallanis asked what would happen to the tenure of faculty members appointed to the Center if the Center were later discontinued. The question was not hypothetical: Professor Gallanis had already noted, in his email sent on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 3:39 pm, that the plan did not address whether the Center could be the tenure home of its faculty, and the answer would matter to any scholar considering a tenured appointment at the Center.

As I recall the discussion, Executive Director Braun and President Cramer both stated that such faculty would lose their tenure. I then referred to the Center's bylaws, approved by the Board in December 2025, which address this question directly in its Article IX:[6]

> **Section 5.** Faculty may have tenure in the Center. If the Center is discontinued, the tenured faculty shall keep their tenure in the University.

Executive Director Braun responded that this provision could not be followed because the University would not honored it, even though tenures were approved by the Board. None of the three regents present questioned his view or referred to the bylaws the Board itself had approved.

I report this exchange from my recollection, as I do not know of a written record of the meeting. Its significance, however, is clear. The protection of tenure is among the most important conditions for recruiting established scholars. A scholar asked to give up a tenured position elsewhere will want to know that the appointment will not disappear if the Center is restructured or closed. The bylaws answered that question, and the Board had approved them. If that provision is not to be followed, the Board should say so formally, and amend the bylaws through the procedure they establish, rather than leave the question unresolved for the candidates it hopes to recruit.

[6] *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*.

19.4 The Proposed Requirement of at Least Three Finalists

The second document scheduled for discussion at the September 16–17, 2026 meeting, "Clarification of Number of Finalists,"[7] concerns a request that the Advisory Council submit at least three, and no more than four, named finalists for the position of Director.

This is not a reasonable requirement. When I wrote the critique on which this chapter is based, on September 12, I was still a candidate, and I hoped that the plan would be revised before the Board acted on it. My concern was that, if the plan were adopted as proposed, it would be very difficult for any director, however capable, to do what the Center was created to do, and that a candidate fully willing to accept those terms might not be the reformer the Center needs. For that reason, the Advisory Council should remain free to submit fewer than three finalists, or none at all, if it concludes that the conditions of the position or the candidates in the pool do not allow the Center to carry out its mission. The Board approved the plan without changes, and I have since concluded that I would not accept the position under it (see Chapter 28).

Even if the plan had not been adopted, the Advisory Council could reasonably have concluded, after conducting its search, that fewer than three candidates were acceptable. This is not a hypothetical concern: searches for university leaders sometimes fail to produce the expected number of suitable finalists, as the examples cited in my objections to the Board show (Section 21.2).

This requirement is an interference in the functions of the Advisory Council, and I believe it is inconsistent with the provisions of House File 437 concerning the Advisory Council's role in conducting the national search for the Director:[8]

> § 263C.8(1) *"The advisory council established under section 263C.7* ***shall conduct*** *a nationwide search for candidates for the director of the center. The council shall adhere to all relevant state and federal laws in conducting the search. The council* ***shall submit finalists*** *for the position to the board."*

Under that Act, the Advisory Council, not the Board, conducts the nationwide search and determines which candidates to submit to the Board as finalists. A fixed numerical quota imposed on the Council's own judgment about which candidates are acceptable displaces that statutory function rather than respecting it. The requirement also conflicts with the Center's bylaws, which permit the Executive Committee to submit "a list of one or more finalists" (Article VII, Section 5) and can be amended only with the prior approval of the Advisory Council (Article

[7] *Meeting Agenda, September 16–17, 2026 (University of Northern Iowa)*.

[8] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

XIV).

19.5 Subsequent Developments

At its September 16, 2026 meeting, the Board gave initial approval to the organizational plan. The Executive Director clarified that the Advisory Council's Executive Committee must bring no fewer than three and no more than four finalists to the Board, and Regent Hensley reported that the pool of 62 applicants had been narrowed to 11 candidates, with finalist decisions expected in October.[9] Board President Cramer described the plan as the beginning of a "reset" for the Center.[10] According to press reports, Board President Cramer also informed Professor Lowery, as chair of the Executive Committee, that the Board had approved the administrative agreement, the finalist requirement, and a hiring timeline set by Regent Hensley.[11]

In the following days, 11 of the Advisory Council's 26 members resigned, including Professor Lowery, reducing the Council to 15 members.[12,13] Council members had objected to the degree of control the Board exercised over the Center's staff and planning, including the restrictions on director travel described in the next chapter.[14]

The Board's consideration and approval of the plan, the resignations that followed, and the search for a permanent director are described in Chapters 21, 22, and 23.

[9] "Regents give initial approval for Center for Intellectual Freedom organizational plan".
[10] "Regents give initial approval for Center for Intellectual Freedom organizational plan".
[11] "Regent to Center for Intellectual Freedom committee chair: 'Get on board' or resign".
[12] "Nearly half of Center for Intellectual Freedom advisory council members resign".
[13] "Faculty Advisers Resign After Call for 'Reset' of Iowa Civics Center".
[14] "Nearly half of Center for Intellectual Freedom advisory council members resign".

CHAPTER 20

Micromanagement of Travel

This chapter focuses on travel. The travel provision of the plan discussed in Chapter 19 is, in my view, its most substantial defect. The chapter first describes how advance approval of the Director's travel by a regent began in practice, in July 2026. It then reviews how the Board has handled the travel of the chief executives of the other units it oversees, the presidents of the three Regents universities, including after a documented case of misconduct in 2015, and applies that precedent to the Center. It closes with how the policy was applied to my own requests to attend academic conferences, and with my recommendations.

20.1 The Requirement of Advance Approval

During the summer of 2026, the Center's travel had been suspended, along with its other activities (see Chapter 18). On July 31, 2026, I wrote to Regent Hensley asking whether the suspension had been lifted, since she had remarked a few days earlier that I could have been networking during the summer.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, July 31, 2026, 12:49 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Networking
>
> Hi Chris,
>
> A few days ago you observed that I could have been doing networking over the summer. I replied that this was not possible because of the earlier decision to suspend all travel.
>
> Since your comment came after that decision and some time has now passed (with new updates and decisions), I'd like to revisit the matter and ask: am I free to resume travel for networking as you proposed?
>
> In particular, there is an event this weekend in Des Moines that would be especially useful for identifying potential donors for the Center. I plan to attend with Collin, who already knows some people in that community:
>
> `https://goals.goa.org/speakers`
>
> While this event is a concrete example, my question is more general. I hope to be able to resume these efforts more broadly.

> Best regards,
> Luciano

Regent Hensley replied shortly afterward, approving travel in principle but requiring that every request be submitted to her in advance, with estimated costs and objectives.

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Friday, July 31, 2026, 1:02 pm
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Networking
>
> The short answer is yes, but all requests for travel will need to be made in advance, estimated cost and what you hope to accomplish. I would say most conferences are scheduled significantly in advance of the actual event so that should not be a problem.

In practice, this meant that each trip by the director of an academic center would be reviewed individually by a member of the Board of Regents. I replied suggesting that the Center follow the procedures already used by other academic units:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, August 3, 2026, 12:19 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Subject:** Travel request approvals [RE: [External] Re: Networking]
>
> Chris,
>
> Thank you for the suggestion regarding advance travel requests.
>
> I believe it may be more efficient for the Center to follow the same established procedures used by other academic units at the University of Iowa. Having individual expenditures reviewed by the Board of Regents could take more of your time (and that of the other regents) than is typically required for similar decisions made by academic units or university administrators.
>
> I would be happy to discuss this further and help draft a proposed procedure if that would be useful.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

Collin Sawyer attended the Des Moines event that weekend. Regent Hensley did not reply to my suggestion, and the requirement of advance approval remained in place; it was later incorporated into the framework adopted by the Board in

September (Section 19.2).

20.2 The Board's Own Precedent: The 2016 Review of Presidential Travel

The Board has addressed the question of who should approve the travel of the chief executives it oversees before, in circumstances far more serious than any at the Center. In July 2015, Iowa State University President Steven Leath flew a university-owned aircraft on a trip that combined personal business with university business, and damaged it in a hard landing. The damage was not reported to the University's Office of Risk Management at the time, and no insurance claim was filed.[1] After the incident drew sustained media attention, the Board's Executive Director commissioned a review of travel and equipment use by the presidents of all three universities, presented to the Board on October 20, 2016.[2][3]

The review found that each president's travel was already approved by an institutional officer:[4]

Institution	Who approved the president's travel
University of Northern Iowa	Provost
University of Iowa	Senior financial analyst within the President's office
Iowa State University	Senior Vice President of University Services

No regent, individually or collectively, was part of this approval chain at any of the three universities. Even after a documented case of misconduct, the review's recommendation was to keep that model:

> *"Each President's travel should be approved at a Vice President level. The Board should consider whether the Board President should review the Presidents' travels periodically such as quarterly or semiannually."*[5]

In other words, the Board's own standard is approval by an accountable institutional officer, with the Board limited to periodic, retrospective review, not case-by-case approval by a sitting regent.

[1] *ISU Flight Service and University Owned Aircraft*, p. 7–8.

[2] *Review of Travel Policies and the Use of State Equipment*, p. 1.

[3] The review was presented to the Board's Audit/Compliance and Investment Committee on October 20, 2016 (Iowa Board of Regents 2016b), which received the minutes of that meeting on December 5–6, 2016 (Iowa Board of Regents 2016c).

[4] *Review of Travel Policies and the Use of State Equipment*, p. 3.

[5] *Review of Travel Policies and the Use of State Equipment*, p. 3.

20.3 Application to the Center

The 2016 case provides a direct, on-point precedent for how the Board structures financial and travel oversight even in the most serious circumstances. Applied to the proposal to vest travel-approval authority over the Center's Director in the Chair of the CIF Committee, the record supports the following points:

(a) This procedure was established in a case of actual, documented misconduct. The 2016 review was not a routine or precautionary exercise. It was commissioned only after a university president personally piloted a university aircraft, damaged it, mixed personal and university business on the flight, and the resulting incident drew sustained public and media scrutiny.[6] The Board's subsequent audit went on to document additional, concrete problems: undisclosed damage, an undocumented decision not to file an insurance claim, and billing and recordkeeping irregularities.[7] The Board's intervention was a response to an evidenced problem, not a default or precautionary governance setting.

(b) Even confronted with that documented misconduct, the Board's chosen procedure was approval by a vice-president-level finance or administrative officer, not by a regent or a committee of regents. The Board's own audit, examining exactly this question, benchmarked existing practice at all three universities and found that presidential travel approval already ran through the Provost (UNI), a senior financial analyst (UI), and a Senior Vice President (ISU). Its express recommendation, following the incident, was to standardize this at "a Vice President level," with the Board's own role limited to periodic (quarterly or semiannual) retrospective review.[8] At no stage of either the October preliminary review or the December comprehensive audit did the Board consider, recommend, or adopt a structure in which an individual regent, or a small committee of regents, held ongoing, case-by-case approval authority over a president's travel.

(c) There is no comparable finding of misconduct at the Center. Unlike the ISU Flight Service matter, the proposal to vest travel authority in the CIF Committee Chair is not preceded by any audit finding, compliance review, or documented instance of undisclosed damage, billing irregularity, or policy violation. The 2016 case is precisely the kind of documented, serious problem that the Board's own practice treats as the threshold for any heightened scrutiny, and even then, the remedy was staff-level approval, not approval vested in one or a few individual Board members.

(d) The statute creating the Center vests final operational authority in the director, not the Board. Iowa Code § 263C.9(1) grants the Center's director "sole

[6] See Section 20.2.
[7] *ISU Flight Service and University Owned Aircraft*, p. 5–11.
[8] See Section 20.2.

and exclusive authority" over hiring and staffing decisions and Iowa Code § 263C.9(3) gives "authority to invite guest speakers to the university on behalf of the center," and provides that "the director shall report directly to the board" as an institutional body, not to an individual member or committee chair. This statutory design mirrors, and arguably reinforces, the institutional-officer model the Board itself adopted in 2016: authority to conduct day-to-day and travel-related operations sits with the accountable officer of the unit (there, university vice presidents; here, the statutorily designated director), while the Board's role is oversight and periodic review, not first-line approval.

(e) It follows that the same procedure adopted in 2016 should reasonably apply to the Center, which, like the three universities, is a unit subordinate to the Board. The Center for Intellectual Freedom is, under § 263C.2(1), "an independent academic center under the board at the university," occupying a position relative to the Board analogous to that of the universities themselves. Having already determined, after a genuine misconduct episode, that the appropriate and sufficient oversight mechanism for the most senior officials at its universities is vice-president-level travel approval coupled with periodic Board-level review, the Board has no readily apparent basis to apply a stricter, individual-regent- or committee-approval model to the Center absent any comparable finding.

The Board's own audit record specifies precisely what that periodic review should look like, and it is not case-by-case approval:

> *"Each President's travel should be approved at a Vice President level. The Board should consider whether the Board President should review the Presidents' travels periodically such as* ***quarterly or semiannually****."*
> (emphasis added) *Review of Travel Policies and the Use of State Equipment*, p. 3

Consistent, precedent-based governance favors extending this same 2016 standard to the Center: travel approval vested in an accountable finance or administrative officer engaged by or assigned to the Center, with review by the Board (or the Board President) occurring on a quarterly or semiannual basis, not through case-by-case approval exercised by a regent or a committee of regents.

20.4 The Practice of This Policy

The concern above is not merely theoretical. It was already put into practice against the Center's Director even before the plan was formally adopted. On August 28, 2026, already following the procedures detailed in the plan, I was asked to provide information about the three conferences I wanted to attend in the following two months, and I sent Regent Hensley the corresponding links.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Friday, August 28, 2026, 6:38 pm
> **To:** Hensley, Christine
> **Subject:** Conferences
>
> Chris,
>
> As requested, here are the links to the three conferences I mentioned:
>
> 1. American Culture: Past and Present (and Future?)
> `https://phillysoc.org/tps_meetings/2026-fall-meeting/`
> 2. Conference on Civic Thought
> `https://chasecenter.osu.edu/2026-conference-civic-thought`
> 3. 1776: Liberty Conversation
> `https://www.mps2026.org/`
>
> Best,
> Luciano.

Regent Hensley replied the next morning asking for the estimated costs associated with attending.

> **From:** Hensley, Christine
> **Date:** Saturday, August 29, 2026, 6:47 am
> **To:** Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Conferences
>
> Luciano can you please provide the estimated cost to attend, including conference fees and related travel expenses. Thanks

As reported by *The Gazette*, the Board of Regents then blocked me, as the Center's interim director, from attending these three academic conferences, in Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana, despite criticism and concern expressed by the Center's own executive committee.[9] All three conferences were directly related to the Center's mission, and members of the executive committee, including faculty from other universities serving on the Center's advisory council, objected to the denial as an unprecedented and inappropriate level of board involvement in a director's ordinary academic activities.[10,11]

[9] *Regents Won't Let Center for Intellectual Freedom Interim Director Attend 3 Conferences* (Vanessa Miller, The Gazette).
[10] *Regents Won't Let Center for Intellectual Freedom Interim Director Attend 3 Conferences* (Vanessa Miller, The Gazette).
[11] "Center for Intellectual Freedom advisers debate oversight of activities, curriculum".

A few days after being informed of the denial of the trips, I offered to cover the travel expenses of these conferences myself, so that cost would not be a factor in the decision. I also requested authorization to participate in a fourth conference. The corresponding email follows:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Monday, September 7, 2026, 4:52 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley
> **Cc:** Robert Cramer; Stephen M. Lacy
> **Subject:** RE: [External] Follow up on Questions re: Actual Financials and Proposed Budget for FY 27
>
> Chris,
>
> *[Portions of this email addressing other topics are omitted.]*
>
> **Speaker Series**
>
> In these first few weeks of the Fall semester, I have been developing a good system to promote the talks and obtain good attendance for the speaker series. This includes collecting individual emails for each faculty member at the University of Iowa. We were working on this last week for Professor Todd Zywicki's talk at the College of Law, and we already obtained very positive results. He commented after the talk that in twenty years of giving talks for the Federalist Society, he had never seen so many faculty attending one of his talks.
>
> We will conclude the organization of this system this week and use it for inviting faculty to the Bill McClay talk on Thursday, September 10. My plan is to send an individual invitation to as many faculty as we can reach. Besides promoting attendance, this strategy has the added effect of connecting with the rest of the university to promote the Center and its academic character.
>
> **Conference Attendance**
>
> Since the system for promoting attendance at the talks will be finalized this week, I want to clarify that for the next talks, promoting attendance will be much easier and will require much less of my time. Given this, I would like to revisit your decision about the conferences. As I said, my presence or absence at the University at the time of these conferences will not affect attendance one way or another.
>
> I would also like to add another conference to the list, organized by the Federalist Society:
>
> "250 Years of American Exceptionalism"
> November 12 to 14, 2026 (Thursday through Saturday)
> The Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C.
> https://fedsoc.org/conferences/2026-national-lawyers-convention
>
> Despite being called the National Lawyers Convention, this conference is not re-

> stricted to lawyers and is open to academics from other fields.
>
> This conference also does not conflict with any of the talks scheduled for the Center. If the concern is the use of resources, I will be glad to pay all costs to attend the four conferences with my own resources, without using any of the Center's funds. I would just like assurance that this will not negatively affect the evaluation of my application for the position of permanent director.
>
> I am asking this now because I only recently learned of this additional conference, and because, as you know, this subject is something I care about deeply. These conferences are learning opportunities, in addition to networking, that I would love to take advantage of. As a humble and eager learner, I request your authorization to attend these conferences without the negative impact I mentioned above.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

That offer did not change the outcome. On Saturday, September 12, 2026, I was informed by Regent Hensley that:

> *"As of this morning, we are still denying the request for the conferences."*

There is no reasonable justification for the denial of these conferences. As I have stated multiple times, and in particular in the email above, my participation in these conferences would not affect the speaker series. The use of funds is likewise no longer a reason, since I offered to pay my own expenses.

20.5 What Is Behind This Plan

What, then, is the true intention behind this denial and, ultimately, of this entire plan? It is, in my assessment, simply a way to subordinate, and to demonstrate control over, the Director. I understand this decision as the continuation of a full year of obstacles created by the University and the Board Office. It is further evidence of these actors' determination to prevent the Center from accomplishing anything meaningful, while organizing appearances designed to persuade the public that something is being done.

As such, no reasonable candidate, that is, no candidate genuinely interested in serving the purpose for which the Center was created, should be expected to accept a policy that operates this way.

20.6 What Should Be Done

First, the plan developed by the Board Office and the University should be disregarded entirely.

Second, it should be determined that the Center should be a central player in the development of any operational plan. This plan would essentially consist of following the same procedures already used for the other units under the Board. In particular, rather than vesting expenditure and travel approval in the Chair of the CIF Committee, the Center should be permitted to hire its own personnel to review its expenditures, an arrangement equivalent, in function, to the chief financial officer of a university. Given that the Center's transaction volume will initially be small, this could reasonably be a part-time, hourly position rather than a full-time appointment. The Director may propose a candidate, but the qualifications of this person could be subject to Board approval. Critically, however, this person should work *for the Center*, in the same way that a university's chief financial officer works for the university rather than for the Board or the Board Office. This is precisely the model that Section 20.3, above, shows the Board itself adopted for university presidents even after a genuine instance of misconduct: an accountable institutional officer, not a regent or a committee of regents, performing the ongoing approval function.

Moreover, the requirement of at least three finalists should be abandoned entirely. The statutory function of the Advisory Council should be preserved. This point may appear self-serving, since I was a candidate for the position. It is not: as I explain in Chapter 28, I would not accept the position under the framework the Board has adopted, and my concern is that the Center be organized so that any director can carry out its duties.

Chapter 21

The Board's Approval of the Restructuring Plan

Chapter 19 describes how the plan to restructure the Center, formally titled *Center for Intellectual Freedom: Operational & Financial Management Framework*, was developed by the Board Office and the University without the Director's participation, and how Professor Lowery, Professor Gallanis, and I received it on Friday, August 28, 2026, for discussion the following Monday. This chapter describes what followed: the Board's consideration of the plan at its meeting of September 16, 2026, and the written objections that Professor Lowery and I submitted that night. These events set the stage for the resignations from the Advisory Council described in the next chapter.

21.1 The Board Meeting of September 16, 2026

The plan, together with the proposal to require at least three finalists for the director position, was taken up by the CIF Committee of the Board on the afternoon of September 16. During the discussion, Regent Hensley stated that the "professors" had not provided comments on the two proposals.

That statement did not reflect what had happened. At the meeting of Monday, August 31, Professor Lowery, Professor Gallanis, and I had each told the three regents of the CIF Committee that we did not consider the plan acceptable, and Professor Gallanis had already written, on August 28, that the document raised more questions than could be addressed in a single meeting (see Chapter 19). What was true was only that we had not submitted written comments, and the reason is evident from the timeline: we had received the final document on a Friday afternoon, after it had been settled by the regents, with no real opportunity to change it.

21.2 My Written Objections

To correct the record, I wrote to the three regents of the CIF Committee shortly after midnight, stating my opposition to both measures and explaining my reasons in writing. The email summarizes, in a form addressed to the regents themselves, the arguments developed in Chapters 19 and 20. It also states clearly which of its claims rest on documented facts and which reflect my own assessment.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Thursday, September 17, 2026, 12:42 am

To: Christine Hensley; Robert Cramer; Steve Lacy
Cc: Richard Lowery; Thomas P. Gallanis
Subject: Re: Fw: Updated Draft for Monday's discussion

Dear Regents Hensley, Cramer, and Lacy,

In today's discussion, Regent Hensley noted that the "professors" did not provide comment on the two proposals before the Board. I want to clarify the record on this point. During the meeting, Richard Lowery, Tom Gallanis, and I made clear, in our comments, that we did not consider the plan acceptable. It is correct, however, that I did not submit comments in writing. I want to remedy that now, and to state for the record that I, as Interim Director of the Center, oppose both measures in the strongest possible terms. This email explains the reasons for that opposition.

I. The Proposed Operational and Financial Management Framework

Regent Hensley described this operational framework as a means of giving the Center independence. I see it very differently: as crystalizing a form of control that has no parallel with respect to any other unit overseen by the Board. It is not difficult to see why. Throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, Executive Director Mark Braun worked in very close coordination with the University to block the Center's operations. This included blocking visitors, blocking hiring, inserting himself into the preparation of the Center's bylaws by insisting on retaining ultimate authority over expenditures, and delaying the release of the market demand report, among many other instances. The University, through its Provost, likewise took the position that the Center cannot offer courses, even though Iowa Code 263C.3(4) states that the "center shall offer at least one three-semester hour course." I want to be clear that these are not impressions on my part: I have documented these events in writing as they occurred, including the relevant email correspondence. After I brought all of these facts forward, Regent Hensley asked precisely these two actors, the Executive Director and the University, to develop a "plan" for the Center's independence. More importantly, the Director's own participation was excluded from every discussion of that plan, even though the Center had already submitted its own proposal in April, which was simply ignored. I would also note, on this question of participation, that the Board Office and the University had months to develop this operational framework, and that the three regents on the CIF Committee then had ten days to review it themselves. By contrast, Richard, Tom, and I received the framework on a Friday afternoon to discuss it the following Monday morning. We were not permitted to see it before it had already been finalized by the regents, and had no real opportunity to change anything in it.

What does this operational framework amount to? As a factual matter, it places Regent Hensley in the position of administrative authority previously exercised by Executive Director Mark Braun, with only minor changes. How that authority will actually be used in the future is, I recognize, a matter of judgment rather than established fact, and I want to be clear that what follows is my own assessment, not a claim I can document in the same way as the events described above. But it is

fair to ask the question: why would actors with such a consistent record of blocking the Center's operations suddenly reverse course and work for its independence? My own reading is that they have not changed, and that the practical effect of this framework is to continue the same pattern of control over the Center, now through a regent rather than through the Executive Director. I recognize the Board may see this differently, but I would note that the pattern is already visible in practice, in the recent decision to block the Director's participation in academic conferences related directly to its mission. I am genuinely sorry that Regent Hensley agreed to take on this role.

One of the panels at the inaugural event I organized last December, at an enormous level of personal effort and sacrifice, addressed the possibility of reforming universities. Two of the three panelists said it was essentially not possible, and the third offered only a hint of possibility. I tried to present this at the time as a warning of how difficult it would be to change universities from within, and I emphasized it more than once. It seems that warning has been forgotten. I understand that pretending to act is far easier and more convenient than actually doing what is needed. Real change requires a high level of courage and effort. I have always been willing to put in that level of effort. I am sorry that so many people prefer the easier path. My principles do not allow me to do the same.

I include this because I see it as my duty to offer a candid assessment of what this operational framework amounts to. It is equally important, however, to show how it conflicts with the Board's own practice.

Substantively, the framework concentrates administrative and financial control over the Center in the Chair of the CIF Committee, an individual regent, rather than in an institutional officer of the kind the Board itself has relied on elsewhere. Three provisions illustrate this. First, the Chair, not a finance officer, holds signature authority over any CIF purchase or contract of $25,000 and above; this figure is the same threshold at which an ordinary university department purchaser may act entirely alone, and is far below the $3 million level at which the Board itself becomes involved in a university's capital spending, so it places the Center under tighter day-to-day control than any university administrator faces. Second, the framework assigns legal review of CIF contracts to Board counsel or the Attorney General, displacing counsel retained by or for the Center, even though the Board Office has already shown itself willing to act adversely to the Center's interests, including by altering the substance of the Center's own bylaws before they reached the Board's agenda in November 2025. Third, and most significantly, the framework gives the Chair of the CIF Committee, rather than any institutional officer, approval authority over the Director's own travel.

This travel provision breaks with the Board's own precedent. After a 2015 incident in which an ISU president caused significant damage to a university aircraft, the Board's 2016 review of presidential travel found that, even before any corrective action, every president's travel was approved by an institutional officer (a provost, a senior financial analyst, or a senior vice president) and not by any regent. Confronted with actual documented misconduct, the Board's own recommendation was

to standardize travel approval at the vice-president level, with the Board's role limited to periodic, retrospective review, not case-by-case approval by a sitting regent. No comparable finding of misconduct exists here, yet the framework subjects the Center's Director to a stricter regime than the one the Board adopted for university presidents after a genuine scandal.

The correct way to address this is to adopt the same procedure followed at every college and university: have expenditures approved by a financial officer, who could work for the Center on an hourly basis initially, given how small the Center's operations still are. That same person, standing with respect to the Director in a position analogous to a vice president's relative to a university president, would also approve the Director's travel. By the same logic, the Center should also have its own legal counsel, as universities themselves do, rather than being routed through Board counsel or the Attorney General; here too, the attorney could be engaged on an hourly basis to begin with, given the Center's current size. This would follow the standard procedure already used for every other unit under the Board, rather than singling out the Center for a far more restrictive form of regental control, which runs against the purpose of the law, especially when the Board is willing to impose it in order to accommodate the University's own preferences regarding the Center.

II. The Proposed Requirement of at Least Three Finalists

I see at least four problems with this second proposal.

First, the Board's approach to the Center's director search is more restrictive than its approach to presidential searches, even though the underlying statute for the Center is more specific. Presidential search committees have historically operated under an informal practice of forwarding between three and five finalists, a range set by custom rather than by any Board rule fixing the number. Iowa Code § 263C.8, by contrast, already speaks directly to the Center's search and simply requires the Council to submit "finalists" without specifying a number at all. It is telling that the Board felt the need to impose a rigid three-to-four band precisely where the statute is least ambiguous, while presidential searches, governed by looser statutory language, have never been pinned to a fixed count by Board rule.

Second, a fixed floor is not merely a formality; it can produce a failed search. Recent history offers several cautionary examples of searches that could not produce the required number of suitable finalists. The University of Wisconsin System's 2020 presidential search narrowed to a single finalist who withdrew within ten days amid faculty revolt, forcing the Board of Regents to restart the process. The University of Michigan's 2026 search saw its selected successor withdraw after a cancer diagnosis, again sending the university back to a fresh search. Most directly on point, Boise State University's 2025 presidential search, which required the committee to forward five qualified finalists to the Idaho State Board of Education, was suspended indefinitely when the committee could not identify five candidates willing to be named publicly. A specialized, tenure-eligible directorship is at least as likely as a university presidency to produce a thinner pool in a given search cycle, and a rigid minimum of three risks forcing the Council either to pad its list with unsuitable

names or to abandon a search that has, in substance, succeeded in finding one or two genuinely qualified candidates.

Third, the proposed floor and ceiling conflict with the Center's own Bylaws, which already govern the number of finalists and say something different: Article VII, Section 5 permits the Executive Committee to submit "a list of one or more finalists," with the only qualification, in Section 6, being that finalists hold the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at the University, at the rank of Professor. Changing that requirement would amend the Bylaws, and Article XIV of the Bylaws requires prior approval by the Advisory Council before any amendment takes effect. The Board's proposal does not follow that procedure; it simply imposes a conflicting numerical rule by docket action.

Fourth, and looking forward rather than back, there is the question of whether this floor and ceiling are meant to apply only to the Center's search or to searches generally. If the Board intends this rule only for the Center, and only for this specific search, then it amounts to meddling with, and interfering in, this particular process in a casuistic manner. Why enact a rule to constrain just one search, if the same constraint is not thought necessary for any other search the Board conducts? If, on the other hand, the Board believes a fixed numerical floor and ceiling are sound practice generally, then it should say so and apply the same rule to presidential and other institutional searches going forward. Either the rule is general, in which case it should be adopted as such, or it is specific to the Center, in which case it is difficult to see it as anything other than an ad hoc intervention in this one search.

Respectfully,
Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director, Center for Intellectual Freedom, University of Iowa

21.3 Professor Lowery's Confirmation

A few hours later, Professor Lowery, who chaired the Advisory Council's Executive Committee, replied to all recipients, confirming that he too had opposed the plan and rejecting the suggestion that the professors had offered no comments.

From: Richard Lowery
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2026, 4:04 am
To: Luciano de Castro
Cc: Christine Hensley; Thomas P. Gallanis; Robert Cramer; Steve Lacy
Subject: Re: Fw: Updated Draft for Monday's discussion

I will add that I made it abundantly clear that I opposed this plan in its entirety. It is not correct that I did not have any comments. I made my opposition to the plan and the opaque process of developing the plan abundantly clear.

21.4 The Outcome

None of the three regents replied to either email. Later that day, September 17, the full Board approved the framework, the requirement that the Advisory Council submit three to four finalists, and a timeline for the hiring process set by Regent Hensley.[1] Board President Cramer described the plan as the beginning of a "reset" for the Center. In the days that followed, eleven of the Advisory Council's twenty-six members resigned, including Professor Lowery. Those resignations are the subject of the next chapter.

Takeaway. The Board approved the restructuring plan after describing the Center's own leadership as having offered no comments on it, although all three had stated their opposition at the only meeting to which they were invited. When the Director and the chair of the Executive Committee corrected the record in writing, the Board's decision did not change.

[1] The Board's committee on the Center had given the plan initial approval on September 16 (Draisey 2026f); President Cramer reported the full Board's approval in his email to Professor Lowery that evening, reproduced in Section 22.2.

Chapter 22

The Resignations from the Advisory Council

On September 21, 2026, eleven of the thirteen faculty members of the Center's Advisory Council resigned, including Professor Richard Lowery, chair of its Executive Committee. The Council had been designed to combine thirteen Iowans with thirteen nationally recognized scholars, whose presence was meant to give the Center academic standing from its first day (see Section 5.4). Their departure left a Council of fifteen members, only two of them academics. This chapter documents the exchange that led to the resignations, in the five days following the Board's approval of the restructuring plan described in Chapter 21.

22.1 The Dispute over the Search Timeline

On the afternoon of September 16, shortly after the Board's CIF Committee took up the restructuring plan, Regent Hensley wrote to the members of the Executive Committee, through the Board's paralegal, setting a timeline for the remainder of the director search.

> **From:** Stephanie Griffin, on behalf of Christine Hensley
> **Date:** Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4:16 pm
> **To:** Executive Committee Members
> **Subject:** Next Executive Committee Meeting – Request for Availability
>
> *This email is being sent on behalf of Chris Hensley*
>
> Executive Committee Members,
>
> As a follow up to our last meeting, we established there were 11 candidates with two or more members of the EC selecting them. For your reference here are the numbers of those individuals: [candidate numbers omitted].
>
> We need to schedule an EC meeting the week of 9/21 to finalize the list. Please send your availability for the week of 9/21–9/25 to Stephanie Griffin. (Understanding there may be 2 or 3 individuals the EC committee does not wish to move forward). I would urge all EC members to review the individuals listed above so we can finalize the pool and keep this process moving forward.
>
> I have also directed notices be sent to the remaining applicants not listed above that they were not selected.
>
> Timeline going forward:

> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Week of 9/21 | Executive Committee meeting |
> | Week of 9/28 | Zoom interviews with candidates in the pool |
> | Week of 10/5 | In-depth interviews with remaining candidates |
> | Week of 10/12 | Campus visits |
> | Week of 10/19 | Final interviews with Regents and selection |
>
> Appreciate all of your time and assistance in moving this process forward. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Two features of this email deserve attention. First, it set the schedule of the search, including the date by which the Regents would make their selection, without a decision of the Executive Committee. Second, it reported that notices had already been sent, at Regent Hensley's direction, informing applicants outside the pool of eleven that they had not been selected. Under Iowa Code § 263C.8(1), it is the Advisory Council that "shall conduct a nationwide search for candidates for the director of the center," and the Center's bylaws assign that task to its Executive Committee, which Professor Lowery chaired for the purposes of the search.

Professor Lowery replied within the hour.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 5:06 pm
> **To:** Stephanie Griffin
> **Cc:** Executive Committee members; Christine Hensley; Robert Cramer; Steve Lacy; Angela Stuedemann (Office of the Attorney General)
> **Subject:** Re: Next Executive Committee Meeting – Request for Availability
>
> I am the chair of the executive committee for the purposes of the search. We will not be meeting for the search next week and that is not the timeline we will follow.

22.2 Board President Cramer's Ultimatum

The following evening, after the Board had approved the restructuring plan, Board President Robert Cramer wrote to Professor Lowery. He copied Executive Director Braun, Representative Taylor Collins, Regent Hensley, and Regent Lacy, and blind-copied the Governor.

> **From:** Robert Cramer
> **Date:** Thursday, September 17, 2026, 7:43 pm
> **To:** Richard Lowery
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Taylor Collins; Christine Hensley; Steve Lacy
> **Subject:** CIF
>
> Dear Richard.

> I appreciate the work you have put into the Center for Intellectual Freedom. But it appears we are going down different paths. The Board of Regents is moving forward with a new administrative agreement with the university and with hiring the permanent director. Rather than acting as an advisory committee, you seem to want to run the center your way and you're not respecting the Board's decisions. It appears that you're trying to use the hiring process as leverage with the Board to get what you want. Therefore, Regent Hensley called for the Executive Committee to meet next week to keep moving forward.
>
> We are looking forward to a reset for CIF. Instead of fighting each step of the way, we want the permanent executive director and the Advisory Council to set a new course by working in partnership with the Board and the University. CIF will maintain its independence and ensure its courses are taught in a fair and balanced way that matches the legislative intent. But we don't have to do everything in isolation. We and the University share the goal of helping our students grow in the knowledge of civics and American history and in the skills of debate and citizenship. We don't want CIF to be an island of disgruntled nonconformists but an engaging center that permeates the whole campus. We want to change the culture.
>
> I have copied in Representative Collins and have blind copied in the Governor as they have both shown interest in the success of the Center.
>
> I am letting you know that the Board voted today to approve the new administrative agreement, the direction to the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council to submit three or four finalists for the job of Permanent Executive Director, and, due to your refusal below to proceed with the hiring process in a timely manner, we're also approving the timeline Regent Hensley has laid out for the hiring process.
>
> The board covets and appreciates the input from the advisory council. But CIF is the responsibility of the Board, and the Board will make the final decisions regarding CIF.
>
> I respectfully ask that you get on board and work with Regent Hensley collaboratively or step down and allow someone else to chair the hiring process. Please let us know what you decide.
>
> Robert Cramer

President Cramer's email states the Board's view clearly, and it should be read in those terms: that the Advisory Council is advisory, that the Board bears final responsibility for the Center, and that the Executive Committee's chair was using the search as leverage. Regent Hensley later described the disagreement to *Inside Higher Ed* in similar terms, as a dispute over whether a permanent director had to be in place before the Center could act, while the departing faculty supported allowing the interim director to make those decisions (Quinn 2026). According to the same report, Representative Collins wrote to Professor Lowery that he agreed with President Cramer.

Three aspects of the email, however, go beyond a disagreement over process. First,

it describes the Board as having the final word over the search itself, although the statute assigns the search to the Advisory Council and asks only that the Council "submit finalists" to the Board (§ 263C.8(1)). Second, it confirms that the restructuring plan was conceived as a partnership "with the Board and the University," the same University whose administrators had, as Part III documents, opposed the Center's operation from the start. Third, it describes the scholars on the Advisory Council, and implicitly the Center they were helping to build, as a potential "island of disgruntled nonconformists." For the faculty members to whom it was addressed, many of whom had experienced professional consequences for departing from prevailing views on their own campuses, the phrase confirmed that the Board regarded them as a problem to be managed rather than as the scholars the Governor had invited to help.

22.3 The Resignations

On Saturday, September 19, Professor Lowery replied to President Cramer, attaching a letter of resignation signed by himself and ten other faculty members of the Advisory Council.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Saturday, September 19, 2026, 6:10 pm
> **To:** Robert Cramer
> **Cc:** Mark Braun; Taylor Collins; Christine Hensley; Steve Lacy
> **Subject:** Re: CIF
>
> Robert,
>
> It is now abundantly clear that the University and Regents will never allow the Center for Intellectual Freedom to be a success and will never allow the Center to operate in accordance with the law. Sadly, it seems that there will also not be the external support needed to see this endeavor actually succeed.
>
> Your message demonstrates clearly that you have complete contempt for those academics who do not adhere to the dominant, leftist ideology on university campus, describing us contemptuously as "disgruntled nonconformists." That is not an environment that can possibly lead to a vibrant Center for Intellectual Freedom. No serious academics with an interest in higher education reform would reasonably want to continue to associate with this project under your leadership, and as you can see from the attached letter they will not.
>
> Richard Lowery

The letter of resignation read in full:

September 21, 2026

An open letter to President Robert Cramer
Board of Regents, State of Iowa

Dear President Cramer,

We express our vote of no confidence in the Board of Regents and in the Board's Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) Supervisory Committee by resigning, effective immediately, from the CIF Advisory Council.

Sincerely,

Richard Lowery
Thomas Gallanis
Dorian Abbot
Daniel Bonevac
Carlos Carvalho
Joshua Katz
Sergiu Klainerman
Iván Marinovic
Nicola Persico
Joshua Rauh
Harald Uhlig

The eleven members who resigned were Professors Richard Lowery (University of Texas at Austin), Carlos Carvalho (University of Austin), Iván Marinovic (Stanford University), Dorian Abbot (University of Chicago), Daniel Bonevac (University of Texas at Austin), Harald Uhlig (University of Chicago), Joshua Katz (American Enterprise Institute), Sergiu Klainerman (Princeton University), Nicola Persico (Northwestern University), Joshua Rauh (Stanford University), and Thomas Gallanis (George Mason University). According to *The Gazette*, their letter described the resignation as a vote of no confidence in the Board of Regents and in its CIF committee (Miller 2026a). Of the thirteen faculty members on the Council, only Professors Mark Bauerlein and Wilfred McClay remained.

On Tuesday, September 22, the Board released a statement accepting the eleven resignations, effective immediately. Regent Hensley stated that the Board looked forward to working with the remaining fifteen members, and the Board announced that the five remaining members of the Executive Committee would meet that Friday to continue the search (Miller 2026a). In an email to the press, President Cramer described himself as being as conservative as anyone on the Advisory Council, and stated that he wanted to change hearts and minds rather than fight among allies (Miller 2026a).

On Friday, September 25, the Executive Committee, reduced from nine members to five by the resignations and now chaired by Professor Bauerlein, met in closed session to consider the eleven remaining candidates. It advanced four finalists, the number the Board had just required. I was not among them (Miller 2026c). In early September, with the support of the full committee, I had been one of the eleven applicants, out of sixty-two, advanced for further consideration; I was also the only one of the eleven whose name had been made public. The decision not to advance my application was thus made only after most of the committee members who had supported it had resigned. The finalists were to visit campus in October, with interviews before the Board and a final selection expected the week of October 19.

22.4 The Request to Remove the Resigning Members from the Website

Less than half an hour after his email to President Cramer, Professor Lowery asked the Center to remove the names and photographs of the resigning members from its website.

> **From:** Richard Lowery
> **Date:** Saturday, September 19, 2026, 6:36 pm
> **To:** Collin Sawyer; Luciano de Castro
> **Subject:** Fwd: CIF
>
> Please remove the names and photos of the signatories of this letter from the Center's website.

The website was updated the following Monday, September 21, 2026.

22.5 Public Reaction

The resignations were covered widely. *The Gazette* described them as a vote of no confidence in the Board and noted that the Governor had personally invited the departing scholars to serve (Miller 2026a). *Inside Higher Ed* placed the episode within a broader pattern of conflict at civics centers created by legislatures and governing boards, and reported Professor Lowery's view that political support for doing the work properly had disappeared in Iowa (Quinn 2026). Professor Lowery himself set out the lessons he drew from the episode in *National Review*, arguing that a captured center does not fail visibly, but continues operating while telling donors and legislators what they want to hear, and that reform requires regents willing to push back against university leaders and politicians willing to stay the course under criticism (Lowery 2026).

22.6 Assessment

The thirteen faculty members of the Advisory Council were the Center's principal link to the national academic community, and the main source of the academic credibility the Center needed in order to hire faculty and build courses of high quality. In September 2025, their inclusion was also what allowed the Council to meet its requirement of political balance (see Section 5.4). Whether the reduced Council continues to satisfy the political balance requirements of Iowa Code § 263C.7 and § 69.16 is a question the Board will need to address.

Their departure was not a reaction to a single email. It followed a year in which, as Part III documents, the Center's Director and its Advisory Council raised the same concerns repeatedly without effect, and it came within days of the Board's approval of a framework that the Council's own leadership had opposed. The Board's response was to accept the resignations, describe the outcome as a reset, and continue the search on the timeline it had set. The scholars whom the Governor had personally invited to help build the Center concluded that the Board would not allow it to operate as the law intended, and the Board did not attempt to persuade them otherwise.

Takeaway. Within five days of approving the restructuring plan, the Board set the timeline of the director search without the Executive Committee, issued an ultimatum to its chair, and accepted the resignations of eleven of the Council's thirteen scholars. The Center lost most of the national academic expertise on which its credibility depended, and the Board treated the loss as the beginning of a reset.

Chapter 23

The Search for a Permanent Director

Iowa law requires the Center to have a permanent director, and the search for that director was meant to be one of the first tasks after the Center's creation. Instead, it became one of the longest delays of the year. This chapter describes the original timeline, the failed attempt to hire a search firm, the assurances given to candidates about open evaluation, the selection of finalists, the complaint I submitted to the Iowa Public Information Board, and the meetings between the finalists and the University's senior administrators.

23.1 The Original Timeline

The initial plan was to conduct the search in October 2025, as Regent Hensley outlines in an email sent on Monday, July 14, 2025, 10:10 am. However, as of this writing in October 2026, the search has yet to be concluded.

I was not involved in most of the discussions regarding the search and do not know most of the details of the process. Because I could become a candidate for the position, it was appropriate that information about the search not be shared with me, and Richard Lowery was careful not to do so. I occasionally learned some pieces of information from Regent Hensley. During the first months of 2026, I was told that the Board Office was discussing changes to the proposals of the search firms.

At the same time, information about the search was reaching others at the University. In a conversation during the search, one of the University's deans described details of the process that I did not know, and it was clear that the dean was considerably better informed about it than I was. I do not know how this information reached the dean. Information about the search was concentrated in the Board Office, and deans do not ordinarily have direct access to the Board Office; information of this kind usually reaches them through the Provost, for example at meetings of the Council of Deans. It would be natural for the Executive Director of the Board to keep the Provost informed, but this is a conjecture I cannot verify. Whatever the path, the fact that a dean was informed shows that the University's leadership was following the search with interest.

23.2 The Failed Attempt to Hire a Search Firm

On Thursday, March 19, 2026, I was invited to a meeting in which I was informed that the attempt to hire a search firm for the permanent director position had failed.

During the meeting, it emerged that an important obstacle was the firm's insistence on a substantial non-refundable retainer. The main concern was what would happen in the event of a failed search. The Board Office maintained that the payment was small. I do not know the details of the negotiations or which firms were involved.

During the meeting, I commented that the Center's budget included an estimated $100,000 for the search, so the amounts that had been mentioned could be accommodated. After that comment, Regent Hensley suggested that I must have altered the search-firm budget line because I had known in advance what the firm would charge. I denied knowing anything about this in advance, and I explained the history of the budget line in the email below, sent shortly afterward. The original estimate had in fact been $150,000, well above the amount ultimately charged.

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** Saturday, March 21, 2026, 8:34 pm
> **To:** Christine Hensley; Richard Lowery; James R Lowery Jr
> **Subject:** Follow-up on the information given during Thursday meeting
>
> Hi Chris and Richard,
>
> Following up on our discussion last Thursday, I wanted to share the budget that Suzanne Stratton prepared on October 7, 2025. In this initial budget, she estimated the "Search Firm for Permanent Director" expense at $150,000.
>
> On October 29, 2025, I sent the attached revised budget, reducing that line item to $80,000 because I considered the original amount high.
>
> Later, Richard suggested increasing the estimate to $100,000 for the new budget I was asked to prepare. This updated budget was sent on January 29, 2026.
>
> As I said during the meeting, I was unaware, until that Thursday morning, that the firm had charged $100,000.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

23.3 The Assurance of Open Evaluation

The search was eventually conducted by the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council and the Board Office. On August 21, 2026, the Board of Regents sent candidates a form to request that their applications be discussed in closed session, stating that candidates who did not submit it would be evaluated in public.

> **From:** Griffin, Stephanie L
> **Date:** Friday, August 21, 2026, 11:39 am

> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** Closed Session Request Form - Center for Intellectual Freedom Director Position
>
> Good morning,
>
> Thank you for your interest in the Center for Intellectual Freedom Director position. To allow the Iowa Board of Regents, the Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council and the Center for Intellectual Freedom Executive Committee to discuss your application and related materials in closed session, please complete the attached closed session request form and return it to my attention at your earliest convenience. If you choose not to submit this form, your qualifications and credentials will be evaluated in public session.
>
> Thank you,
> Stephanie Griffin
> Paralegal, Iowa Board of Regents

Six days later, she sent a follow-up repeating the same conditions.

> **From:** Griffin, Stephanie L
> **Date:** Thursday, August 27, 2026, 8:48 am
> **To:** De Castro Filho, Luciano I
> **Subject:** [External] Re: Closed Session Request Form - Center for Intellectual Freedom Director Position
>
> Good morning,
>
> I'm following up regarding the closed session request form for the Center for Intellectual Freedom Director position. Please complete the attached form and return it to my attention at your earliest convenience. As noted in my previous email, if you choose not to submit the form, your qualifications and credentials will be evaluated in public session.
>
> Thank you,
> Stephanie Griffin
> Paralegal, Iowa Board of Regents

I chose not to submit the form. I wanted my candidacy to be considered publicly, and I relied on this assurance.

23.4 The Selection of Finalists

The position attracted 62 applicants. At its September 1, 2026 meeting, the Executive Committee discussed the applicants in closed session. Of the six candidates

who chose open consideration, I was the only one advanced.[1] The Board of Regents later stated that the pool had been narrowed to eleven candidates.[2]

On September 25, 2026, the Executive Committee, reduced to five members after the resignations described in Chapter 22, held a closed session and narrowed the pool from eleven candidates to four finalists. A Board of Regents spokesperson confirmed that I was one of the eleven but not one of the four.[3,4] In the open portion of the meeting, no vote selecting the finalists was taken, and my candidacy was not discussed or evaluated.

23.5 Complaint to the Iowa Public Information Board

On September 28, 2026, I asked the Iowa Public Information Board to investigate whether the Executive Committee complied with Iowa's open meetings law, Iowa Code chapter 21, at its September 25 meeting. The complaint raises two questions.

The first is whether the four finalists could be selected in closed session. Chapter 21 requires that final action by a governmental body be taken in open session unless a provision of the Code expressly permits otherwise. Because no vote on the finalists was taken in open session, the public record cannot show how each member voted on the selection. This question concerns the selection process as a whole.

The second is whether my candidacy could be evaluated in closed session. Chapter 21 permits a closed session to evaluate a candidate for hiring only when the candidate requests it. I made no such request, and the Board of Regents had assured me twice in writing that my qualifications and credentials would be evaluated in public. Narrowing eleven candidates to four necessarily involved comparing their qualifications, and that comparison does not appear to have taken place in public.

I disclose my interest plainly: I was a candidate and was not among the finalists. But I do not seek to reverse the Executive Committee's decision, and I would not accept the position under the Center's current structure, for the reasons explained in Chapter 28. I have informed the IPIB of this position, while leaving to it the determination of whether chapter 21 was violated and what consequences, if any, should follow. The complaint is pending as of this writing, and I do not presume its outcome.

23.6 Meetings Between the Finalists and University Administrators

During the week of October 5–9, 2026, the finalists met with the President of the University of Iowa, the Provost, and the President of the Faculty Senate. I learned

[1] *Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom Still Undecided on Director Applicants to Advance*.
[2] "Regents give initial approval for Center for Intellectual Freedom organizational plan".
[3] *Luciano de Castro Not a Finalist for Center for Intellectual Freedom Director's Job*.
[4] *CIF Executive Committee Announces Four Finalists for Center's Director Position*.

of these meetings because the Zoom links were sent by Collin Sawyer, who works at the Center. I do not know who the finalists are. Collin did not tell me, and I asked him not to.

In an ordinary faculty search, meetings between finalists and campus leaders are standard practice. But this is not an ordinary search. The Center was created by statute to operate independently of the University's administration, and the preceding chapters document that administration's resistance to the Center throughout the year. These meetings open a path for the President, the Provost, and the President of the Faculty Senate to give the regents feedback on the candidates before the final selection, and thus for the University's administration to influence directly the choice of the director of a center designed to be independent of it.

The contrast with my own experience is also worth noting. In more than a year as interim director, I was never invited to a meeting with the President or the Provost. This was not for lack of effort on my part. I sought conversations with the University's administration as early as December 2024 and again in February 2025 (see Chapter 26), and in December 2025 Regent Hensley asked that the Center's director be included in the Council of Deans (see Section 11.2). None of these efforts led to a meeting. Yet the same administrators found time to meet with each of the finalists for the position.

PART V

Missed and Remaining Opportunities

Chapter 24

Opportunities

Opportunities are favorable conditions the Center is, or was, positioned to take advantage of. This chapter discusses three. The first, the academic standing that the scholars of the Advisory Council gave the Center, has already been lost. The second, the general education requirement established by House File 2800, remains available, but under the current arrangement it is more likely to be lost than realized. The third consists of the fellowship programs the Center has proposed, which remain available to its future leadership.

24.1 The Scholars of the Advisory Council: An Opportunity Lost

The most valuable asset the Center had in its first year was the group of scholars who agreed to serve on its Advisory Council. Thirteen of the Council's twenty-six members were faculty from some of the most respected institutions in the country, including Stanford University, Princeton University, the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and George Mason University (Section 5.4). Few new academic centers, and few civics centers of any age, have begun with an advisory body of this distinction.

Their value to the Center went well beyond their names. Through the Scholar Committee, they were to advise on the hiring and tenure of the Center's faculty, giving its appointments a standard of quality that would have been difficult for critics to question. Several of them took part in the inaugural event and some lectured in the Center's first courses. And their participation sent a signal to scholars elsewhere: that the Center was a serious academic enterprise, in which a distinguished scholar could build a career. For a center that would need to recruit a significant number of faculty before 2028, that signal was perhaps its most important recruiting asset.

In September 2026, eleven of the thirteen resigned, expressing their lack of confidence in the Board of Regents and its committee on the Center (Chapter 22). Their departure is the Center's most significant loss of the year, and the most difficult to repair. A reputation of this kind is built slowly, through the willingness of respected scholars to associate their names with an institution; once they have publicly withdrawn, others will be reluctant to take their place. Rebuilding the Council's academic membership will be one of the first tasks of the Center's future leadership, and its success will depend on whether scholars of similar standing can be persuaded that the Center will be allowed to operate as the law intended.

24.2 The General Education Requirement: An Opportunity at Risk

When the General Assembly passed House File 2800, it appeared to give the Center its greatest opportunity. Beginning in July 2028, every University of Iowa undergraduate must complete courses in American history and American government, and the Center is the sole academic unit at the University responsible for offering them. Few new academic units have ever started with guaranteed enrollment on this scale: an estimated 12,000 students each year. The requirement is also consistent with the central finding of the market assessment: centers of this kind generate demand rather than find it waiting, and general education requirements are among the strongest drivers of enrollment at similar centers (see Section 5.11).

In principle, the requirement would give the Center a stable base of students and tuition revenue from which to build faculty positions, research programs, and eventually certificates, minors, and majors, as House File 437 authorizes. It would also give the Center the chance to shape the civic education of an entire generation of University of Iowa graduates.

I no longer believe this opportunity will be realized under the present arrangement. A requirement is only as valuable as the courses that fulfill it, and those courses will be shaped by whoever directs the Center and hires its faculty. Under the framework approved by the Board in September 2026 (Chapter 19), the Center's Director will operate under close, case-by-case control by the Board, whose decisions have consistently followed the preferences of University administrators, as this report documents. A director in that position will find it difficult to build courses and hire faculty that depart from what the University prefers. The loss of the Council's scholars, described above, makes the task harder still, since it removes the academic standing the Center would have needed to recruit faculty of high quality.

The risk, then, is not that the requirement will fail, but that it will succeed in form and fail in substance. Thousands of students may take the required courses each year, and the Center may report impressive enrollment figures, while the courses themselves differ little from what the University would have offered without the Center. In that case, the requirement would not advance the purpose for which the General Assembly created the Center; it would instead become the most visible example of the pretense of reform discussed in Part VII. An opportunity of this size, used in this way, would be worse than no opportunity at all, because it would persuade legislators and the public that reform had been achieved.

The opportunity is not yet entirely lost. The requirement does not take effect until 2028, and the decisions that will determine its substance (who directs the Center, who hires its faculty, and who controls its curriculum) are still being made. Whether the opportunity can be recovered depends on whether the Center is given the independence that House File 437 intended. My recommendations on this point are presented in Part VII.

24.3 Proposed Fellowships for Faculty and Students

The Center has prepared proposals for fellowship programs for faculty and for students, which were presented to the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council at its April 30, 2026 meeting (see Section 5.6.3 and Appendix G). Faculty fellowships would allow scholars at the University of Iowa and elsewhere to develop research and courses aligned with the Center's mission. Student fellowships would support undergraduate and graduate students who wish to engage more deeply with the Center's subjects. Together, they would help the Center recruit faculty, build a community of students, and establish its academic reputation well before 2028.

The faculty fellowship would support an initial cohort of four to five fellows, each receiving an annual research award of $4,000, together with access to research software and participation in the Center's events, retreats, and meetings with visiting speakers; fellows serving on Center committees would receive additional compensation. The student fellowship would support an initial cohort of ten students, each receiving $2,500 toward tuition and participating in the Center's lectures, retreats, and educational trips, in exchange for attending and helping organize Center events. The estimated annual cost was about $24,600 for the faculty program, excluding committee compensation, and about $52,400 for the student program. Both proposals were unanimously approved by the Executive Committee on April 30, 2026, but were put on hold when the Center's activities were suspended in May, before any fellows were selected.

Like the general education requirement, these programs can serve the Center's mission only if the Center retains control over who is selected and what they do. Under the current framework, their value will depend on the same conditions described above.

PART VI

Challenges

CHAPTER 25

Challenges

In this report, *obstacles* are barriers created by others, whose removal requires action by another party, such as the Board, the University, or the General Assembly; they are documented in Part III. *Challenges*, by contrast, are difficulties inherent in the Center's mission. They would exist even with full cooperation from every party, and the Center must work through them itself.

25.1 The Scale of the General Education Requirement

House File 2800, signed by Governor Reynolds in June 2, 2026, requires undergraduates at the three Regents universities to complete six credit hours of core civics courses, and designates the Center as the sole academic unit responsible for administering the required courses at the University of Iowa. The requirement takes effect in July 2028.[1,2] Press reports estimate that the Center will need to teach roughly 12,000 undergraduates by then, although, as of September 2026, it had not yet hired a permanent director or any faculty.[3] Building a curriculum, hiring faculty, and securing classrooms and administrative capacity for courses of this scale in about two years is the Center's largest challenge.

In August 2026, the Center prepared a preliminary estimate of the course sections, faculty positions, and teaching assistants that the requirement will demand. The estimate depends on decisions that have not yet been made, including the design of the courses, class sizes, and the balance between tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and teaching assistants, and it should be refined and settled by the Center's future leadership.

25.2 Faculty Recruitment and the Tenure Home

Meeting that demand requires recruiting high-quality faculty, including tenured and tenure-track scholars. Whether the Center can serve as the tenure home of its director and faculty, rather than depending on departmental approval, remains unresolved, as Professor Gallanis emphasized in response to the draft plan (Chapter 19). The Board Office's earlier proposal to make tenure department-based (Chapter 8) shows why this question matters: without an independent tenure

[1] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom council begins planning for required civics courses".

[2] "Courses will be required at University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom".

[3] *Regents Won't Let Center for Intellectual Freedom Interim Director Attend 3 Conferences* (Vanessa Miller, The Gazette).

home, departments could block the Center's appointments.

25.3 Credibility with Faculty and Students

The Center must build its standing with faculty and students, some of whom opposed its creation publicly. Regent Hensley has said that pushback from faculty created difficulties for hiring and course design, and that student outreach has been difficult despite the Center's marketing efforts.[4] Public criticism by faculty members, such as the remarks by Professor Hope Metcalf, reflects the same challenge.

25.4 Coordination with the Other Civics Centers

House File 437 requires the Center to coordinate with the Center for Cyclone Civics at Iowa State University and the Center for Civic Education at the University of Northern Iowa, so that its course is available to students at all three institutions.[5] Under House File 2800, the other two centers will designate required courses at their own universities.[6] Aligning course content, credit transfer, and online delivery across three institutions with different structures will require sustained cooperation.

The Center has already established contact with both. I visited the Center for Cyclone Civics at Iowa State University and the Center for Civic Education at the University of Northern Iowa, and representatives of the Center for Cyclone Civics took part in the Center's inaugural event. These contacts became less frequent in the spring of 2026, as the Center's activities were curtailed and then suspended, and they will need to be resumed and formalized by the Center's future leadership.

25.5 Sustainable Funding

The Center began with a $1 million state appropriation, and press reports put total state funding allocated to the Center at $2 million.[7,8] Donations to date amount to about $14,700. A sustainable financial model, combining state support, tuition revenue from required courses, and philanthropy, has yet to be established. Donor interest exists, but a systematic fundraising effort has not yet been possible.

A proposed budget for fiscal year 2027 was prepared and shared with the Board's committee on the Center. A systematic fundraising plan, coordinated with the Uni-

[4] "Center for Intellectual Freedom optimistic for future".

[5] *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*.

[6] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom council begins planning for required civics courses".

[7] "Report: UI Center for Intellectual Freedom can create demand".

[8] "University of Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom pauses courses amid search for director".

versity of Iowa Center for Advancement, remains to be developed by the Center's future leadership.

25.6 Leadership Transition and the Advisory Council

The search for a permanent director, originally planned for October 2025, has extended for a year. As of this writing, the Executive Committee has selected four finalists, the Advisory Council has approved sending them to the Board, and the Board has scheduled a special meeting for October 20, 2026, to make its selection (Chapter 23). In September 2026, eleven of the Advisory Council's twenty-six members resigned, including the chair of its Executive Committee, leaving fifteen members, only two of them academics (Chapter 22). No new members had been appointed to the Council as of this writing. Completing the transition to a permanent director, and rebuilding the Council's academic membership, are immediate challenges.

25.7 Press Coverage

Press coverage of the Center has been largely negative. Reports have emphasized the low enrollment in the first courses,[9,10] the fact that invitations to the inaugural event were sent only to Republican legislators,[11] the course lecture titled "Why Capitalism Rocks!" and local opposition to the Center,[12,13] and the pause in course offerings.[14] Much of this coverage describes the Center as controversial or polarizing. Some commentary has been favorable,[15] but it has been the exception.

This coverage shapes how students, faculty, and donors perceive the Center before they encounter its work directly. Responding to it requires a proactive communications effort: publicizing the Center's events and scholarship, explaining its mission accurately, and correcting factual errors when they occur.

The Center had begun to address this before its activities were suspended. After the Executive Committee meeting of April 30, 2026, I contacted a marketing specialist and a grant and donor specialist to develop the Center's communications and outreach, and work with one of them had already begun. When the Center's expenditures were frozen on May 7, I suspended these engagements, as I reported to Regent Hensley in my email of May 9 (Section 18.3). A proactive communications strategy remains necessary, and it should be resumed by the Center's future leadership.

[9] "Report: UI Center for Intellectual Freedom can create demand".
[10] *Incivil (and Wasteful) Civic Centers*.
[11] "GOP invited to Center for Intellectual Freedom event, Dems weren't".
[12] "Center for Intellectual Freedom optimistic for future".
[13] "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom sparks backlash in Iowa City".
[14] "University of Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom pauses courses amid search for director".
[15] "Conservatives in Iowa Will Finally Have a Voice on Campus".

PART VII

Reflections, Lessons, and Recommendations

CHAPTER 26

My Approach as Interim Director

The preceding chapters document the actions of others. Readers are entitled to ask how I conducted myself in turn. This chapter answers that question. Its purpose is to show that I began by seeking dialogue and cooperation, that I continued to do so even after conflicts arose, and that I changed course only when it became clear that cooperation was not wanted. It also acknowledges mistakes I made along the way, and the risks I accept in presenting this report.

26.1 Seeking Dialogue from the Start

My first instinct, before the Center even existed, was to work with the University rather than around it. In December 2024, immediately after learning of the legislators' plans, I informed the University through Associate Dean Barrett Thomas and offered to help it engage with the legislators (Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 4:17 pm). In February 2025, I met with Peter Matthes and urged that the University develop its own proposal in time for the Board of Regents, so that it could shape the outcome rather than oppose it (Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 8:02 am). The University did not take up that offer, and did not share the proposal it was already preparing.

I also reached out to those who disagreed with me. After my testimony in February 2025, I wrote individually to each of the legislators who had challenged my arguments, responding to their objections and inviting further conversation. None replied.

After my appointment, I sought conversations across the University. During my first months as Interim Director, I met with the deans of the College of Engineering, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Tippie College of Business, and the College of Law. I also spoke with several faculty members from different departments, including two from the College of Law, some of whom had publicly criticized the Center. I sought these conversations precisely because I wanted the Center to be part of the University's academic life, not isolated from it, and because I believe that dialogue with those who disagree is what the Center exists to promote.

26.2 Working with Colleagues and Staff

From the beginning, I tried to recognize and thank those who helped the Center. When the Board Office first objected to Professor Lowery's visit, my message to Regent Hensley closed by praising Amy Kirkey, who had conveyed that objection

to me, as "an exceptional professional" (Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 6:27 pm). After the inaugural event, I asked Regent Hensley to approve special compensation for the University staff who had worked on site, many of them beyond their normal duties, and she agreed. Because so few people at the University were willing to help the Center, I made a point of being grateful to every one who did.

I also stood by the Center's own staff. When the monitor episode implied that my assistant, Collin Sawyer, had mishandled University property, I defended him and asked that the characterization be corrected.

26.3 Seeking Conciliation in Conflict

Even when conflicts arose, my first response was to look for a practical way forward. When the Board Office objected to Professor Lowery's visit, I did not contest its decision on the use of Center funds; I offered to pay for the visit myself (Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 12:22 pm). In drafting the Center's bylaws, after Board Counsel had rejected my first draft without identifying any specific error, I adopted many of her suggestions and most of those of the Board's Chief Academic Officer, declining only those that would have compromised the Center's independence, and explaining each decision in writing (Section 8.3). When the inaugural event raised a disagreement about the open-meetings classification, I chose not to formally challenge the Board Office before the event, preferring, as I wrote at the time, to find a practical way forward rather than get stuck in disputes. And after the monitor accusation proved unfounded, I submitted my reply to the Provost to Regent Hensley for review before sending it, and added the conciliatory paragraph she suggested, emphasizing that the Center's success would also be the University's success (Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 3:01 pm). That message received no reply.

26.4 Mistakes I Made

I did not handle everything well, and it is fair to say so. Some of my mistakes were minor; others were not.

26.4.1 Underestimating the Difficulty of Recruiting Students

The most important mistake concerned the Center's first courses. I underestimated how difficult it would be to recruit students for them. I had been told, by a colleague with experience in University College, that half-semester courses filled easily, and I assumed the same would hold for ours. It did not: the two courses that were offered enrolled 11 and 8 students, and a third was canceled.

In retrospect, I can identify several reasons. My colleague's experience was with online courses, which attract a very different kind of demand from in-person evening courses. For logistical reasons, I scheduled our courses at night, and I made the further mistake of scheduling one of them on Thursday evenings, an especially un-

favorable time for undergraduates. Most important, I did not know how strongly students' choices depend on whether a course counts toward a major, a minor, or a certificate. Our courses counted toward none of these. I learned how decisive this factor is only later, during the preparation of the market assessment (Section 5.11), which found that requirement status explains more of the variation in enrollment than any other factor, and that purely elective courses attract few students at comparable centers.

In short, I lacked knowledge that was critical to designing the Center's first courses, and the courses suffered for it. I learned from these mistakes, and the lessons are reflected in the recommendations of the market assessment and of this report.

26.4.2 Assuming Professionalism Would Prevail over Ideology

My second mistake was to assume that the people the Center dealt with would put professionalism before ideology. I knew, of course, that not everyone in professional life acts with complete honesty. But I did not take enough precautions against the possibility that some people would let their views of the Center shape how they treated it. In several interactions, with service providers and with members of the press, I came to believe that this is what happened. I approached some of these interactions with a degree of trust, and at times of naiveté, that I should have avoided.

26.4.3 Overestimating the Commitment of Allies

I also overestimated the commitment of some of the Center's allies, and their understanding of what was at stake. I took for granted support that, in hindsight, needed to be cultivated and protected more carefully. I recognize, at the same time, that I did not have the time or energy to do more than I did, with a very small staff, a great deal of work at the Center, and my regular duties as a professor.

26.4.4 Smaller Mistakes

There were also smaller mistakes, most of them related to the inaugural event. The most significant was that the event was not publicized as broadly as it should have been. I wish we had sent invitations to the entire faculty of the University, and to a much wider circle of the community, than we did. The late invitation to President Wilson, sent only twelve days in advance, as I acknowledged in the invitation itself, was one symptom of this broader problem.

A related mistake concerned the invitations to legislators. With little time and a very small staff, invitations had to be written individually, so I decided to invite the legislators who had voted for House File 437, reasoning that they were the ones most likely to be interested in the event. Since no Democratic legislator had voted for the bill, no Democrats were invited; for the same reason, Republican legislators who had voted against it were not invited either. The event was open to the public, and the invitations served only to let likely attendees know about it. But the result

was that every invited legislator was a Republican, and the press later reported it in exactly those terms.[1] I did not anticipate how the choice would be perceived, and I should have. Inviting the full General Assembly would have cost more time, but it would have avoided an impression that did not reflect my intent and that the Center did not need.

The cause was not a lack of willingness, but of time and people. The event was organized in about a month and a half by two people, Collin Sawyer and me, with no prior experience organizing an event of this kind. An event of this size would ordinarily require three to four months of preparation and a considerably larger staff. Within those constraints, we accomplished a great deal: the event brought the Governor, legislators, and scholars from across the country to the Old Capitol. But I have to acknowledge that the same constraints prevented us from publicizing it as widely as it deserved. They also explain why the catering order was submitted later than the University's usual notice period, which limited the menu and created avoidable friction.

Finally, during the summer of 2026, I did not keep Regent Hensley informed as promptly as she expected while I was traveling, and I apologized for it at the time.

26.4.5 What These Mistakes Explain

Some of these mistakes had real consequences, above all for the enrollment in the Center's first courses, and I take responsibility for them. But they do not explain the obstacles documented in this report, most of which began before any of them occurred, and none of which depended on them: the blocking of the Center's hiring, the alteration of its bylaws, the delays imposed on its market assessment, or the framework that ended its independence. I describe my mistakes here because an account of this year that acknowledged only the mistakes of others would be incomplete.

26.5 Holding My Ground

My approach changed only when it became clear that cooperation was not reciprocated. When the regents responsible for the Center sided with the Board Office and the University, I did not withdraw. I continued to document what was happening and to object, in writing, when decisions conflicted with the statute or the Center's bylaws: in my report to the regents in April 2026, in my requests for a written commitment on copyright, in my objections to the handling of the market assessment, and in my letters to President Cramer about communications that bypassed the Director, the last of them in September 2026 (Friday, September 18, 2026, 5:02 pm).

Holding my ground did not come from a wish for conflict. Throughout the year, I accepted compromise wherever the Center's mission allowed it, as I mentioned in Section 26.3 above. But some matters are not open to compromise without aban-

[1] "GOP invited to Center for Intellectual Freedom event, Dems weren't".

doning the purpose for which an institution exists. The General Assembly created the Center outside the University's hierarchy precisely so that its Director would not have to yield to the University on the matters the law assigns to him. Yielding on those matters might have made the year easier and earned me the reputation of a cooperative director; it would also have made the Center's independence a fiction. Between those two outcomes, I did not consider the choice a difficult one.

26.6 The Risks of This Report

I am aware that, by preparing this report and criticizing decisions of the Board Office, University administrators, and individual regents, I may face consequences. Tenure protects against some of them, but not all. There are cases in which professors at other universities who challenged their institutions lost their positions on grounds that many observers regarded as pretextual. I consider such an outcome unlikely here, but I cannot rule it out.

Losing tenure is also not the only consequence a professor can face. Teaching and service assignments can be made less favorable, opportunities can be withheld, and a professional reputation can be damaged. Annual evaluations can be lowered, and salary increases can be made smaller than those of departmental colleagues. Such decisions rarely reach the press, and there is little remedy against them. I am therefore aware that, in preparing this report, I am putting my position, and even my ability to provide for my family, at risk.

I have chosen to accept that risk because I believe the Governor, the General Assembly, and the people of Iowa are entitled to a complete and accurate account of what happened to the Center they created. Providing that account is not only my choice but my statutory duty: Iowa Code § 263C.10 requires the Director to identify the obstacles in the Center's development. Iowa law also protects public employees who disclose information to members of the General Assembly from reprisal for doing so.[2] I trust that a report prepared in good faith, at the request of the law, will be received in that spirit.

26.7 What Do You Do When You Are Left Alone?

Throughout the year, I tried to do what I believed a director should do. I thanked and praised those who helped the Center, from the University staff who supported its first steps (Section 26.2) to those who worked behind the scenes at its inaugural event. I sought conciliation even after conflicts that were not of my making (Section 26.3). And I kept my attention on the mission the General Assembly had given the Center. Yet, as the months passed, I steadily lost support.

I came to believe that University administrators, having realized that they could not control me, set out to have me removed, perhaps so that I could be replaced

[2] Iowa Code § 70A.28.

by someone they could control. In my assessment, they worked through the Board Office and the regents, and their position was eventually adopted by the regents themselves. The regents, in turn, conveyed it to legislators, some of whom concluded that the best course was to defer to the Board, without seeing where the pressure had originated. The same view was accepted by many members of the Advisory Council. The faculty reformers on the Council knew better, and when they could no longer accept the Board's direction, they resigned. When they left, I was left alone. In truth, I had been alone in Iowa well before then.

What do you do when you are left alone?

What do you do when you realize that no one else is still working to accomplish what was planned from the beginning?

I can answer with actions rather than words. I continued to work, to denounce the improper procedures, to organize the speaker series, to invite faculty to its lectures, and to carry out the Center's work, as I had done throughout the year. And I prepared this report, so that those who created the Center would have a complete account of what happened to it. It was hard, but my heart gave me no other option. When I was left alone, I kept going. I kept going because the pursuit of the good matters more than anything else.

As my service at this Center comes to a close, my conscience is at peace. I did what I believed was right, and I did it as well as I could. I know that many people disagree. But there is a sentence I once wrote for myself, and that I have adopted as my personal motto:

I seek the approval of no one,
but of the Judge of All.

Luciano I. de Castro

CHAPTER 27

Lessons Learned

The past year taught me seven lessons, some of which I did not expect. The first three concern how universities and their governing board respond to reform; the remaining four concern the people on whom reform depends, and the temptations that undermine it.

27.1 Universities Disregard the Law When No One Enforces It

I came to this position believing that the law is something to be respected, and that public institutions above all would respect it. The past year taught me otherwise. House File 437 established the Center as an independent academic center, required it to offer courses, and gave its Director sole and exclusive authority over hiring. Yet, as Part III documents, the Center's hiring was blocked, the Provost declared that it could not function as an academic unit, and decisions the statute assigns to the Director were made by others.

The lesson is not only that administrators were willing to set the statute aside, but that they could do so at no cost. No one was held responsible for blocking the Center's hiring, for altering its bylaws before they reached the Board, or for any of the other actions documented in this report. A law that is not enforced does not constrain those who prefer to ignore it.

27.2 The Board Is Captured by the Administrators It Oversees

The reason no one enforced the law is that those charged with oversight did not see enforcement as their role. In principle, the Board of Regents governs the universities. In practice, as Chapter 11 explains, the Board depends on the Board Office for its information, on university administrators for its understanding of academic matters, and on the goodwill of those same administrators for many of the rewards of service. Under these conditions, regents who resist the University are sidelined, and the Board as a whole comes to accommodate the institutions it is supposed to oversee.

This lesson matters for anyone who hopes to reform a public university. A law creating a new institution is only as effective as the body charged with implementing it. If that body is captured by the administrators the law was meant to constrain, the law will be implemented on their terms.

27.3 The "Dialogue" Trap

One of the most common objections to centers like this one is that they are imposed by legislatures rather than developed through dialogue with the faculty. Reform, the argument goes, should come from conversation and shared governance, not from the law. The objection sounds reasonable, and it appeals to anyone who values collegiality. The experience of the past year shows why it should not be accepted.

Consider who would be on the other side of such a conversation. The faculty, as Chapter 1 documents, is overwhelmingly dominated by one perspective, and faculty hiring is controlled by that majority. University administrators, in turn, are selected largely by other administrators, who tend to advance those who share their outlook and to exclude those who do not. A conversation between reformers and this establishment is not a negotiation between equals; it is a request addressed to those who benefit from the status quo, asking them to give up part of it.

The record shows how such requests are answered. In 2023, the Board of Regents asked the universities to explore an initiative in civic education; the University of Iowa explored it and did nothing (Chapter 2). In 2024 and 2025, I sought to work with the University to develop a proposal it could accept; the University did not engage, and prepared its own plan without informing me (Chapter 3). Only then did the General Assembly act.

However, even with a law in force, explicitly establishing the Center, granting its Director authority over hiring, and requiring it to offer courses, the University and the Board Office blocked its hiring, declared that it could not function as an academic unit, and set aside the provisions that stood in their way, as Part III documents. If administrators are willing to disregard a statute enacted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor, what would they do if they were merely invited to talk? The answer is clear: nothing.

Whatever the intentions of those who make it, the call to replace legislation with "dialogue" therefore functions as a trap. It invites reformers to believe that they have a chance of changing something through conversation, when they have little chance of changing anything even with the law on their side. It consumes time, absorbs energy, and allows the status quo to continue while appearing open to reform. Legislators and regents who accept this invitation should understand that they are not choosing a gentler path to the same result; they are choosing no result at all.

27.4 Three Types of Conservative Professors

The lessons that follow depend on a distinction among the conservative professors on whom any reform must rely. The small number of conservative professors can be divided into three groups:

1. *The concealed*, who keep their political views hidden to protect their careers.
2. *The accommodators*, who take positions created to promote intellectual diversity but accept the limits set by administrators.
3. *The reformers*, who openly pursue substantive change, even at personal cost.

One might think that the concealed are being dishonest, but in fact they are acting rationally. Even for tenured professors, being openly conservative can be extremely costly. At the extreme, it can lead to attempts to revoke tenure on pretextual grounds. Short of that, a range of more discreet mechanisms is available: inconvenient teaching or service assignments, smaller salary increases than colleagues receive, and similar measures. Such decisions rarely reach the press, and those affected have little or no recourse against them. Openly conservative professors also face serious difficulty on the job market, since they are likely to be discriminated against for their views. The reason is simple: if left-leaning professors form the majority in nearly every department, and a job offer depends on a majority vote, an openly conservative candidate has little chance of being hired. Given how high the cost of revealing their views is, remaining concealed is a rational choice.[1]

The accommodators are a product of new incentives. As civics centers proliferate and offer attractive salaries, they draw conservative professors to apply for these positions. Some of those who are hired, however, readily accept the terms set by university administrators. In practice, accommodators agree to give the appearance of change without doing anything substantial.

27.5 Reformers Are Rare, and Administrators Push Them Out

Of the three groups, the reformers are the one on which any genuine reform depends, and the one most exposed to the obstacles documented in this report. Administrators have little reason to fear the concealed, who do not act, or the accommodators, who act only within the limits administrators set. The reformers are different, because they seek substantive change, and they are therefore the ones administrators work hardest to remove.

The reformers are the rarest of the three groups. What distinguishes them is character rather than discipline. They must place principle above self-interest, and their work demands integrity and a commitment to doing things the right way. Precisely because they seek real change rather than its appearance, university administrators will do whatever they can to push them out.

[1]Surveys of academics support this concern. In one survey, 22 percent of academics said they would discriminate against a known Trump supporter in hiring (see Section 1.2). In a survey of social psychologists, more than a third said they would be at least somewhat inclined to favor a liberal over a conservative candidate in hiring decisions (Inbar and Lammers 2012); and a large survey of academics in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom found substantial willingness to discriminate against conservative candidates and grant applications (Kaufmann 2021).

27.6 Reformers Cannot Succeed Without Committed Allies

Both Schumpeter (1942) and Novak (1978) emphasized that the battle over the ideas that sustain a free society is an intellectual one, and that it must be fought by intellectuals rather than by business leaders. Business leaders rarely have the patience to engage in the sustained intellectual debates that this battle requires. For that, they need the participation of academics.

Academics, however, cannot prevail alone. Without outside support, they lack the means to accomplish what needs to be done. Success requires a coalition of three parts: business leaders, political leaders, and academics. If any one of the three is missing, the effort will fail. Without the guidance of genuine reformers, business leaders in particular are likely to be misled by the wrong academics.

Reformers on the faculty therefore depend on three groups of external allies:

1. *Legislators*, who pass the laws that establish civics centers and provide their funding.
2. *Regents and trustees*, who support the centers and prevent university administrators from interfering with their work.
3. *Civic patrons*, who sustain the centers through donations and offer guidance drawn from their experience outside academia.

Legislators, regents, and civic patrons must recognize that they need academics to succeed, and that not just any academics will do: they need reformers, not accommodators. They must therefore act together with the faculty, and above all with the reformers. Their first task is to identify true reformers and distinguish them from accommodators, who will present themselves as reformers when it serves their interests. Once they have found true reformers, they must stand by them no matter what. University administrators have many ways to create obstacles: delaying hires, controlling budgets and space, questioning the centers' academic legitimacy, and building narratives that portray reformers as divisive or unqualified. External allies must recognize these tactics for what they are. If they allow the administrators' narratives to prevail and withdraw their support from reformers under pressure, the centers will drift into the hands of accommodators, and the reform effort will fail.

27.7 Pretending Is Far Easier Than Reforming

It is far easier to pretend to bring change than to actually implement meaningful and significant reform. Pretending requires only visible gestures: announcing a new center, issuing a statement in support of open inquiry, hosting a debate series, or appointing a director whose views will not disturb anyone. These gestures generate favorable press, satisfy legislators and donors, and cost the administration almost nothing, because they leave the institution's underlying structures un-

touched. Real reform is different. It requires changing who is hired, what is taught, how faculty are evaluated, and who controls the resources of the new centers, and every one of these changes meets resistance from faculty, administrators, and accrediting bodies. It is slow, it creates conflict, and its results may take years to become visible. Faced with this choice, administrators have every incentive to prefer the appearance of reform, and accommodators are willing to supply it.

External allies must learn to judge reform efforts by their substance rather than their announcements. Above all, they must be committed to true reform and must reject any attempt at deception.

They need to understand that university administrators can be extremely charming and persuasive, and can present matters in ways that seem reasonable even when they are not. Administrators will offer compelling arguments and give every assurance that they intend to do the right thing. The order of moves, however, is predictable. First, they remove the true reformers, who will not compromise on what truly matters. Then they enlist accommodators, who help them deceive the external allies. The allies, in turn, come to believe, along with the public, that true reform is under way.

Civic patrons are especially vulnerable. Confident in the skills that brought them success in business, they may underestimate the complexity of academia's bureaucratic world and overestimate their ability to perceive what is actually happening within it. They will be shown a carefully selected set of indicators, and, lacking experience in academia, they will be unable to see where the deception lies. Without true reformers at their side to expose these tactics, they will be defenseless against the pretense of reform.

Over time, even allies who grow uncomfortable and realize that things are not progressing as they should have an incentive to keep defending the process as legitimate. Having taken part in it, they find it difficult to admit that it has failed. Their defense makes it even harder for outsiders to distinguish pretense from real change, and this, in turn, makes the far less costly option of pretending all the more attractive.

If pretending is so attractive, what is its cost? The cost is that the real problems are never addressed. Pretending produces just cosmetic measures that never reach the roots of the problems and have little chance of changing anything of significance. Time passes, and reality remains unchanged, or the problems grow worse. The motivation that started the effort, the concerns discussed in Chapter 1, is gradually lost, and the time, resources, and goodwill invested in reform are wasted, because no real change was ever possible under the arrangement adopted.

The reason is simple. Under pretending, the decisions of real consequence remain with those whose interests lie in preserving the status quo. Accommodators, acting in their own interest, continue to do what they do best: accommodate. And after enough time has passed, those who see only the efforts that accommodators con-

trol conclude that reform is pointless, that the problems simply cannot be solved. This is what makes pretending so perverse. It does not merely fail to fix the problem; it discredits the very idea that the problem can be fixed. Of all the possible outcomes, it is the worst, because it consumes the opportunity for reform while leaving behind the conviction that reform was never possible.

However, the temptation to pretend is simply too great. Resisting it requires firm principles and a genuine commitment to the cause. Unfortunately, these qualities are rare—extremely rare.

27.8 Abandoning Reformers Has a Lasting Cost

When legislators, regents, and civic patrons fail to support true reformers, the consequences extend well beyond any single center. Their failure enlarges the ranks of the concealed. Professors who might otherwise have stepped forward as reformers observe what happens to those who do: they are passed over in favor of accommodators, or left without support when administrators push back. Having learned this lesson, they will not try. They will remain concealed, and the pool of potential reformers, already small, will shrink further.

The proliferation of accommodators is equally worrisome. Distinguishing an accommodator from a true reformer takes time, often years, because accommodators present themselves as reformers and their failures are easy to attribute to circumstances beyond their control. In the meantime, precious time is lost. Worse, the insignificant results of accommodation come to be mistaken for evidence that real change is impossible. Observers who see a well-funded center produce nothing of consequence may reasonably conclude that universities cannot be reformed at all, when in fact reform was never seriously attempted.

This damage is not confined to one institution; it harms the cause of reform as a whole. Each center captured by accommodators discourages future reformers, reassures university administrators that outside pressure can be absorbed without change, and weakens the case for reform in the eyes of legislators and the public elsewhere. It is regrettable that those in a position to prevent this outcome have taken such a short-sighted view.

27.9 The Iowa Outcome

Under the arrangement adopted by the Board of Regents in September 2026, the path of pretending has prevailed. Some of those who had championed the Center accepted the Board's direction rather than insist on the independence the law had promised.[2] Whoever is hired as director under the present arrangement, even with the best intentions, will be unable to stand up to the University administration and will be forced to yield on every important decision. In the end, every matter of

[2]The General Assembly as a body, though, has not yet decided the Center's future.

consequence will be decided as the University prefers.

This is a deeply regrettable outcome. Iowa had a rare opportunity, and it has been missed, to the detriment of the people of Iowa and of its students.

The university administration and its allies have prevailed. That the General Assembly enacted legislation has proven to matter little; what matters is that the university bureaucracy retains effective control over every decision. This is a defeat, and there is no honest way to describe it otherwise. It is also a defeat that carries a measure of shame for those who had the authority to prevent it and chose not to exercise it.

Shame, however, is no reason to compound the failure with deception. The temptation will be to present the Center as a success: to point to its events, its budget, and its announcements as evidence of significant change, while the facts that matter remain out of view. That course would be a mistake. Sooner or later the public will learn the truth, and it will not forgive having been deceived. Whatever credibility remains to those responsible depends on their willingness to be honest now.

Unfortunately, under its present arrangement, the Center for Intellectual Freedom, as it was originally conceived, is lost. It would be better to admit this plainly, and either to give the Center the independence it was promised or to discontinue it, than to sustain an expensive pretense in its name.

That decision should be made by those who created the Center. I hope that, when they make it, they will choose true reform, with true reformers, rather than an imitation of reform carried out with the help of accommodators. My recommendations for how to reach that decision follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 28

Recommendations

Section 263C.10 asks the Director to identify the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of the Center. Having done so, I offer the following recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Board of Regents.

28.1 Suspend the Search for a Permanent Director

The search for a permanent director should be suspended. Under the framework approved by the Board in September 2026, any director, however capable, will operate under close, case-by-case control by the Board, whose decisions have consistently followed the preferences of the University administration, as Part III documents. Appointing a permanent director under these conditions would lock the Center into this structure for years, at precisely the moment when the courses required by House File 2800 are being designed. A permanent appointment should be made only once the Center's governance has been settled in a way that allows it to carry out its statutory mission.

28.2 Appoint a New Interim Director

In the meantime, the Board should appoint a new interim director to maintain the Center's operations, including its speaker series and its administrative functions.

I do not wish to continue serving as Interim Director. As this report documents, the conditions under which the Center now operates do not allow its Director to fulfill the mission the General Assembly gave it, and I see no purpose in continuing to serve under them. For the same reasons, I would not serve as director, in either an interim or a permanent capacity, under the framework approved in September 2026. To be clear, this statement is not yet a formal resignation, which I will submit separately to the Board of Regents if necessary. I will continue to serve as Interim Director, and to cooperate fully in an orderly transition, until a successor is appointed.

28.3 Let the Elected Branches Decide the Center's Direction

The Center was established by statute, enacted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. The Board of Regents was charged only with implementing that statute, not with deciding whether or how the Center should exist. The final direc-

tion of the Center should therefore be decided by the elected branches that created it, which are accountable to the people of Iowa for the laws they enact: the Governor who takes office in January 2027 and the General Assembly. They will also be joined by a substantially renewed Board of Regents: the terms of three regents expire on April 30, 2027, and together with the Board's current vacancy, the next Governor will be able to appoint four of its nine members.[1]

Waiting for this new leadership is not a delay for its own sake. A decision made now, by a Board whose approach this report documents, would be unlikely to endure, and would most likely commit the Center to a pretense of reform. A decision made by new leadership, with full knowledge of the Center's first year, can set a direction that lasts. New leadership will be able to choose between two paths. Either is preferable to the present course.

28.3.1 Path One: Attempt a True Reform

If the State chooses to pursue the reform the General Assembly intended, the Center must be given the independence House File 437 promised. At a minimum, this requires:

1. recognition of the Center as an academic unit, able to offer its own courses and to serve as the tenure home of its director and faculty;
2. expenditure and travel approval by an accountable financial officer working for the Center, with periodic review by the Board, as the Board's own 2016 review recommended for university presidents, rather than case-by-case approval by individual regents;
3. the ability to retain its own legal counsel;
4. respect for the statutory role of the Advisory Council in conducting the search for the director, without a fixed quota of finalists;
5. a director who is a true *reformer*, committed to the Center's mission, rather than an *accommodator*, who will yield whenever opposition arises.

The General Assembly may also wish to consider structural reforms of broader scope, such as the Academic Council for the Board of Regents proposed in Appendix J.

28.3.2 Path Two: End the Pretense

If the State concludes that the Center cannot be given this independence, it would be better for the General Assembly to discontinue the Center than to maintain a pretense of reform at public expense. Pretending is cheap for those who pretend, but it is costly for the people of Iowa: it consumes public funds, it misleads the legislators who created the Center and the public it is meant to serve, and it per-

[1] See the Board of Regents' membership page, which lists each regent's term (https://www.iowaregents.edu/the-board/member-bios), accessed October 12, 2026.

suades everyone that reform has been achieved when it has not, making genuine reform harder to attempt in the future.

The 2028 Deadline

Delaying a permanent appointment will compress the time available to prepare for the general education requirement established by House File 2800, which takes effect in 2028. This should not be a reason to act in haste. The deadline was set by law and can be adjusted by law; if new leadership chooses to discontinue the Center, the requirement will have to be revisited in any case. What cannot easily be undone is a curriculum and a faculty built under the present structure. Once in place, they would shape the civic education of thousands of students each year, and would be difficult to change.

28.4 Create an Independent Academic Council

Whatever path the elected branches choose for the Center, one problem documented in this report will remain: the Board of Regents has no independent source of academic advice. On academic questions, the Board depends on the Board office and on the administrators of the universities it oversees, the same administrators whose decisions it is meant to evaluate. As discussed in Chapter 11, this leaves the Board without the means to assess claims made by administrators, to recognize when a reform is being resisted, or to distinguish real compliance from minimal compliance.

I therefore recommend that the General Assembly create an independent Academic Council to advise the Board of Regents on academic matters, composed of distinguished scholars from research universities outside Iowa, who have no stake in the administration of Iowa's public universities. Such a council would give the Board what it currently lacks: an informed, independent view on questions such as curricula, general education requirements, faculty hiring, and the implementation of legislative directives.

I first prepared this proposal in February 2026. Its full text appears in Appendix J.

This recommendation does not depend on the future of the Center. Even if the Center is discontinued, an independent Academic Council would help the Board fulfill its responsibilities toward all of Iowa's public universities and would make it far more difficult for future reforms to be absorbed without change.

28.5 The Continuing Case for Civics Centers

None of these recommendations reflects a change in my conviction about the importance of centers like this one. The reasons set out in Chapter 1 remain as valid today as when the General Assembly created the Center: universities need places where students encounter the ideas that sustain a free society, and where scholars

who depart from prevailing orthodoxies can teach and conduct research. The experience of the past year does not show that such centers are unnecessary or that they cannot succeed. It shows that they require far more resolve than was anticipated, from the legislators, regents, and civic patrons who support them, to persist in the face of opposition from university administrators and faculty. Where that resolve exists, as other states have shown, such centers can flourish. Where it does not, they become a pretense. The choice now before Iowa's leaders is which of these the Center for Intellectual Freedom will be.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

University of Iowa Proposal for a Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership (Form C, January 17, 2025)

This appendix reproduces, in full, the University of Iowa's own proposal for a "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership (CCDL)," submitted to the Board of Regents on Form C on January 17, 2025. The proposal describes a center to be housed in the Office of the Provost and directed by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. It sets out the center's proposed mission, activities, governance structure (including an external advisory board appointed by the president and provost), relationship to similar centers at other Iowa universities, and a proposed budget of $250,000 per year in institutional funding for three years.

At the January 28, 2025 subcommittee hearing on the legislators' bill, a University of Iowa representative responded by announcing the University's own competing plan for a "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership." The exchange was reported as follows.

> **"Former Iowa Gov. Branstad backs bill for new UI 'School of Intellectual Freedom'," by Vanessa Miller, The Gazette, January 28, 2025 (excerpt).**
>
> DES MOINES, in responding to an Iowa House proposal that would require the University of Iowa to establish a "School of Intellectual Freedom," a UI lobbyist Tuesday announced campus plans to create a new "Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership."
>
> Plans for that new center have been submitted to the Board of Regents, according to Chief Government Relations Officer and UI representative Keith Saunders, who said the proposal will be considered at the board meeting in February.
>
> "So we are moving down the road on this," Saunders said, adding, "The center that's envisioned at the University of Iowa would be very similar to what UNI and Iowa State have already proposed."

I am not aware of any public website where this document has been posted, and no such link is included here. The pages that follow contain the PDF of the original document, resized to 90% to fit the page of this report.

FORM C
(revised: June 7, 2021)
Board of Regents, State of Iowa

REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A CENTER OR INSTITUTE

Establishing a new center or institute provides an opportunity for a university to support its mission, particularly in the areas of research and public service. Proposals to create new centers or institutes at the universities, regardless of institutional financial commitment, shall be submitted to the Board Office and the Council of Provosts for review and to the Academic Affairs Committee and Board of Regents for approval.

Institution: University of Iowa

Title of center or institute: University of Iowa Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership

Approximate date to establish center or institute: Upon BOR approval

(In cases when the initiation of center/institute activities precedes the request to the Board of Regents, the date to establish the center/institute can be "upon BOR approval.")

Contact person: (name, telephone, and e-mail) Tanya Uden-Holman; 319-335-3565; tanya-uden-holman@uiowa.edu

Administrative unit for center or institute: Office of the Provost

Please provide the following information (use additional pages as needed).

1. Describe the proposed new center or institute and the need it will serve.

The proposed University of Iowa's Center for Civic Dialogue and Leadership (CCDL) will be housed in the Office of the Provost and will utilize a hub and spoke model for activities related to civic dialogue and civic engagement. The mission of the center will be to advance scholarship and cultivate skills essential to free speech, public discourse, civic engagement, and leadership in civic matters. The proposed center supports the institution's commitment to intellectual freedom and the diversity of thought. The Office of the Provost provides oversight of key components (the hub), connecting the array of resources across the university (the spokes). This model provides an opportunity to connect with existing opportunities and identify areas of further development and growth.

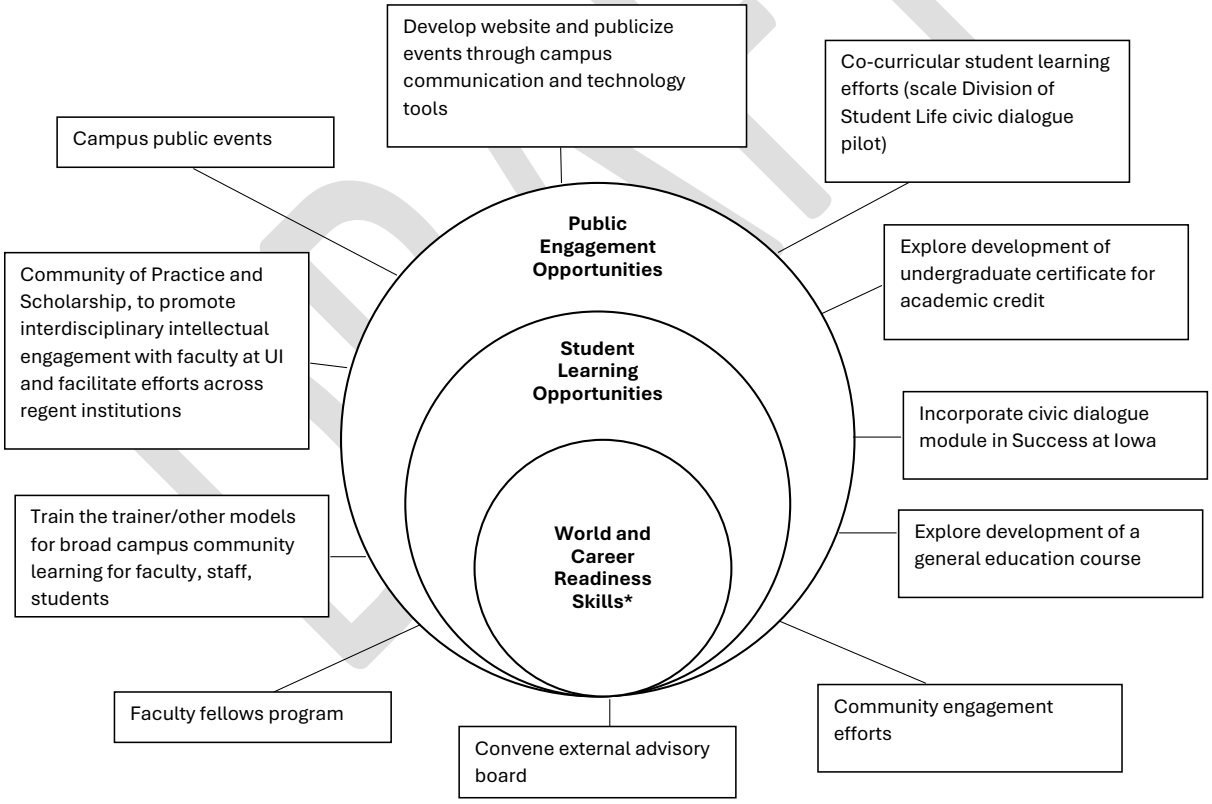
There are many ways for students to develop their civic knowledge and skills. The proposed center will serve as a point of connection for current curricular and co-curricular experiences and will help facilitate the expansion of new opportunities ensuring synergy among units and alignment with the strategic plan. Through integrating civic dialogue into high-impact practices both within and outside the classroom, students will be able to practice their civic knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

Additionally, UI faculty will have the opportunity to affiliate with the center and actively exchange ideas, connect across difference, and collaborate on common goals and challenges to enhance scholarship.

FORM C
(revised: June 7, 2021)

An **external advisory board** will be created to provide guidance to the center. The board will consist of individuals who have demonstrated a mutual respect for intellectual differences and have a strong record of supporting free speech through civil discourse. Members should represent a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and ideas. The board will be co-chaired by two external leaders who will also serve in an advisory role to the president and provost.

The following representation of the hub and spoke model provides more detail on what we envision for the proposed center.



FORM C
(revised: June 7, 2021)

2. Provide a brief statement of activities and objectives for the proposed center/institute.

The CCDL will:

- Serve as a resource to members of the university community seeking opportunities to engage in scholarship related to civic dialogue, civic leadership, and civic engagement
- Sponsor and co-sponsor campus opportunities for dialogue aligned with the center's mission to cultivate skills in free speech, public discourse, civic engagement, and civic leadership
- Promote educational opportunities for UI students to develop foundational civic knowledge, skills, and behaviors that empower them to be lifelong engaged citizens and leaders

Examples of new or enhanced activities of the proposed new center include:

- Introducing civic skills such as listening, curiosity, and openness to diverse intellectual perspectives as part of Success at Iowa, a required course for all undergraduate students.
- Exploring the development of an undergraduate certificate for academic credit
- Exploring the development of a gen ed course
- Teaching civic dialogue skills in the residence halls
- Teaching civic dialogue skills to leaders of our student organizations
- Expanding current course tagging efforts to include courses that promote civic dialogue and/or have a civics-related education component
- Exploring the development of a comprehensive train-the-trainer program to expand skill-building across the campus community
- Co-sponsoring events on campus for students, faculty, and staff to experience civic dialogue in a reflective manner
- Identifying speakers through our external advisory board to visit campus to provide a forum for our students, faculty, and staff to engage in thoughtful civic discussions

3. Explain the relationship of the proposed new center/institute to the institutional mission and the role of the center/institute in the institution's and/or college's strategic plan.

The proposed CCDL aligns with the UI's strategic plan through multiple goals and objectives. The proposed center will promote scholarship to develop individuals' skills related to free speech, public discourse, civic engagement, and civic leadership. Additionally, the proposed center aligns with the promotion of shared high-impact practices, the support of interdisciplinary research to grow scholarship and increase involvement of students, and the coordination and collaboration among faculty and staff who teach courses, conduct research, and advise and mentor students in civic engagement.

DRAFT

FORM C
(revised: June 7, 2021)

4. Explain the relationship of the proposed new center/institute to other existing centers/institutes at the institution.

The proposed center will collaborate with a wide range of campus units to promote curricular and co-curricular programs on civic dialogue, participation, leadership, and engaged learning. The center will also provide opportunities for faculty to engage with one another to build a community of practice and scholarship. Examples of partnering units include the Office of Community Engagement, Office of the Vice President for Research, Center for Teaching, Office of the Vice President for Student Life, and the Office of the Dean of Students, specifically Leadership and Engagement.

5. Describe the relationship of the proposed new center or institute to existing centers/institutes at other colleges and universities in Iowa, including how the proposed center/institute is different or has a different emphasis than existing centers/institutes. Explain any collaborative opportunities being planned or explored.

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) has a Center for Civic Education, which enhances civic education among university students, pre-K-12 students and teachers, and the broader public by researching, developing and implementing effective civic learning strategies and encouraging respectful dialogue across differences.

Iowa State University has a Cyclone Civics initiative with a three-pronged approach – education, research, and outreach. The education component emphasizes curriculum instruction, forums, debates, lectures, and other public events for students and the public. The research facet includes calls for proposals from faculty to support research on civic education, free speech, and related areas. Keeping with its land-grant roots, the university will lean on expertise from ISU Extension and Outreach to spread civics education to all Iowans.

The proposed center aligns well with UNI and ISU's programming and collaborative opportunities will be explored once the proposed center is established.

6. How long is the center/institute expected to be in existence?

This will be a permanent center.

7. Describe the personnel, facilities and equipment that will be required to establish and maintain the proposed center or institute.

The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education will serve as the center director. The center's organizational structure will include a deputy director, coordinator, and faculty fellow(s). Additionally, a strategic plan work group will be developed and will include members from the Office of Community Engagement, Center for Teaching, Division of Student Life, Graduate

FORM C
(revised: June 7, 2021)

College, Office of the Vice President for Research, collegiate representation, and shared governance. This work group will ensure that activities of the center are aligned with the mission of the institution and its strategic plan priorities.

An **external advisory board** will be created to provide guidance to the center. The board will consist of individuals who have demonstrated a mutual respect for intellectual differences and have a strong record of supporting free speech through civil discourse. Members should represent a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and ideas. The board will be co-chaired by two external leaders who will also serve in an advisory role to the president and provost. The president and provost, in consultation with the director of the CCDL and board co-chairs, will appoint members to the board. Each member will serve a staggered two- to three-year term, which may be renewed for one additional three-year term.

8. What are the funding sources for the proposed center or institute?

a. List all the sources and amounts that apply, e.g., department reallocation, college reallocation, grants, new to the university.

The proposed center will receive institutional funding in the amount of $250,000 per year for three years to support its operations. Funding beyond the third year will be generated via philanthropy and grants.

b. Estimate the total costs that will be necessary as a result of the new center or institute for the next five years:

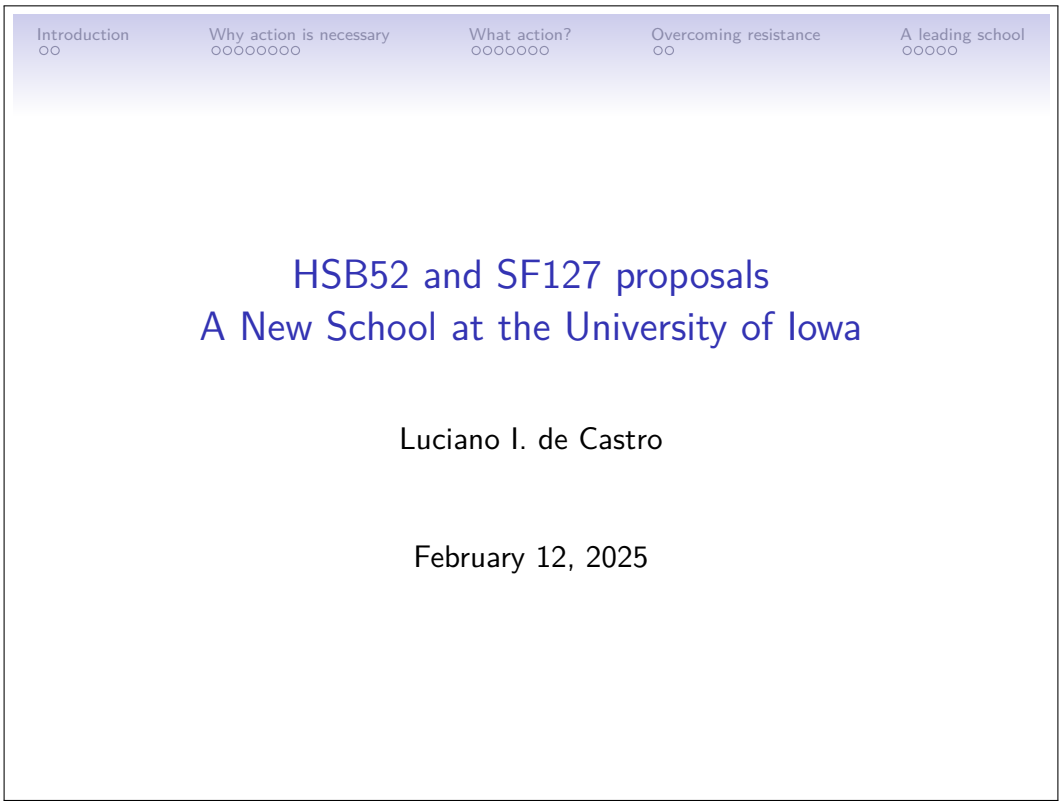
	SOURCE(S) OF FUNDS	TOTAL ANNUAL COSTS
Year 1	Institutional funding	$250,000
Year 2	Institutional funding	$250,000
Year 3	Institutional funding	$250,000
Year 4	Philanthropy/grant funding	TBD
Year 5	Philanthropy/grant funding	TBD

9. Include any additional information that justifies the development of this center/institute.

DRAFT

Appendix B

My Presentation at the Iowa House



Outline

Introduction

Why action is necessary

What should be done

Overcoming the resistance with understanding

Our dream: a leading school

Luciano de Castro

- American citizen, born and educated in Brazil
- 2007-2010: Assistant Professor, University of Illinois
- 2010-2014: Assistant Professor, Northwestern University
- 2014-2021: Associate Professor, University of Iowa
- 2021-present: Professor, Department of Economics, University of Iowa

Figure: Personal website: `https://castroluciano.com/`

I express here my opinion as a citizen. I do not speak for the University of Iowa.

HSB52 and SF127

I strongly support House Study Bill 52 and Senate File 127, that creates a "school of intelectual freedom" in the University of Iowa.

- This new institution will be a much **needed** addition to the University of Iowa, offering new courses and supporting valuable research
- The bill can be improved in minor aspects, but it is certainly a great initiative.
- We (the people of Iowa) should be **grateful** to Representative Collins and Senator Gruenhagen for proposing this bill.

Faculty are overwhelmingly Democratic

Langbert and Stevens (2020) studies the ratio of faculty who are registered and donate to both parties — Democractic (D) and Republican (R).

	# faculty	# Registered			# Donors			Donation $
		D	R	D:R	D	R	D:R	D:R
all	12,372	5,991	709	8:1	2081	22	95:1	$21:1
ISU	142	66	6	11:1	23	2	12:1	$7:1
UI	141	91	8	11:1	31	1	31:1	$42:1

Table: Proportion of Democratic to Republican supporters (registered and donors) in the faculty of 116 academic institution in the US (all), and of the Iowa State University (ISU) and University of Iowa (UI)

Donor Ratio By discipline

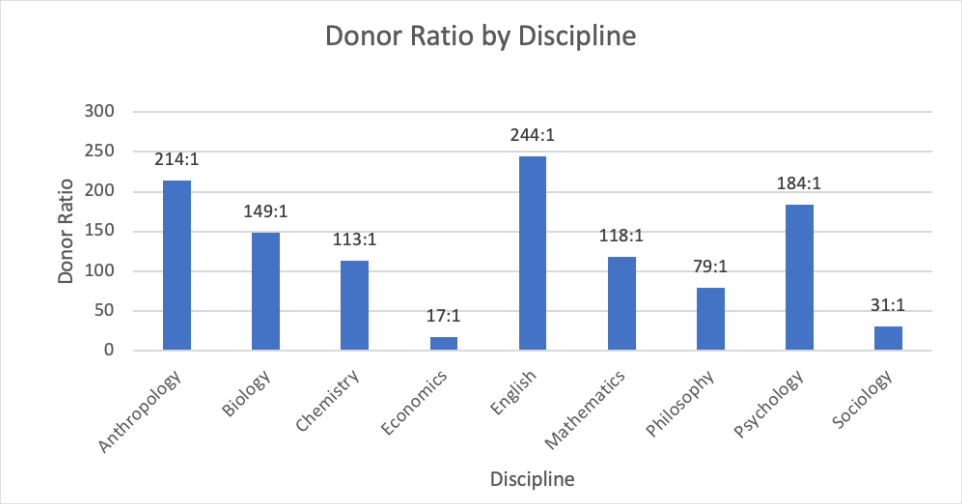


Figure: Overall Donor Ratio D:R by discipline

*It is a fact that the most — **but not all!** — professors are left-leaning. (I will not discuss the reasons why.)*

This has consequences

CNN Politics SCOTUS Congress Facts First 2024 Elections Watch Listen

WHAT MATTERS

Why education level has become the best predictor for how someone will vote

Analysis by Zachary B. Wolf, CNN
4 minute read · Updated 4:14 PM EDT, Mon October 14, 2024

The education gap grows

"The biggest single, best predictor of how someone's going to vote in American politics now is education level. That is now the new fault line in American politics," Sosnik told David Chalian on the "CNN Political Briefing" podcast.

Trump's rise over the past three election cycles, Sosnik argued, "accelerated and completed this political realignment based on education that had been forming since the early '70s, at the beginning of the decline in the middle class."

As the US transitions to a 21st century economy, there's a rift between the people who attain education – "that's become the basic Democratic Party," he said, comparing them with people who feel left behind, "that group of voters is now the modern Republican Party base."

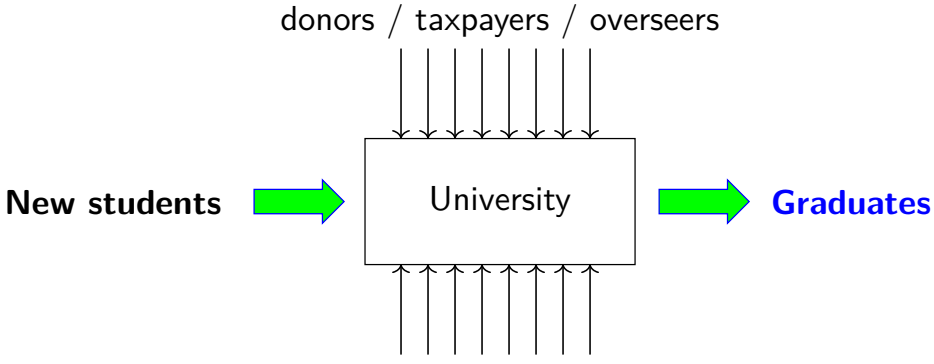
Most and least educated states in the U.S.

Most educated states (all **blue**)	Least educated states (all **red**)
1. **Massachusetss**	1. **West Virginia**
2. **Vermont**	2. **Mississipi**
3. **Maryland**	3. **Lousiana**
4. **Connecticut**	4. **Arkansas**
5. **Colorado**	5. **Oklahoma**

Table: Most and least educated states in America

Source: WalletHub.

What is the mechanism that leads to this outcome?



hiring like-minded colleagues who are competent in
producing "interesting" (=persuasive) ideas (research)
and converting believers (teaching)
all aligned with the causes they cherish

(I'm exaggerating a little bit.)

It is very hard to change this from the inside

- All **incentives** are aligned against a faculty who wants to present a different point of view.
- It is very hard to publish articles with contrarian views in good academic journals.
- Without publishing in well regarded journals, you are not recognized as a productive scholar.
- Left-leaning faculty do not like to hire outspoken conservative professors. Even top scholars who wish to relocate find it hard.
- Thus, in general professors pay a high price for writing or saying anything that departs from academic orthodoxy.

We are not even able to propose new courses

- Administrators in the University asked me (and other professors) to list possible courses to be offered
- I proposed a course titled "Political Economy and Capitalism," with the following description:
  The course adopts a market-friendly perspective on current political issues. Students will learn how to have an informed and well-reasoned response to criticisms of capitalism and assess the benefits and shortcomings of some governmental policies.
- The university staff prevented this course proposal from being included in a **survey** that was solely intended to gauge **student interest**.
- The University of Iowa does not offer a course where students can learn why (and how) capitalism works, and what its advantages are compared to other systems.

It is also hard to change this from the outside

- Professors complain about interference in academic freedom
- University administrators complain about interference in the internal affairs of the university
- All argue that any changes are not necessary or are misguided
- However, this just maintains the *status quo*

Is it possible to do something?

Introduction Why action is necessary What action? Overcoming resistance A leading school

It is also hard to change this from the outside

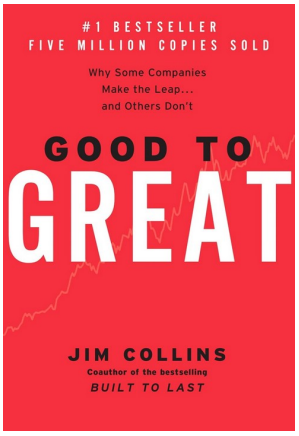
- Professors complain about interference in academic freedom
- University administrators complain about interference in the internal affairs of the university
- All argue that any changes are not necessary or are misguided
- However, this just maintains the *status quo*

Is it possible to do something?

YES!!! *By creating the school as proposed.*

What should be done?

1. Understand that, as legislators, you possess both the **power** and the **responsibility** to intervene for the benefit of those you represent.
2. Be **bold**, be **corageous** and do create this new school in the University of Iowa!
3. Follow Jim Collins' advice:
   "Get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats."



4. Support **research** and **teaching** in this new school, conducted by faculty who are ***intellectually diverse*** from the majority of existing faculty at the U of I.

Potential academic activities of the new school

- In his pamphlet "American Vision: An Essay on the Future of Democratic Capitalism," Michael Novak (1978) argues that it is necessary to uphold **democratic capitalism** as the foundation of our society in its three dimensions:
  1. **economical**
  2. **political**, and
  3. **cultural**.
- All three aspects have been heavily criticized by academics.
- It is necessary to defend these systems; otherwise, the American people could lose their attachment to those values, leading to the unraveling of the foundations of society.

The economic frontier

- Many scholars have written books criticizing capitalism and proposing "improvements." Some of them:
  - *17 Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*, by D. Harvey
  - *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism* by H. Chang
  - *Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future* by P. Mason
  - *How Markets Fail* by J. Cassidy
- We need to show why and how these books are wrong
- We need to educate future business leaders in Iowa (and across the country) on why and how capitalism works
- It needs a constant *intellectual effort*, as Novak himself emphasizes

  This is a war of ideas, with its own rules, weapons, and methods. We cannot avoid engaging in this war; otherwise, we cannot hope to win. We need to fight as one does in a battle of ideas: with better ideas, grounded in reality and truth.

The political frontier

- As Hayek (1982) shows, we need to think deeply about the **political institutions** that are necessary to keep the foundations of a free society
- Otherwise, we will tread "The Road to Serfdom" (Hayek 1944), and ultimately lose the freedom secured for us by the Founding Fathers
- Thinking about these institutions require combining ideas from political science, and law.

  [A]lthough the problem of an appropriate social order is today studied from the different angles of economics, jurisprudence, political science, sociology, and ethics, the problem is one which can be approached successfully only as a whole. (...) Nowhere is the baneful effect of the division into specialisms more evident than in the two oldest of these disciplines, economics and law. (...)

The cultural frontier

We need to uphold fundamental values that constitute the "American way"

- Freedom of Speech and economic activity
- Moral Standards
- Self-Reliance
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- other values emblematic of American culture (e.g., respect for the individual, abidance by the laws, valorization of justice...)

These values need to be thoroughly researched and taught to our students

It is not about ideology, it is about truth!

- This is not about ideology
- It is about **truth**!
- That is why we can suceed in the war even if we are few: we are fighting for truth, not trying to make propaganda
- Incidentally, people that criticize initiatives like this one as "ideologically motivated" never criticize heavily ideological enterprises developed inside universities...

*The ideas I have exemplified here pertain to true and meaningful **research** and **teaching** that currently do not exist and will not materialize at the University of Iowa without the legislators' proposal.*

The organization of the school

- The school can be organized as a standard independent college in the university, with similar rules
  - possibility of hiring faculty
  - independence to give tenure, following the university's procedures
  - independence from other colleges
- There is only one thing that needs to be slightly different:
  - The school needs protection from left-leaning faculty that do not want dissenting voices on campus
  - These faculty will exert pressure on the university administration
  - If the university administration has the power to hinder the school's initiatives, it will be almost inevitable that they will
- It is necessary to create a mechanism to protect the school from interferences from the university administration
- The proposal contains a very good solution to this problem: the **academic council**

Understanding the resistance

- In summary, the proposal is great!
- However, it is already facing resistance
- For example, in a recent hearing, the proposal was labeled with the derogatory adjectives "laughable", "ridiculous", and "pointless".
- There are two ways of interpreting this strong reaction:
  1. The left understands the importance of controlling universities, as machines for producing ideas and activists
  2. More generous interpretation: they are simply not able to understand the importance of this initiative.

Being generous is a good thing, so let us go with the second interpretation.

Overcoming the resistance with understanding

- I mean no disrespect when I say that left-leaning individuals might struggle to understand this initiative.
- Professor Jonathan Haidt (2012), in his best-seller book "The Righetous Mind" demonstrated that left-leaning individuals have much greater difficulty understanding conservatives than vice versa
- Often, left-leaning individuals perceive conservatives as:
  - Motivated by hate
  - Primarily seeking political gains
  - Generally ignorant, and dismissive of intellectual developments
- Please, understand that this is not true!
  - This initiative is motivated by the love of our civilization
  - We seek truth, and the well-being of the Iowa's children
  - We recognize the value of good ideas, regardless of their origin

We can create a school with regional impact

- We can create a great school for the people of Iowa
- but this initiative can have an impact beyond the borders of our state
- We can pioneer a new educational model, rooted in American values.
- This new model can spark necessary innovation in High Ed

We can atract students from other midwest states

Superboys and supergirls coming from Kansas

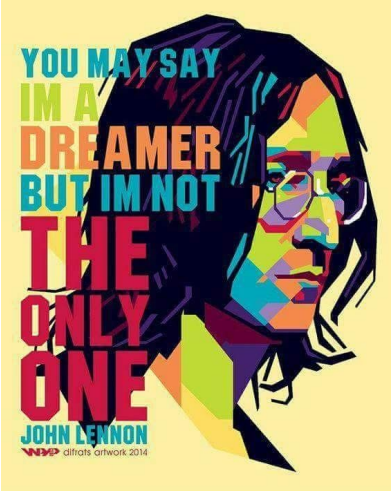
Superman's original motto:
Truth, Justice and the American Way

I also have a **dream**:

That the superboys and supergirls can say in the near future, not in movies, but in their memoirs:

"**I was raised in Kansas with American values, but it was only when I attended the University of Iowa that I truly understood their critical importance.**"

I am not the only academic who wants to do something



Out there, many conservative professors want to have the opportunity to produce truly valuable and highly important **research** and **teaching**.

Please help us try to make a small change in the university environment.

It is not for us, but for the people

But you won't be doing this for the academic folks...

You will do for the people of Iowa (and of the Heartland of the country)

In this way, you will contribute to

Make Universities Great Again

Appendix C

A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action (July 20, 2025)

This appendix reproduces, in full, the "Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action" that I prepared on July 20, 2025, shortly after my appointment as Interim Director. The document was written to explain why I believed the Center needed to begin visible, substantive work immediately, rather than waiting for the Advisory Council and other structures required by HF 437 to be fully in place. It describes early negative reactions to the Center's creation that I had encountered among students, faculty, and the press, and it proposes a coordinated set of actions to address them: a public-facing website and social media presence, campus outreach and public events, engagement with student media, hiring of non-tenure-track teaching faculty, short-term visits by outside scholars (including the visit by Professor Richard Lowery discussed in Chapter 6), engagement with potential donors, and a two-day inauguration event at the Old Capitol featuring outside speakers, meetings with the Advisory Council and Board of Regents, and a public lecture. The plan also includes a preliminary program for that inauguration event.

The pages that follow contain the PDF of the original document, resized to 90% to fit the page of this report.

Center for Intellectual Freedom

A Short-Term Plan for Immediate Action

Luciano de Castro
Professor of Economics
University of Iowa

July 20, 2025

Executive Summary

This document outlines a short-term plan to launch the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa, addressing the urgent need to counter negative perceptions and establish a strong foundation for academic excellence. By initiating immediate actions—such as creating a website, engaging in social media, hiring teaching faculty, organizing public lectures and debates, and hosting an inauguration event with distinguished scholars—we can demonstrate the Center's value to the university community and Iowa's legislators by January 2026. These efforts aim to foster open inquiry, engage stakeholders, and position the Center as a vital contributor to intellectual discourse and higher education.

1 Introduction

I begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to the Board of Regents in Iowa for their trust in appointing me as the interim Director of the Center for Intellectual Freedom. The establishment of this Center marks a significant achievement for the people of Iowa and the state's public university system. It represents a commitment to fostering open inquiry and robust intellectual discourse, values that are fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of our society.

I acknowledge that the restrictions on the selection of members for the Academic Council of the Center have raised concerns. However, I am optimistic that these chal-

lenges will be overcome in the near future. In the meantime, I firmly believe that we should not delay the Center's operations. Immediate action is essential to build momentum and demonstrate the Center's value. By starting our work now, we will be well-positioned to present meaningful progress to legislators when their next session begins in January 2026.

This document outlines why I believe it is critical to begin operations promptly. It also describes the immediate actions I propose to develop the Center's foundation and ensure its early success.

2 Why We Need to Start Working as Soon as Possible

To illustrate the urgency of starting work on the Center for Intellectual Freedom immediately, I will share a couple of personal anecdotes that highlight the current climate surrounding the Center.

This week, when I informed my daughter about my appointment as interim director, she responded, "People on Instagram are talking about this Center." Surprised, I asked, "Seriously, Sophia? What are they saying?" Her reply was telling: "A bunch of bad things." What struck me most was that Sophia is not even a student at the University of Iowa; she is a high school student who just completed 10th grade. 5aYet, news of the Center had already reached her, signaling how quickly perceptions are forming beyond the university community. This was a recent and resonant warning bell for me. However, it was not the first.

Earlier this spring, following the approval of the bill to establish the Center, a colleague and friend shared another revealing incident. He had lunch with several professors, including one from another college within the university. When my name came up in conversation, this professor remarked, "Isn't this guy behind that crazy center they're going to create?" The comment may represent a widespread view among the University of Iowa's Faculty.

A few days after that incident, a journalism student contacted me to request an interview for an article about the Center. I met with her in my office and spoke for over an hour. While she approached the conversation with care and balance, I sensed an initial negative bias, likely shaped by discussions with her peers and instructors. I explained my vision for the Center and provided examples of questions and topics that could enrich a student's academic experience. By the end of our conversation, her perspective had shifted. She exclaimed, "Wow! I've never thought about that! I would love to learn about those things! I wonder why they didn't create a program like this before." About

a week later, another journalism student from a different class and cohort reached out to me, requesting a similar interview.

These experiences underscore two critical points: 1) the university community is actively discussing the Center for Intellectual Freedom, and 2) the prevailing sentiment, particularly among faculty and students at the University of Iowa, is predominantly negative. This is understandable given the political leanings of the university's community.

There is a real danger in failing to address these negative perceptions swiftly. As seen in other universities that have attempted to establish similar centers, opposition from faculty and students can grow, fueled by distorted ideas and increasingly hostile positions. The longer this negative predisposition festers, the more challenging it becomes to counteract. These early reactions may be the first signs of a brewing storm that could manifest itself in the coming months.

By acting quickly, I am confident that we can shift this narrative, much as I did in my conversation with the journalism student. Proactive engagement can neutralize or even reverse these initial negative reactions, particularly among faculty. This document outlines my proposed strategy to address this issue and details additional actions we can take this fall to lay a strong foundation for the Center's success in the spring.

3 Immediate Measures to Counteract Negative Perceptions

To address the negative perceptions surrounding the Center for Intellectual Freedom and build a positive narrative, we must launch a well-executed marketing campaign immediately. This campaign will aim to clarify the Center's mission, engage the university community, and demonstrate its academic value. The following measures will form the cornerstone of this effort:

1. *Creation of a Website*: Developing a professional, accessible website for the Center is a priority. The website will serve as a central hub for information, outlining the Center's mission, goals, and planned activities. It will include testimonials, FAQs to address common misconceptions, and resources that highlight the Center's commitment to academic inquiry. The website will be designed to be user-friendly, visually appealing, and regularly updated with new content to maintain engagement.

2. *Social Media Engagement*: Active presence on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn is essential to reach students, faculty, and the broader Iowa community. We will create official accounts for the Center to share updates, highlight upcoming events, and respond to questions or concerns. Engaging content, such as short

videos explaining the Center's purpose or posts showcasing student opportunities, will help counter negative narratives. We will also monitor social media conversations to address misinformation promptly and respectfully.

3. *Campus Outreach and Events*: Organizing informational sessions, open forums, and workshops will provide opportunities to engage directly with students and faculty. These events will allow us to present the Center's vision, answer questions, and gather feedback. For example, hosting a panel discussion with diverse scholars who support open inquiry could demonstrate the Center's commitment to inclusivity and academic rigor.

4. *Collaborations with Student Media*: Building on my experience with journalism students, we will proactively reach out to student newspapers, radio stations, and blogs to offer interviews and feature stories. These interactions will help shape a positive narrative by showcasing the Center's potential to enhance academic experiences.

5. *Branding and Visual Identity*: Developing a clear and professional brand identity for the Center, including a logo and consistent messaging, will help establish credibility. This branding will be used across all materials, from the website to promotional flyers, to create a cohesive and recognizable presence.

These actions, executed as part of a coordinated marketing campaign, will help shift perceptions by emphasizing transparency, engagement, and the Center's alignment with academic values. By acting swiftly this fall, we can lay the groundwork for a positive reception when the Center's programs fully launch in the spring.

3.1 Key Messages for the Campaign

To ensure clarity and consistency, the marketing campaign will communicate the following key messages:

- The Center for Intellectual Freedom is not ideological but serves a purely academic purpose. It is designed to foster open inquiry and critical thinking, free from partisan agendas.

- The Center aims to pursue academic excellence in both teaching and research, providing students and faculty with opportunities to explore challenging questions in a rigorous and inclusive environment.

- Students participating in the Center's programs will be encouraged to ponder questions such as:
  - What makes the United States the greatest nation on Earth?
  - Are there unique strengths in our values, political institutions, or economic system? If so, why do they work so well?
  - Why have our institutions endured so long and brought such prosperity to our country?

  These questions are intended to spark curiosity and encourage students to engage with complex ideas through evidence-based analysis and open dialogue.
- The Center is committed to enhancing the academic experience at the University of Iowa by offering innovative programs that complement existing curricula and promote intellectual diversity.

By consistently communicating these messages through our website, social media, and outreach efforts, we can counteract misconceptions and build support for the Center's mission. This proactive approach will ensure that the Center is seen as a valuable addition to the University of Iowa, fostering an environment where all ideas can be explored with rigor and respect.

4 Other Immediate Efforts to Launch the Center

In addition to counteracting negative perceptions, we must undertake complementary efforts to establish the Center for Intellectual Freedom as a vibrant and credible entity. These initiatives, which can be launched immediately, focus on building the Center's operational foundation, engaging stakeholders, and demonstrating tangible progress. The following actions will ensure the Center is well-positioned for success by the spring semester and beyond:

1. *Hiring Non-Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty*: We should initiate the process of hiring non-tenure-track teaching faculty to begin developing courses for the Center. These faculty members can start organizing course content, syllabi, and teaching materials, ensuring that academic programs are ready to launch as soon as possible. By focusing on non-tenure-track hires initially, we avoid long-term commitments while the Academic Council is still being finalized. Hiring for tenured faculty positions,

potentially with joint appointments in other colleges, can be deferred until the Academic Council is fully operational.

2. *Engagement with Student Associations*: Collaborating with student associations will be crucial for building support and involving students in the Center's development. We can work with these groups to solicit their input on selecting teaching faculty candidates. For instance, we can invite prospective candidates to deliver public lectures, which will serve a dual purpose: showcasing their teaching capabilities and allowing students to evaluate them. These lectures will also act as early accomplishments for the Center, demonstrating activity and engagement. The events can be included in a report to the Iowa House and Senate in 2026, highlighting the Center's contributions to the university community.

3. *Organizing Public Debates with Iowa Politicians*: To establish the Center as a forum for open and balanced discourse, we can organize debates featuring Iowa politicians from both Republican and Democratic parties. These events will focus on diverse political topics, showcasing the Center's commitment to fostering constructive dialogue. Such debates will not only engage the university community but also attract broader public attention, reinforcing the Center's role as a hub for intellectual exchange.

4. *Inviting Distinguished Professors for Short Visits*: On the research front, we can invite professors from distinguished universities for short-term visits to help shape the Center's intellectual strategy. These visitors can deliver public lectures, participate in workshops, and collaborate with faculty and students to create a vibrant intellectual environment. Their presence will enhance the Center's reputation for academic excellence. The costs of these visits, primarily travel and accommodation, are modest but yield significant benefits in terms of credibility and intellectual vitality.

5. *Developing Academic Programs*: We should begin designing academic programs to be offered to students, potentially starting in the spring semester. While formal courses may require additional time to develop, we can launch preliminary programs consisting of lecture series, discussion groups, and targeted evaluations. These programs can focus on the thought-provoking questions outlined earlier, encouraging students to explore complex issues in a structured yet flexible format.

6. *Hiring Administrative Support*: To ensure smooth operations, hiring an administrative assistant and potentially other support staff is essential. These individuals will

manage logistics, coordinate events, maintain the website, and handle communications, allowing the leadership to focus on strategic priorities. A small, efficient team will be critical to executing the Center's initiatives effectively.

7. *Engaging Potential Donors*: Building a sustainable financial foundation is vital for the Center's long-term success. We can begin identifying and engaging potential donors, including alumni, local businesses, and national organizations that support academic freedom and intellectual inquiry. Initial outreach can include informational meetings, presentations about the Center's mission, and invitations to public events, laying the groundwork for future fundraising campaigns.

8. *Organizing an Inauguration Event*: To mark the official launch of the Center and establish its presence, we can organize a high-profile inauguration event in Iowa City, bringing faculty from prestigious universities. This event will serve as a public declaration of the Center's mission, attract attention from the university and broader community, and set a positive tone for future activities.

4.1 Inauguration Event: Promoting Higher Education and the Center's Mission

To launch the Center for Intellectual Freedom with impact, we propose a two-day inauguration event in Iowa City at the Old Capitol, with the date to be defined in Fall 2025. This event will bring together distinguished faculty from prestigious universities, key stakeholders, and the public to discuss critical aspects of higher education and the Center's role in addressing contemporary challenges. We suggest using the *Old Capitol* building for this event, as it will provide a beautiful and historic venue for this important date for the Center. The public lecture could be held in a spacious campus auditorium.

On the first day, the event will focus on policy-oriented engagement, including separate meetings with the Academic Council, the Board of Regents, potential donors, and Iowa politicians, including the governor. These sessions will discuss the Center's vision, strategic priorities, and alignment with Iowa's educational goals, fostering support and collaboration. The day will conclude with a public lecture by a prominent speaker, such as Christopher Rufo, addressing the importance of intellectual freedom in higher education. A detailed preliminary program for the first day is provided in the Appendix.

On the second day, visiting professors will make presentations in an academic mini-conference format, exploring potential topics such as ideological bias, curriculum design, fostering critical thinking, and the role of intellectual freedom in higher education. These

discussions will aim to generate actionable insights for improving higher education and shaping the Center's academic programs.

This two-day event will serve as a powerful launch for the Center, engaging stakeholders, showcasing its academic and policy relevance, and generating positive publicity. The outcomes, including insights from discussions and the public lecture, will be documented for inclusion in the 2026 report to the Iowa House and Senate, demonstrating the Center's early impact.

5 Conclusion

I once again express my profound gratitude to the Board of Regents for entrusting me with the role of interim Director of the Center for Intellectual Freedom. The urgency of starting our work immediately cannot be overstated. As outlined in this document, negative perceptions within the university community and beyond are already forming, and swift action is essential to shape a positive narrative and demonstrate the Center's value. By launching a marketing campaign, hiring faculty, engaging students, organizing public events, and hosting a high-profile inauguration event, we can establish a strong foundation for the Center's success. This initiative is an exciting opportunity to advance intellectual freedom and academic excellence at the University of Iowa. With the support of the Board, the university community, and our stakeholders, I am confident that the Center will achieve wonderful things, fostering a vibrant environment for open inquiry and contributing meaningfully to higher education in Iowa and beyond.

Appendix: Preliminary Program for the Inauguration Event

Time	Session/Participants	Title/Description
08:30–09:00	Breakfast	*Continental breakfast served*
09:00–10:30	**Session I**	**Welcome and Introductions**
	Invited Faculty and Academic Council	Welcome remarks and introductions of faculty and members of the Academic Council, highlighting past experiences.
10:30–10:50	Break	*Coffee and refreshments*
10:50–12:20	**Session II**	**Reforming Universities**
	Invited Faculty and Academic Council	Discussion on the problems of Higher Ed in general and how they can be addressed
12:20–14:00	Lunch	*Catered lunch for all attendees*
14:00–15:30	**Session III**	**Plans for the Center**
	Invited Faculty and Academic Council	What the CIF should do? Goals and Strategies
15:30–15:50	Break	*Coffee and refreshments*
15:50–16:50	**Session IV**	**Iowa's universities and CIF**
	Invited Faculty and Board of Regents	Building Institutional Support and Partnerships for the Center
16:50–17:10	Break	*Coffee and refreshments*
17:10–18:10	**Session V**	**Engaging the Community with the Center**
	Invited Faculty and Iowa leaders	Dialogue with legislators, politicians, and business community
18:10–19:00	Break	*Extended break with light refreshments*
19:00–20:00	**Public Event**	**Keynote Address**
	General Public	Public lecture by distinguished speaker (TBD)

APPENDIX D

Versions of the Bylaws

D.1 Draft sent to the Board Office

Bylaws

of the

Center for Intellectual Freedom

October 5, 2025

Introduction

Iowa Code 263C.4 establishes that:

> *The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board.*

This document presents the draft of the bylaws developed by the Center for Intellectual Freedom for approval of the Board of Regents, in accordance with this mandate.

This draft was developed in consultation with some members of the Center's Advisory Council as well as other interested individuals. I grateful for their generous help.

Besides the draft of the bylaws, this document incorporates some parts of House File 437, which established the Center as well as some comments in blue. These comments and excerpts from HF437 appear in the left column, with the articles of the bylaws presented in the right column. I consider this presentation useful because the bylaws explain and provide details about rules already contained in HF437. This helps the reader to observe that the bylaws follow naturally from HF437. It should be observed, however, that some sections of HF437 may be omitted for brevity or taken out of order for convenience.

Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director
Center for Intellectual Freedom

Contents

Article – I	**Definitions**	**3**
Article – II	**Scope of Bylaws and Mission of the Center**	**3**
Article – III	**Organization**	**4**
Article – IV	**Duties of the Advisory Council and its Committees**	**4**
Article – V	**Membership of the Advisory Council and its Committees**	**5**
Article – VI	**Leadership of the Advisory Council and its Committees other than the Executive Committee**	**6**
Article – VII	**Membership and Leadership of the Executive Committee**	**7**
Article – VIII	**Meetings of the Advisory Council and Its Committees**	**7**
Article – IX	**Director Search**	**8**
Article – X	**Term of Director or Interim Director**	**9**
Article – XI	**Powers and Duties of the Director**	**9**
Article – XII	**Policies and Procedures**	**10**
Article – XIII	**Center Faculty**	**10**
Article – XIV	**Courses, Certificates and Programs**	**11**
Article – XV	**Funding**	**11**
Article – XVI	**Dispute Resolution**	**11**
Article – XVII	**Parliamentary Authority**	**12**

This left column contains comments in blue and some parts of the Iowa Code established by House File 437, in black. These parts come with corresponding section numbers in the Iowa Code. We highlight some parts in **bold** that are not in the original.

– 263C.1 Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:
1. "*Board*" means the state board of regents.
2. "*Center*" means the center for intellectual freedom established by section 263C.2.
3. "*Regents institution*" means an institution specified in section 262.7, subsections 1 through 3.
4. "*University*" means the state university of Iowa.

Some of the contents of Article II of the bylaws are requred by Iowa Code 263C.4:

– 263C.4 Bylaws.

The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board. In addition to any other bylaws established, the bylaws must include all of the following requirements, which shall take precedence over any other requirements in the bylaws:
1. The center shall educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth.
2. The center affirms its duty to equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind they need to reach their own informed conclusions on matters of social and political importance.
3. The center affirms the value of intellectual diversity in higher education and aspires to enhance the intellectual diversity of

Article I – Definitions

S. 1. "*Advisory Council*" means the advisory council established by Iowa Code 263C.7.

S. 2. "*Board*" means the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.

S. 3. "*Center*" means the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code 263C.2.

S. 4. "*Director*" means the director of the Center, mentioned in Iowa Code 263C.8 and 263C.9. The term includes an interim director unless explicitly specified otherwise.

S. 5. "*R1 institution*" means a university or institution classified as "Research 1: Very High Research Activity" by the Carnegie Classification of Research Institutions;

S. 6. "*Regents institution*" means an institution specified in section 262.7, subsections 1 through 3.

S. 7. "*University*" means the State University of Iowa.

Article II – Scope of Bylaws and Mission of the Center

S. 1. These bylaws govern the Center and its Advisory Council.

S. 2. Pursuant to Iowa Code 263C.4, the Center:

(a) shall educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth;

(b) affirms its duty to equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind they need to

the university.
4. The center affirms a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the intellectual freedom of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and welcomes the differences of opinion that naturally exist in a public university community.

– 263C.2 Center for intellectual freedom.

1. A center for intellectual freedom is established as an **independent academic** center under the board at the university.
2. The center shall conduct **teaching and research** in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society.
(...)

As an *academic* unit, it seems natural that the Center relies on advice from academic members of the Advisory Council. This is the reason to have a Scholar Committee. Its functions are discussed below.

The search for the director is one of the primary functions of the Advisory Council, as established by Iowa Code 263C.8:

– 263C.8 Appointment of director.

1. The advisory council established under section 263C.7 shall conduct a nationwide search for candidates for the director of the center. (...)

reach their own informed conclusions on matters of social and political importance;

(c) affirms the value of intellectual diversity in higher education and aspires to enhance the intellectual diversity of the University; and

(d) affirms a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the intellectual freedom of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and welcomes the differences of opinion that naturally exist in a public university community.

Article III – Organization

S. 1. The Center is an independent academic unit under the Board at the University. The Director reports directly to the Board.

S. 2. The Advisory Council shall have an Executive Committee and a Scholar Committee.

S. 3. The Advisory Council may create ad hoc committees.

Article IV – Duties of the Advisory Council and its Committees

S. 1. The duties of the Advisory Council are:

(a) to conduct a nationwide search for a permanent director of the Center if that position is or will become vacant;

(b) to provide advice to the Director and the Board about matters related to the Center;

It seems natural that the Advisory Council also provides advice and academic oversight. The academic oversight aims to preserve and enhance the academic reputation of the Center.

(c) to provide academic oversight and deliver feedback on the activities and operations of the Center.

S. 2. The duties of the Executive Committee include:

The functions listed for the Executive Committee seem natural, in order to support the operation of the Advisory Council.

(a) to manage the search for a permanent director;

(b) to prepare the agenda and materials for the meetings of the Advisory Council;

(c) to prepare the minutes of the meetings of the Advisory Council; and

(d) to provide advice to the chair of the Advisory Council.

During discussions for the approval of House File 437, Democratic Party members expressed concerns about the Director of the Center's extensive authority over hiring and tenure decisions. The Scholar Committee addresses these concerns by providing academic oversight similar to that of other University colleges. Like the Promotion and Tenure Committees that advise deans on faculty hiring and tenure, the Scholar Committee offers advisory recommendations. Thus, it establishes mechanisms comparable to those in other colleges, underscoring its importance.

S. 3. The duties of the Scholar Committee include:

(a) to advise the Director on the hiring of any tenure-eligible faculty;

(b) to advise the Director on promotion and tenure of faculty;

(c) to advise on the inclusion of new academic members in the Advisory Council; and

(d) to provide advice to the Director on academic matters.

– 263C.7 Advisory council.

(...) 2. The board shall appoint a minimum of nine members to the council. A majority of the members appointed to the council shall constitute a quorum. No more than one member of the council may be an employee of the university.
3. The board shall determine the initial length of each member's term in accordance with this subsection. A majority of the members initially appointed to the council shall serve initial terms of four years. The remaining initially appointed members shall

Article V – Membership of the Advisory Council and its Committees

S. 1. The Board shall appoint the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 2. The Advisory Council shall have a minimum of nine members.

S. 3. A majority of the members initially appointed shall serve an initial term of four years. The remaining initially appointed members shall serve an initial term of two years. The terms are renewable by the Board.

serve initial terms of two years. The board shall appoint new members to fill vacancies on the council in accordance with this section.

As previously noted, the Center is an *academic unit* of the University. To maintain its academic character, faculty from recognized institutions must have a significant role in the Executive Committee's operations. This is crucial because the Executive Committee oversees the search for a new Director, who must possess the qualifications for tenure at the University.

It is advisable that these committees consist of at least five members. However, the Advisory Council may choose to appoint additional members.

Up to this point in the bylaws, the Director is the only individual in the organization with a clear academic background. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Director to appoint members of the Advisory Council to the Scholar Committee, which advises on academic matters. Similarly, deans appoint members of the Promotion and Tenure Committees in their colleges.

S. 4. Pursuant to Iowa Code 263C.7(2), no more than one member of the Advisory Council may be an employee of the University.

S. 5. The Executive Committee shall have a minimum of five members. A majority of its members shall be current or former tenured professors from R1 institutions. These members shall be referred to as *academic members* of the Executive Committee.

S. 6. The members of the Executive Committee shall be proposed and elected as described in Article VII and shall have a term of two years, which may be extended for one additional two-year term by election by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 7. The Scholar Committee shall have a minimum of five members. The members of the Scholar Committee shall be current or former tenured professors from R1 institutions. The members of the Scholar Committee shall be proposed as a slate of candidates by the Director and elected by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council.

Article VI – Leadership of the Advisory Council and its Committees other than the Executive Committee

S. 1. The chair of the Advisory Council initially shall be appointed by the Board. Thereafter, the chair of the Advisory Council shall be elected by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 2. The chair of the Advisory Council shall serve a term of two years, which may

These election provisions resemble practices adopted by other councils in Iowa.

– 263C.3 Functions of the center.

1. The center shall provide **scholarship** in all of the following subjects:
(...)

The chair of the Scholar Committee is part of the Executive Committee and assumes leadership in determining the other academic members of the Executive Committee.

The chair of Advisory Council assumes leadership in determining the remaining members of the Executive Committee.

One of the primary functions of the Executive Committee is to oversee the search for a permanent Director. This process is comparable to a dean search, where search committees are predominantly composed of academics. It is uncommon for a non-academic individual to chair a search for an academic position.

The Advisory Council meets at least once a semester, but can meet more frequently. Counting this meeting, the members of the Executive Committee will meet at least twice per semester.

be extended for one additional two-year term by election by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 3. The chair of the Scholar Committee and of any *ad hoc* committees shall be elected by their members for a renewable two-year term.

Article VII – Membership and Leadership of the Executive Committee

S. 1. The academic members of the Executive Committee shall be proposed as a slate of candidates by the chair of the Scholar Committee and elected by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council. This slate shall include the chair of the Scholar Committee.

S. 2. The non-academic members of the Executive Committee shall be proposed as a slate of candidates by the chair of the Advisory Council and elected by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 3. The chair of the Advisory Council shall serve as the chair of the Executive Committee except during a search for a permanent director. The chair of the Scholar Committee shall serve as the chair of the Executive Committee during a search for a permanent director.

Article VIII – Meetings of the Advisory Council and Its Committees

S. 1. The Advisory Council shall meet at least once per semester and additionally as needed as determined by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once

These other provisions seem natural.

between meetings of the Advisory Council.

S. 2. Meetings of the Advisory Council or its committees may be in-person or virtual. An in-person meeting shall include a virtual option for attendance, participation, and voting.

S. 3. Notice of a meeting shall be given to members at least 14 calendar days in advance, unless a majority of members votes to waive this notice requirement.

S. 4. The Director may attend and have the privileges of the floor in a meeting of the Advisory Council or its committees (but not a meeting of the Executive Committee to manage a search for a permanent director) unless requested not to do so by the chair of the Advisory Council or the presiding officer of the meeting. The Director is not a member of the Advisory Council and does not vote.

S. 5. A majority of the members of the Advisory Council shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Council. A majority of the members of a committee of the Advisory Council shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of that committee.

– 263C.8 Appointment of director.

1. The advisory council established under section 263C.7 shall conduct a nationwide search for candidates for the director of the center. The council shall adhere to all relevant state and federal laws in conducting the search. The council shall submit finalists for the position to the board. The board, upon approval of a candidate, shall appoint the candidate as the director. All subsequent directors shall be chosen in the same manner.
2. The director shall have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at a regents institution.

Article IX – Director Search

S. 1. If the position of permanent director is or will become vacant, the Advisory Council and its Executive Committee shall commence a nationwide search for candidates for a permanent director of the Center. The Board shall appoint an interim director if there is a period of time in which the Center has no permanent director.

S. 2. No member of the Advisory Council shall be a candidate for the position of permanent director.

These provisions seem natural and/or just follow the law.

– 263C.9 Duties of director.

1. The director of the center shall have the **sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process**, and to extend offers for employment, of the center and to terminate employment of all staff of the center in accordance with state and federal law.
2. The director shall conduct a market assessment to determine course demand and the number of faculty required to meet any unmet needs of the center and may conduct additional market assessments as needed. A market assessment shall include the subjects described in section 263C.3, subsections 1 and 2.
3. The director **shall have the authority to invite guest speakers** to the university on behalf of the center.
4. **The director shall report directly to the board.**

S. 3. The procedures for the search shall be consistent with state and federal law and the policies of the Board.

S. 4. The Executive Committee shall submit a list of one or more finalists for a vote of the Advisory Council.

S. 5. All finalists must have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at the University, at the rank of Professor.

S. 6. A list of finalists approved by a majority vote of the Advisory Council shall be submitted to the Board.

S. 7. The Board, upon its approval of a candidate, shall appoint the candidate as the Director.

Article X – Term of Director or Interim Director

S. 1. A permanent director shall serve a renewable term of five years.

S. 2. An interim director shall serve a nonrenewable term of two years or until the starting date of the term of a permanent director, whichever is shorter.

Article XI – Powers and Duties of the Director

S. 1. The Director is the chief executive officer of the Center and reports directly to the Board.

S. 2. In addition to all of the other powers of a chief executive officer of a collegiate academic unit at the University, the Director has the powers needed to fulfill the requirements of Iowa Code 263C.2 to 263C.10.

S. 3. The duties of the Director are specified in Iowa Code 263C.9 and 263C.10.

– 263C.10 Annual report.

Beginning in 2026, the director of the center shall submit an annual report to the governor, the general assembly, and the board of regents by December 31. The report shall provide a full account of the center's achievements and shall identify any opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of the center.

As quoted above, Iowa Code 263C.9 gives to the director "**sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process**. Moreover, 263C.6 establishes that:

– 263C.6 Center faculty.

The university shall employ **tenure-eligible faculty members** to provide instruction through the center. The university shall incrementally increase the number of such faculty to five based on market research and student demand. Faculty members appointed to the center may hold joint appointments to other academic units of the university. **Faculty members who are not affiliated with the center shall have no authority to approve, deny, or modify the terms of appointment of faculty to the center.**

Since:
- the Director has sole and exclusive authority over hiring;
- the Center can employ tenure-track and tenured professors; and
- the provost of the University (as a faculty member not affiliated to the center) does not have any authority to approve or deny tenure for faculty to the Center;

we can only conclude that the Director makes the tenure decision, subject to the approval of the Board.

Article XII – Policies and Procedures

S. 1. The Director shall develop policies and procedures for the Center.

S. 2. The Center's policies and procedures shall be consistent with state and federal law and with the policies of the Board.

Article XIII – Center Faculty

S. 1. The Director has sole and exclusive authority to invite or hire:

(a) Support staff;

(b) Speakers;

(c) Visitors;

(d) Temporary professors, with short-term contracts;

(e) Visiting professors;

(f) Teaching faculty, with renewable contracts lasting at least a semester;

(g) Tenure-track assistant professors, eligible for tenure after a period specified in their offer; or

(h) Tenured professors or associate professors, subject to the approval of tenure by the Board.

S. 2. The Director shall determine the responsibilities and compensation of the Center's personnel.

S. 3. Tenured and tenure-track professors may have a joint appointment with other academic units of the University.

S. 4. Tenured professors may have tenure in the Center. If the Center is discontinued, the tenured faculty shall keep their tenure in the University.

– 263C.3 Functions of the center.

(...)
3. The center shall work to do all of the following:
a. Expand the intellectual diversity of the university's academic community.
b. Foster civic engagement among university students and faculty.
c. Coordinate with the center for cyclone civics at Iowa state university and the center for civic education at the university of northern Iowa to enable academic offerings that **may be offered to students at any of the regents institutions either in person or online.**
4. The center, in collaboration with any of the regents institutions, **may offer courses; develop certificate, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs; and offer degrees.**
(...)

– 263C.5 Funding – use.

1. The center may accept and administer private and external donations and gifts. The university of Iowa center for advancement shall be the designated foundation for philanthropic gifts or funding for the center.
2. **Any moneys appropriated to the center, and any private and external donations to the center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the center.**
3. Any additional funding required to operate the center shall be proportionally provided by the regents institutions, subject to approval of the board.

The Regents institution might not approve courses, funding, or other initiatives by the Center. In this case, a dispute between the Center and the Regents institution may arise.

Article XIV – Courses, Certificates and Programs

S. 1. The Center may offer courses; develop certificates, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs; and offer degrees at the University.

S. 2. The Center shall coordinate with the the center for cyclone civics at Iowa State University and the center for civic education at the University of Northern Iowa to offer courses at these Regents institutions either in person or online.

S. 3. The Regents institutions shall recognize the credit hours of the courses offered by the Center.

S. 4. The Center may coordinate with the Regents institutions to include some of the Center's courses as satisfying core, major, minor or certificate requirements.

Article XV – Funding

S. 1. Any moneys appropriated to the Center, and any private and external donations to the Center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the Center. The Director has the sole and exclusive authority for the use of these moneys.

S. 2. Any additional funding required to operate the Center shall be provided by the Regents institutions, subject to the approval of the Board.

Article XVI – Dispute Resolution

S. 1. If a dispute arises between the Center and a Regents institution, the Chair

This procedure to resolve disputes seem simple and natural.

of the Advisory Council shall attempt to resolve the dispute.

S. 2. If an agreement is not reached, the dispute shall be referred to a meeting of the Board for resolution.

Article XVII – Parliamentary Authority

This article provides the standard provision adopting Robert's Rules of Order.

S. 1. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Center, the Advisory Council and its committees in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and with any special rules of order that the Center, the Advisory Council, or its committees may adopt.

D.2 Comments to the Bylaws Proposed by the Board Counsel

Comments on the draft of Bylaws proposed by the Board Counsel

Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director, Center for Intellectual Freedom

October 15, 2025

Introduction

I sent the draft of the bylaws to the Board office on Tuesday, October 7 ,2025. Almost a week later, on Monday, October 13, the Board Counsel (Aimee Clayes) wrote the following:

> Regent Hensley and Professor De Castro: I have reviewed this draft document a number of times, and am confident that it does not represent a form of bylaws that should be presented for consideration by the CIF Advisory Council and/or the Iowa Board of Regents. I cannot recommend Board approval of the current form and structure. I am happy to have further conversations with the drafting team, but **it is not a productive use of my time** to attempt to red-line the current draft into a workable form. *(Emphasis included.)*

On Tuesday, October 14, the Board Counsel promised to send a revised draft of the bylaws, which she delivered by the end of the day. Despite my commitments to organizing a major event for December and developing two courses for students in the Spring semester, I considered it a **productive use of my time** to review and provide comments on her draft of the bylaws during the morning of Wednesday, October 15, 2025. I hope this demonstrates a respect for the Board Counsel's work that I have not received in return.

Before presenting those comments, I think it is important to remember what Iowa Code 263C.4 establishes regarding these bylaws:

> *The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board.*

It is the responsibility of the Center, and thus my responsibility as Interim Director, to draft the bylaws and submit them for approval by the Iowa Board of Regents. I understand that the Board Counsel has a duty to review the draft bylaws submitted by the Center and provide suggestions. I may choose to adopt or reject these suggestions at my discretion. The Board Counsel may recommend rejection of the proposed bylaws, as she has indicated she might in her email. While she has the authority to make any recommendation, the Board Counsel cannot propose alternative bylaws, as Iowa Code § 263C.2 stipulates that "the Center shall establish the bylaws." In anticipation of the Board Counsel recommending rejection, I have prepared this document (including this introduction) for inclusion in the public docket for consideration by the Iowa Board of Regents, detailing my reasons for disagreeing with her proposal.

Comments

Comments are in blue; legal text or citations in black.

This first article repeats the article II of the draft of the Center's bylaws.

The Board Counsel eliminated the article with "'Definitions" that was included at the beginning of the draft that I have sent to the Board office. I included the article with definitions because:

- it is in the law HF 437;
- it is in the Bylaws of the Hamilton Center at the University of Florida, which is a center similar to the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa.

The only difference with respect to the Hamilton's Center bylaws in this regard is that in our draft, the definitions article come first, instead of second. This was a suggestion by law professor Thomas Gallanis, who worked many hours helping to revise these bylaws.

This language does not follow the legislative intent of HF 437, which established the Center and its **Advisory** Council. HF 437 created an **Advisory** Council to the Director, not a Council to "oversee" the operations of the Center. Although the Center's bylaws did include (in Article IV, section 1) as duties of the Advisory Council "to provide academic oversight", this is advisory to the Director. The Board Counsel took away the function of providing "**academic** oversight".

Board Counsel draft

Article I – Purpose and Mission

The Center for Intellectual Freedom (Center) is established by Iowa Code section 263C.2 to conduct teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society. The Center for Intellectual Freedom shall do all of the following, which shall take precedence over all remaining provisions of these bylaws:

A. Educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth.

B. Affirm its duty to equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind they need to reach their own informed conclusions on matters of social and political importance.

C. Affirm the value of intellectual diversity in higher education and aspire to enhance the intellectual diversity of the State University of Iowa.

D. Affirm a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the intellectual freedom of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and welcomes the differences of opinion that naturally exist in a public university community.

The Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council (Advisory Council) is established by Iowa Code section 263C.7 to assist the Iowa Board of Regents in overseeing the operations of the Center.

It is not completely clear the intention behind changing the language of the law and of the Center's bylaws.

263C.2 Center for intellectual freedom. 1. A center for intellectual freedom is established as an independent academic center under the board at the university.

Article II – Membership and Organization

The Center is an independent academic center established under the Iowa Board of Regents.

Article III – Board of Directors

This goes against legislative intent. The **Advisory** Council created by HF 437 is **ADVISORY** in nature. Nowhere in the law is it stated that the Advisory Council will "govern" the Center. The legislative intent clearly vests primary authority in the Director, not the Advisory Council.

A. **General Powers.** The Center shall be governed by an Advisory Council, which shall be subject to the oversight of the Iowa Board of Regents. It shall be the Advisory Council's duty to carry out the objectives and purposes of the Center in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 263C, these Bylaws, direction of the Iowa Board of Regents, and other applicable law.

Since a "Definitions" article is missing and this Section calls *all* members of the Advisory Council *directors*, then we must assume that when these bylaws says "directors", it means *members* of the Advisory Council. This is confusing, since the law frequently uses *director* for the Director of the Center, who can only be one person.

B. **Appointment, Number, Term.** The Advisory Council shall consist of not less than nine (9) or more than twenty-six (26) directors. Directors shall be recommended by the Chair of the Advisory Council subject to appointment by the Iowa Board of Regents. A majority of the directors shall be appointed to an initial term of four (4) years, the remaining directors shall be appointed to an initial term of two (2) years. Thereafter, all directors shall serve a term of four (4) years.

The current composition of the Advisory Council includes only three Iowa Board of Regents members. To comply with the provision requiring a minimum of four Board of Regents members, the Board must appoint an additional member. However, as Section B above limits the total number of Advisory Council members to 26, one current member would need to be replaced to accommodate this appointment. Who would this member be? Furthermore, this provision restricts the Board's authority. The

C. **Qualifications.**

(a) No more than one (1) director, or the highest number allowed by applicable law, may be an employee of the University of Iowa.

(b) A minimum of four (4) directors shall be appointed from the current membership of the Iowa Board of Regents.

Iowa Board of Regents has the authority to appoint any or all of its members to the Advisory Council. Why is it necessary to impose restrictions on this authority?

Section (C) (c) says no more than X directors – whatever X represents – may be residents of a state other than Iowa. Again, this imposes a restriction on the Board of Regents' authority. What is the purpose of restricting the Board's power in this manner?

(c) No more than X directors may be residents of a state other than Iowa.

D. **Vacancies.** A vacancy, other than a resignation, will only be declared in the manner(s) prescribed by Iowa law for determining vacancies in statutory boards, councils, and commissions. Any vacancy occurring in the Advisory Council board of directors shall be filled in the same manner as an initial appointment. A director so appointed shall be appointed for the unexpired term of the director's predecessor or the full term of such new appointment, as applicable.

E. **Voting Rights.**

F. **Compensation.** The Advisory Council directors shall not receive any compensation for their services as directors but may be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in Iowa Board of Regents policy or state law.

Article IV – Officers

It seems strange that "the officers" (plural) consists of one person, who already holds a designated title.

A. **Officers.** The officers of the Advisory Council shall consist of a Chair of the Advisory Council.

B. **Qualifications, Election and Term.**

(a) The Chair of the Advisory Council shall be a current member of the Iowa Board of Regents.

(b) The initial Chair of the Advisory Council shall be selected by the Iowa Board of Regents from the initial membership of the Advisory Council. Thereafter, the Chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the directors of the Advisory Council.

I will refrain from commenting on the remainder of this draft, as it does not seem relevant. Furthermore, the "draft" is clearly incomplete.

(c) The Chair shall serve a term of two years. No director may serve more than two consecutive terms as Chair, nor may a director serve more than X terms as Chair in total.

C. **Duties and Powers.** The Chair of the Advisory Council shall, when present, preside over all meetings of the Advisory Council. The Chair shall have general power over the affairs of the Advisory Council, subject to these bylaws and the oversight of the Iowa Board of Regents. The Chair may authorize any director who is also a current member of the Iowa Board of Regents to perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.

D. **Removal.** Any officer may be removed by a majority vote of the Advisory Council.

Article V – Meetings

A. **Regular Meetings.** The Advisory Council shall meet at least once per academic semester at a place, time, and location to be determined by the Executive Committee.

B. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Advisory Council may be called by the Chair or upon the written request of X directors. A request to convene a special meeting shall be directed to the Chair.

C. **Operation of Meetings.**

(a) The Advisory Council shall follow the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 21 – the Iowa Open Meetings Act, and any successor law, when conducting its meetings.

(b) The Advisory Council and each of its committees shall

Article VI – Advisory Committees

A. **Establishment.** The Advisory Council shall maintain an Executive Committee as a standing advisory committee. Additional advisory committees may be established on a time-limited, ad hoc basis upon the announcement of the Chair during a regular meeting.

B. **Operation.** An advisory committee shall not be vested with the authority to exercise decision-making authority on behalf of the Advisory Council and shall not exercise any of the powers or duties reserved for the Advisory Council pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 263C, these bylaws, Iowa Board of Regents directive, or other applicable law.

C. **Dissolution.** The Chair retains the authority to dissolve all advisory committees, other than the Executive Committee, at the Chair's discretion by making an announcement to that effect during a regular meeting of the Advisory Council.

D. **Executive Committee.**

(a) Appointment, Membership, duties.

Article VII – Finances

Article VIII – Conflicts of Interest

Article IX – Amendments

D.3 New Version of the Bylaws Incorporating Board Office Suggestions

New draft of Bylaws
(incorporating suggestions from the Board Counsel)

Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director, Center for Intellectual Freedom

October 23, 2025

Introduction

Hi, Aimee and Rachel,

Thank you for your feedback. I noticed that the document contains comments only from Rachel, so I will address my response to her.

Rachel,

I've incorporated most of your suggestions into the revised document. However, I couldn't implement a few, which are detailed below.

I am glad you made those comments, because they prove beyond any doubt the importance of retaining the Articles I've advocated for. As I previously emphasized, ambiguity in these provisions could lead to confusion in future interactions between the Center and the University, resulting in significant additional work for all involved.

Your comments validate my concerns about this risk, and I'm grateful for this. Notably, in some critical areas, your understanding of the issues is very different from mine. In my responses to your comments, I explain why I believe certain suggestions should not be adopted and why my proposed approach better supports the Center's operations while aligning with applicable law.

Thank you for your collaboration.

In the rest of this file, I've presented the bylaws in the right column, with comments in the left column. Rachel's comments are in red, and my responses or additional comments are in blue. I've focused only on new comments not previously addressed.

Best regards,

Luciano

1

Contents

Article I	Definitions	3
Article II	Purpose and Mission	3
Article III	Organization	4
Article IV	Membership	5
Article V	Officers	6
Article VI	Meetings	7
Article VII	Director Search	8
Article VIII	Center Director	8
Article IX	Center Faculty	9
Article X	Courses, Certificates and Programs	11
Article XI	Finance	11
Article XII	Dispute Resolution	12
Article XIII	Conflicts of interest	12

No changes or suggestions for the articles in this page.

Article I – Definitions

S. 1. "*Advisory Council*" means the advisory council established by Iowa Code section 263C.7.

S. 2. "*Board*" means the state of Iowa board of regents.

S. 3. "*Center*" means the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.2.

S. 4. "*Director*" means the director of the Center, mentioned in Iowa Code section 263C.9. The term includes an interim director, unless explicitly specified otherwise.

S. 5. "*R1 institution*" means a university or institution classified as "Research 1: Very High Research Activity" by the Carnegie Classification of Research Institutions.

S. 6. "*Regents institution*" means an institution specified in Iowa Code section 262.7, subsections 1 through 3.

S. 7. "*University*" means the State University of Iowa.

Article II – Purpose and Mission

S. 1. These bylaws govern the Center and its Advisory Council.

S. 2. Pursuant to Iowa Code 263C.4, the Center:

(a) shall educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth;

(b) affirms its duty to equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind they need to reach their own informed conclusions on matters of social and political importance;

No suggestions for Article II.

(c) affirms the value of intellectual diversity in higher education and aspires to enhance the intellectual diversity of the University; and

(d) affirms a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the intellectual freedom of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and welcomes the differences of opinion that naturally exist in a public university community.

Article III – Organization

S. 1. The Center is an independent academic unit under the Board at the University. The Director reports directly to the Board.

S. 2. The Advisory Council shall have an Executive Committee and a Scholar Committee and may create ad hoc committees.

S. 3. The duties of the Advisory Council include:

(a) conducting a nationwide search for a permanent director of the Center if that position is or will become vacant;

(b) providing advice to the Director and the Board about matters related to the Center;

(c) providing oversight and delivering feedback on the activities and operations of the Center.

Suggestion for deleting "academic" between "providing" and "oversight" in Article III, Section 3, (c):

RACHEL: Deleted "academic" as I believe the oversight function is broader than just that area.

Suggestion adopted

S. 4. The duties of the Executive Committee include:

(a) managing the search for a Center Director;

(b) preparing the agenda and materials for meetings of the Advisory Council;

No changes or suggestions for the articles in this page.

(c) preparing and maintaining the minutes of meetings of the Advisory Council;

(d) providing advice to the Chair on all matters related to the Center and its activities; and

(e) performing any other functions assigned by the Advisory Council.

S. 5. The duties of the Scholar Committee include:

(a) advising the Director on the decision to hire all tenure-eligible faculty;

(b) advising the Director on promotion and tenure of faculty;

(c) advising on the Inclusion of new academic representatives on the Advisory Council;

(d) providing advice to the Director on all academic matters related to the Center's activities; and

(e) performing any other functions assigned by the Advisory Council.

Article IV – Membership

S. 1. Iowa Code section 263C.7 establishes the rules for membership of the Advisory Council.

S. 2. The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) and not more than one-half of the current membership of the Advisory Council, as determined by the Chair of the Advisory Council. A majority of the Executive Committee members shall be Advisory Council members who are current or former tenured professors from R1 institutions (Academic Members).

No changes or suggestions for the articles in this page.

S. 3. Academic Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the Advisory Council from a slate of candidates proposed by the Scholar Committee. The remaining members shall be elected by a majority of the members of the Advisory Council from a slate of candidates proposed by the Chair of the Advisory Council.

S. 4. The Scholar Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) and not more than one-half of the current membership of the Advisory Council, as determined by the Chair of the Advisory Council. The members of the Scholar Committee shall be Advisory Council members who are current or former tenured professors from R1 institutions.

S. 5. Members of any committee shall serve a term of two (2) years, with one consecutive two-year renewal term upon a majority vote of the Advisory Council. Thereafter, a member may be re-elected or reappointed to the committee after at least a two-year hiatus.

Article V – Officers

S. 1. The officers of the Advisory Council shall consist of a Chair of the Advisory Council and a Chair of the Scholar Committee.

S. 2. The initial Chair of the Advisory Council shall be selected by the Board from the initial membership of the Advisory Council. Thereafter, the Chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the Advisory Council.

S. 3. The Chair of the Advisory Council shall serve a term of two years. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms as Chair, nor may a member

No changes or suggestions for the articles in this page.

serve more than four terms as Chair in total.

S. 4. The Chair of the Scholar Committee and of any *ad hoc* committees shall be elected by their members for a renewable two-year term.

S. 5. The Chair of the Advisory Council shall serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee, except that for the limited purposes of conducting any search for a Center Director the Chair of the Scholar Committee shall serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee.

Article VI – Meetings

S. 1. The Advisory Council shall meet at least once per academic semester at a place, time, and location to be determined by the Executive Committee.

S. 2. Special meetings of the Advisory Council may be called by the Chair or the Executive Committee. A request to convene a special meeting shall be directed to the Executive Committee.

S. 3. The Advisory Council shall follow the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 21 – the Iowa Open Meetings Act, and any successor law, when conducting its meetings.

S. 4. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Advisory Council and each of its committees to the extent they are not inconsistent with applicable law, these bylaws, or any special rules of order that the Advisory Council or a committee may adopt.

S. 5. The Center Director may attend and have the privileges of the floor during any regular meeting of the Advisory Council or one of its committees, unless the Chair determines otherwise.

Suggestion made for changing Article VII, Section 6, as follows:

RACHEL: Recommend striking "must" and replacing with "may" in order to assure Advisory Council and Board flexibility in naming a director. Highly qualified individuals may come from federal or state government roles, first amendment attorneys, judges, high profile 1st amendment experts who have not been in a faculty role.

This suggestion cannot be adopted, as it conflicts with the explicit text of the law. Specifically, the proposed change to Article VII, Section 6, contradicts Iowa Code Section 263C.8(2), which states:

263C.8 2. The director shall have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at a regents institution.

Article VII, Section 6 aligns with the requirements of Iowa Code Section 263C.8(2). As the Center is located at the University of Iowa, it is reasonable to require the Director to have the academic qualifications necessary for tenure eligibility at this university. Thus, this section complies with the law while providing a reasonable specification.

Article VII – Director Search

S. 1. If the position of permanent director is or will become vacant, the Advisory Council and its Executive Committee shall commence a nationwide search for candidates for a permanent director of the Center, pursuant Iowa Code section 263C.8.

S. 2. The Board shall appoint an interim director if there is a period of time in which the Center has no permanent director.

S. 3. No member of the Advisory Council shall be a candidate for the position of permanent director.

S. 4. The procedures for the search shall be consistent with state and federal law and the policies of the Board.

S. 5. The Executive Committee shall submit a list of one or more finalists for a vote of the Advisory Council.

S. 6. All finalists must have the academic standing to be eligible for tenure at the University, at the rank of Professor.

S. 7. A list of finalists approved by a majority vote of the Advisory Council shall be submitted to the Board.

Article VIII – Center Director

S. 1. The Director is the chief executive officer of the Center and reports directly to the Board.

S. 2. A permanent director shall serve a renewable term of five years.

S. 3. An interim director shall serve a nonrenewable term of two years or until the starting date of the term of a permanent director, whichever is shorter.

Rachel asked the following question regarding Article VIII, Section 6:

RACHEL: Are policies developed by the Director subject to BOR approval?

Board Counsel Aimee Claeys suggested that certain aspects that were previously addressed in the bylaws could be managed through policies to enhance flexibility. However, this flexibility would be limited if such policies require Board approval. Indeed, any revisions to these policies would also need Board approval.

Comments about Article IX, Section 1:

RACHEL: This is ok, but must be "in accordance with all university requirements for employing faculty in these categories." This is not an issue of controlling who gets hired so much as a liability, risk mitigation, quality assurance issue.

RACHEL:Tenure is the most highly regulated thing at the universities. Tenure must be assigned to an academic department, so we need to ensure the process is not perceived as "sole discretion of a Center director" but is handled in alignment with how faculty are hired in any other area of the university. The Director can have authority to decide which faculty are able to have an affiliation with the Center, but home department faculty decide if that person is tenure-eligible. In addition, if the Center Director should cut affiliation with a tenured faculty member, the home department will still have full employment obligation to maintain that person as long as they meet all other employment expectations.

These comments underscore the critical importance of this Article. Allowing a **home department** to determine a faculty member's tenure eligibility, rather than the Center, conflicts with the explicit text of the law:

S. 4. In addition to all of the other powers of a chief executive officer of a collegiate academic unit at the University, the Director has the powers needed to fulfill the requirements of Iowa Code sections 263C.2 to 263C.10.

S. 5. The duties of the Director are specified in Iowa Code sections 263C.9 and 263C.10.

S. 6. The Director shall develop policies and procedures for the Center.

S. 7. The Center's policies and procedures shall be consistent with state and federal law and with the policies of the Board.

Article IX – Center Faculty

S. 1. The Director has sole and exclusive authority to invite or hire:

(a) Support staff;

(b) Speakers;

(c) Visitors;

(d) Temporary professors, with short-term contracts;

(e) Visiting professors;

(f) Part-time faculty;

(g) Teaching faculty, with renewable contracts lasting at least a semester;

(h) Tenure-track assistant professors, eligible for tenure after a period specified in their offer; or

(i) Tenured professors or associate professors, subject to the approval of tenure by the Board.

S. 2. The Director shall determine the responsibilities and compensation of the Center's personnel.

263C.6 (...) Faculty members who are not affiliated with the center shall have no authority to approve, deny, or modify the terms of appointment of faculty to the center.

Therefore, it goes against the law to require a department to approve tenure for the Center's Faculty. Rachel adds the following comment to Article IX, Section 4:

RACHEL : No other Center as the university is a "tenure home" for it's faculty. All tenured faculty are attached to an existing academic department that is subject to university and college academic policies and procedures. Tenure cannot be assigned "to the university" but must be tied to an appropriate academic unit with the proper reviews associated with such assignment. Iowa Code 263C says "the university shall employ tenure-eligible faculty" who are "appointed to the Center" but it does not suggest the Center is the tenure-home.

The Center is an academic unit, no less significant than any department. Under these bylaws, the Scholar Committee will function as the Center's Personnel and Promotion (P&T) Committee, analogous to those in other colleges at the University of Iowa. However, the Faculty appointed to our Advisory Council are of exceptional caliber, comprising professors from top universities. Consequently, the Center's Scholar Committee, serving as its P&T Committee, is likely to uphold higher standards than other P&T Committees at the University of Iowa. As a faculty, I was repeatedly informed that all Department and P&T Committee reports are advisory to the Dean. We are replicating this procedure as closely as permitted by law. Indeed, the law establishes:

263C.6 (...) Faculty members appointed to the center **may** hold joint appointments to **other academic units** of the university. (...)

Therefore, the Center **is an academic unit** and may be the tenure-home of its Faculty. Otherwise, the law would say: "**must** hold joint appointments" to departments that will be the tenure-home of those faculty.

S. 3. Faculty members may hold joint appointments with other academic units at the University.

S. 4. Faculty may have tenure in the Center. If the Center is discontinued, the tenured faculty shall keep their tenure in the University.

Rachel suggested to add the following text to the end of Article X, Section 1:

RACHEL added: "subject to existing university and Board procedures for approval of such programs."

Although this change may appear minor, it poses a significant risk. If the University can use its policies to dictate the courses the Center may offer, it effectively controls the Center's curriculum. This clearly contradicts the legislative intent, as evidenced by Iowa Code Section 263C.3:

263C.6 (...) 4. The center, in collaboration with any of the regents institutions, may offer courses; develop certificate, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs; and offer degrees.

The collaboration referenced above pertains to coordination with the Centers at other Regents institutions. This Article specifies that the Center offers courses at the University of Iowa and collaborates with these other Centers.

Article X – Courses, Certificates and Programs

S. 1. The Center may offer courses; develop certificates, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs; and offer degrees at the University.

S. 2. The Center shall coordinate with the center for cyclone civics at Iowa State University and the center for civic education at the University of Northern Iowa to offer courses at these Regents institutions either in person or online.

S. 3. The Regents institutions shall recognize the credit hours of the courses offered by the Center.

S. 4. The Center may coordinate with the Regents institutions to include some of the Center's courses as satisfying core, major, minor or certificate requirements.

Aimee Claeys proposed again an edit to Article XI, Section 1, which was previously rejected. This edit grants the Executive Director of the Board final authority over all funds appropriated to the Center. This is a critical element in ensuring the Center's operations remain unimpeded. If the Executive Director controls the use of funds, the Center's Director lacks true authority, effectively ceding control to the Executive Director. Furthermore, Suzanne Stratton, Director of Finance & Budget Operations in the Office of the Provost at the University of Iowa, noted that most colleges operate as outlined in Article XI, Section 1: all expenses are determined at the college level, except for deans' travel. Thus, Section 1 aligns with the University's standard practice for its colleges.

Article XI – Finance

S. 1. Any moneys appropriated to the Center, and any private and external donations to the Center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the Center. The Director has the sole and exclusive authority for the use of these moneys, with the exception of the Director's travel expenses, which shall be approved by the Executive Director of the Board under the same criteria that govern the travel expenses of a chief executive office of a collegiate academic unit at the University.

S. 2. The Director may require additional funding to operate the Center, which shall be provided by the Regents institutions, subject to approval of the Board.

Aimee Claeys suggested the inclusion of Section 3 to Article XI, which I adopted.

S. 3. The Director of the Center shall propose an annual budget that is subject to the approval of the Advisory Council and the Board.

Article XII – Dispute Resolution

Aimee Claeys proposed an edit to Article XII, Section 2, replacing "referred to a meeting of the Board for resolution" with "referred to the Executive Director of the Board for resolution." Though this change may seem minor, it has significant implications. Many aspects of the Center's activities could be subject to disputes with the University. If the Executive Director can resolve these disputes without oversight from the Board of Regents or its meetings, he could effectively halt the Center's initiatives. Referring disputes to Board meetings ensures public transparency and greater oversight. This element is essential to ensuring that the Center's initiatives remain unhindered.

S. 1. If a dispute arises between the Center and a Regents institution, the Chair of the Advisory Council shall attempt to resolve the dispute.

S. 2. If an agreement is not reached, the dispute shall be referred to a meeting of the Board for resolution.

Article XIII – Conflicts of interest

S. 1. An Advisory Council Member shall be considered to have a conflict of interest if

(a) such Member has existing or potential financial or other interests which impair or might reasonably appear to impair such member's independent, unbiased judgment in the discharge of his/her responsibilities to the Center, or

(b) such Member is aware that a member of his/her family (which for purposes of this paragraph shall be a spouse, parents, siblings, children and any other relative if the latter reside in the same household as the Member), or any organization in which such Member (or member of his/her family) is an officer, director, employee, member, partner, director, or controlling stockholder, has such existing or potential financial or other interests.

S. 2. All Members shall disclose to the Advisory Council Executive Committee any possible conflict of interest at the earliest practicable time. No Member shall vote on any matter under consideration in which such Member has a conflict of interest. All Members are required to follow the requirements outlined in Iowa Code Chapter 68B and shall sign an annual conflict of interest disclosure form.

Appendix E

Policies

E.1 Policy 01 – Management of Policies

Policy 01
Development, Approval, Amendment, and Management of Policies

Center for Intellectual Freedom
Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director

February 11, 2026

Abstract

The Interim Director proposes this policy to be approved by the Advisory Council of the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

Contents

Article I – Definitions 2
Article II – Development of Policies 2
Article III – Approval of Policies 2
Article IV – Absence of Policies 3
Article V – Conflicts with University Policies 3

Article I – Definitions

Section 1. "*Advisory Council*" means the advisory council of the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.7.

Section 2. "*Board*" means the state of Iowa board of regents.

Section 3. "*Center*" means the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.2.

Section 4. "*Director*" means the director of the Center, mentioned in Iowa Code section 263C.9. The term includes an interim director, unless explicitly specified otherwise.

Section 5. "*University*" means the State University of Iowa.

Article II – Development of Policies

Section 1. The Director is responsible for developing policies for the Center.

Section 2. The Director shall develop specific policies governing:

(a) Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression;
(b) Content Development and Intellectual Property;
(c) Financial Management;
(d) Collaboration with the University;
(e) Hiring of personnel, including faculty;
(f) Evaluation and promotion of personnel, including faculty;
(g) Granting of tenure to faculty;
(h) General Policies Regarding Students and Courses;
(i) Personnel on-site workload and attendance requirements;
(j) Any other matters that the Director deems relevant.

Section 3. These policies should be developed by December 31, 2027.

Article III – Approval of Policies

Section 1. Once developed by the Director, a policy requires approval by the Advisory Council.

Section 2. After the Advisory Council approval, the policy must also be approved by the Board.

Section 3. The procedure in this Article shall also apply to a policy amendment proposed by the Director.

Article IV – Absence of Policies

Section 1. For any matter not covered in the approved Policies or in the Center's Bylaws, the Director shall determine the practices and procedures to be adopted at the Center.

Section 2. For the determination of the practices and procedures, the Director may consult the policies of the University for guidance, to the extent that such policies do not contradict the enabling legislation and the Center's Bylaws and Policies.

Article V – Conflicts with University Policies

Section 1. The Center operates independently and is not subject to the policies, rules, or administrative requirements of the University, except to the extent mandated by law or by specific contractual or statutory obligations.

Section 2. If there is a disagreement between the Director and the University, the dispute shall be resolved by the mechanism defined in the Center's Bylaws.

E.2 Policy 02 – Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression

Policy 02
Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression

Center for Intellectual Freedom
Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director

February 11, 2026

Abstract

The Interim Director proposes this policy to be approved by the Advisory Council of the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

Contents

Article I – **Definitions** **2**

Article II – **Adoption of the Chicago Principles** **2**

Article III – **Institutional Neutrality** **2**

Article IV – **Freedom of Expression** **3**

Article V – **Attribution of Political Statements** **3**

Article I – Definitions

Section 1. "*Advisory Council*" means the advisory council of the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.7.

Section 2. "*Board*" means the state of Iowa board of regents.

Section 3. "*Center*" means the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.2.

Section 4. "*Chicago Principles*" means the principles set forth in the Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression, adopted by the University of Chicago in January 2015.

Section 5. "*Director*" means the director of the Center, mentioned in Iowa Code section 263C.9. The term includes an interim director, unless explicitly specified otherwise.

Section 6. "*Kalven Report*" means the Report of the Committee on the University's Role in Political and Social Action, adopted by the University of Chicago in 1967.

Section 7. "*University*" means the State University of Iowa.

Article II – Adoption of the Chicago Principles

Section 1. The Center shall adopt the Chicago Principles on freedom of expression and the Kalven Report on institutional neutrality, as adapted and detailed in this Policy, to the extent they are consistent with applicable law, and the Center's Bylaws and Policies.

Article III – Institutional Neutrality

Section 1. The Center, as an institution, shall not take collective positions on political or social controversies of the day.

Section 2. The Center shall promote free inquiry, open debate, and the pursuit of knowledge, not to function as a political actor or advocate for particular causes outside its core scholarly purpose.

Section 3. The Center shall remain neutral as an institution so that its individual members may freely express their own views without implying institutional endorsement.

Section 4. Only when a political or social action directly threatens the Center's ability to fulfill its mission may the Center depart from this neutrality, and only by prior approval of the Advisory Council.

Section 5. The neutrality of the Center arises from respect for free inquiry and the obligation to protect a diversity of viewpoints, not from indifference or lack of courage.

Article IV – Freedom of Expression

Section 1. The Center guarantees to all members of its community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn.

Section 2. It is not the proper role of the Center to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.

Section 3. Although the Center values civility and mutual respect, concerns about civility and respect can never be used as justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of the community.

Section 4. Debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the Center community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed.

Section 5. It is for the individual members of the Center community, not for the Center as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose.

Section 6. The Center may restrict expression only when it violates the law, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, falsely defames a specific individual, unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the Center.

Section 7. The Center may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the Center.

Article V – Attribution of Political Statements

Section 1. All political statements, opinions, endorsements, writings, publications, public comments, or other expressions made by faculty, staff, affiliates, affiliated organizations, Advisory Council members, or any other individuals associated with the Center shall be considered their own personal or organizational views.

Section 2. Such expressions shall not be attributed to, or construed as representing the official position, policy, or views of the Center as an institution, unless expressly adopted by the Advisory Council.

Section 3. This rule of non-attribution applies regardless of whether the individual explicitly disclaims Center endorsement in the statement itself.

Section 4. The Center shall not issue official statements endorsing, condemning, or taking positions on political candidates, parties, legislation, public policy proposals, or social controversies unless such action is directly necessary to protect the Center's core mission, and only by prior approval of the Advisory Council.

Section 5. No member of the Center community shall be required, pressured, or penalized for failing to include a disclaimer when expressing personal views; the non-attribution rule operates automatically.

E.3 Policy 03 – Content Development and Intellectual Property

Policy 03
Content Development and Intellectual Property

Center for Intellectual Freedom
Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director

February 11, 2026

Abstract

The Interim Director proposes this policy to be approved by the Advisory Council of the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

Contents

Article I – **Definitions** **2**

Article II – **Support for Development of Content** **2**

Article III – **Intellectual Property** **2**

Article I – Definitions

Section 1. "*Center*" means the Center for Intellectual Freedom established by Iowa Code section 263C.2.

Section 2. "*Director*" means the director of the Center, mentioned in Iowa Code section 263C.9. The term includes an interim director, unless explicitly specified otherwise.

Article II – Support for Development of Content

Section 1. The Center shall promote the creation of scholarly, educational, and public content.

Section 2. The Center's support for content development may encompass costs associated with promoting and distributing the resulting materials.

Section 3. The Director shall establish procedures for choosing projects to support.

Section 4. The Director shall have final authority to determine which projects receive support from the Center's funds.

Article III – Intellectual Property

Section 1. Copyright in all content produced with Center support (including but not limited to publications, videos, datasets, and other materials) remains with the creator(s), unless a written agreement provides otherwise.

Section 2. When deemed appropriate, the Center shall seek to negotiate a non-exclusive, perpetual, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, display, and create derivative works from content developed with its support.

APPENDIX F

CIF Courses

F.1 Political and Economic Institutions in the United States

Syllabus

CSI:1214:0003 Special Topics II
Political and Economic Institutions
in the United States

Luciano I. de Castro
Professor of Economics & Interim Director
Center for Intellectual Freedom
The University of Iowa

Spring 2026

Contents

1 Overview of the Course **2**
1.1 Learning Objectives . . . 2
1.2 Outline of Course Topics . . . 3
1.3 Required Textbooks, Readings, and Other Materials . . . 3
1.4 Course Meeting Time and Place . . . 3
1.5 Participation . . . 3

2 Lectures **4**
2.1 The Judiciary: The Least Dangerous Branch? . . . 4
2.2 Presidential Nominations & the Electoral College . . . 4
2.3 Representation in Congress . . . 4
2.4 Exploring the relationship between Capitalism and Democracy . . . 5
2.5 From the Athenian Assembly to Capitol Hill: Rethinking Democracy Then and Now . . . 5
2.6 The Foundations of a Constitutional Republic: How Strong are America's . . . 5
2.7 The Midterm Election of 1994, the "Republican Revolution" and the "Contract With America": Lessons for 2026 Midterm Elections . . . 6

3 Instructors **6**
3.1 Luciano I. de Castro (Organizer) . . . 6
3.2 Timothy Hagle . . . 7
3.3 Alex Smith . . . 7
3.4 Reynolds Cramer . . . 8
3.5 Eric Dugdale . . . 9

1

3.6 Stephen H. Balch . . . 9
3.7 Greg Ganske . . . 10

4 Assignments and Grading **10**
4.1 Assignments . . . 11
4.2 Attendance and Accommodations . . . 11
4.3 Calendar of Course Assignments . . . 11

5 General information to students **12**
5.1 Student Complaints . . . 12
5.2 Drop Deadline for this Course . . . 12
5.3 UI Email . . . 12
5.4 Course ICON Site . . . 12
5.5 Academic Honesty and Misconduct . . . 12
5.6 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy . . . 12
5.7 University Course Policies and Resources for Students . . . 12

1 Overview of the Course

This course is offered by the Center for Intellectual Freedom. It consists of a series of 110-minute lectures held weekly in the evenings. The instructors, drawn from diverse backgrounds and experiences (including but not limited to university professors), will present engaging and thought-provoking topics for discussion in a class limited to 32 students. This small class size fosters open discussion and in-depth exploration of each topic's multiple dimensions.

The courses organized by the Center for Intellectual Freedom aim to inspire students to embark on a compelling journey of discovery and learning about significant issues related to the courses' theme.

The course *Political and Economic Institutions in the United States* will explore the foundational ideas, texts, and traditions that have shaped American political and economic institutions. Students are encouraged to grow stronger in their viewpoints and engage in open discussion, civil debate, and conversation.

1.1 Learning Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to inspire students to engage in a thoughtful and open exploration of significant issues related to American political and economic institutions.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain key foundational ideas, texts, and traditions that have shaped American political and economic institutions;

- Analyze the interplay between democratic governance and market-based economic systems, including their historical development and contemporary relevance;
- Participate in informed, civil, and open discussions and debates on complex political and economic topics;

These objectives align with the course's emphasis on promoting intellectual freedom, free speech, and critical inquiry in compliance with the University of Iowa's policies on free expression and non-discrimination.

1.2 Outline of Course Topics

The following is an outline of the lectures planned for this course:

Week	Dates	Title	Lecturer
1	3/24	The Judiciary: The Least Dangerous Branch?	Timothy Hagle
2	3/31	Presidential Nominations & the Electoral College	Alex P. Smith
3	4/7	Representation in Congress	Alex P. Smith
4	4/14	Exploring the relationship between Capitalism and Democracy	Reynolds Cramer
5	4/21	From the Athenian Assembly to Capitol Hill	Eric Dugdale
6	4/28	The Foundations of a Constitutional Republic: How Strong are America's	Stephen Balch
7	5/5	Midterm Elections: 1994 vs. 2026	Greg Ganske

See Section 2 for a detailed description of each lecture. See Section 3 for information about the instructors.

1.3 Required Textbooks, Readings, and Other Materials

All reading materials will be available on ICON. No textbook is required for this course.

1.4 Course Meeting Time and Place

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:20 PM on Tuesdays
Location: S107 Pappajohn Business Building (PBB) — See Figures 1 and 2.
Dates: March 24 – May 5, 2026

1.5 Participation

This course is designed to foster lively, open, and frank discussion. All students are warmly invited to contribute their perspectives, challenge ideas, and explore diverse viewpoints in an intellectually engaging environment. Students are expected to maintain a high level of respect during discussions, treating all participants with courtesy and openness, even when disagreeing or challenging ideas. Disruptive, disrespectful, or personal attacks of any kind will not be tolerated.

Figure 1: Pappajohn Business Building

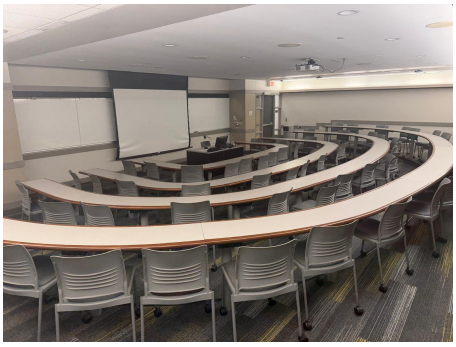


Figure 2: S107 PBB

2 Lectures

2.1 The Judiciary: The Least Dangerous Branch?

Lecturer: Timothy Hagle (Political Science Department)

Through a combination of discussion and lecture, this session will examine the role of the judiciary as one of the three branches of the US government. Topics will include judicial review, the structure of the judiciary (federal and state), how judges decide cases, how people become judges (federal and state), and possible discussion of current cases in the news.

2.2 Presidential Nominations & the Electoral College

Lecturer: Alex Smith (Political Science Department)

One unique feature of American government is the process through which the President is elected. In this session we will discuss how presidential elections work in the United States. We will learn about the primaries and caucuses, nominating conventions, relevant constitutional amendments, and the Electoral College. As we think about the presidential elections and how they have changed over time, we will also discuss the different understandings of the presidents held by George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft.

2.3 Representation in Congress

Lecturer: Alex Smith (Political Science Department)

One of the fundamental questions in a representative democracy is "what does it mean to represent others" as an elected official. In this session we will talk about different models of representation identified by political scientists who study the US Congress. We will not only talk about broad theories of representation, but also look at theories used by Congressional scholars, such as 'home style', 'legislative style', and 'legislative

effectiveness' to understand different approaches that members of Congress take in their role as elected representatives.

2.4 Exploring the relationship between Capitalism and Democracy

Lecturer: Reynolds Cramer (Fareway CEO)

Most people believe they understand the difference between capitalism and democracy. Does the average business have a fair opportunity to start, grow, and expand? What are the challenges and political headwinds that affect starting a business? Do the costs of doing business outweigh the rewards? Is the American dream still a reality and is profit a bad word? We will have great dialogue during this session about what's really going on in the real world today.

2.5 From the Athenian Assembly to Capitol Hill: Rethinking Democracy Then and Now

Lecturer: Eric Dugdale (board of the Society for Classical Studies)

Public trust in political institutions in the United States has reached historic lows. Many Americans are disillusioned by partisan gridlock, government shutdowns, and a sense that elected officials serve powerful interests rather than the public good. As debates over electoral reform, campaign finance, and civic participation intensify, it is worth asking: *Is this the only possible model of democracy?*

This lecture explores how a very different democratic system functioned in ancient Athens—a participatory democracy in which political power was not delegated to representatives, but exercised *directly* by citizens themselves. Athenian citizens debated and voted on matters of war, economics, and public policy in large assemblies; they implemented safeguards against corruption such as randomized juries, term limits, rotation of office, and mechanisms to prevent the concentration of power.

The Founding Fathers deliberately rejected this Athenian model when designing the political institutions of the United States, choosing instead the representative system of the Roman Republic. This lecture examines why they made that choice, what fears and assumptions shaped their decision, and how these ancient models continue to influence contemporary debates about political power, inequality, and civic responsibility. What might participatory democracy offer today, and why was it considered too radical for the modern nation-state?

2.6 The Foundations of a Constitutional Republic: How Strong are America's

Lecturer: Stephen H. Balch (Association for the Study of Free Institutions – ASFI)

Stable constitutional republics have always been exceptional. The political norm is not lawful rule but authoritarianism. What conditions need to exist in order to sustain constitutionalism? Do they still prevail in the United States today?

2.7 The Midterm Election of 1994, the "Republican Revolution" and the "Contract With America": Lessons for 2026 Midterm Elections

Lecturer: Greg Ganske (former Congressman)

The 1994 elections occurred in the middle of Democratic President Bill Clinton's first term in office, and elected the members of 104th United States Congress. The elections have been described as the "Republican Revolution" because the Republican Party captured unified control of Congress for the first time since 1952. Republicans picked up eight seats in the Senate and won a net of 54 seats in the House of Representatives. Republicans also picked up a net of ten governorships and took control of many state legislative chambers. This is the first midterm election since 1946 in which the Republicans ended unified Democratic control of Congress in a midterm election under a Democratic president.

Republicans were able to nationalize the election by campaigning on a "Contract with America", and the new Republican majorities passed conservative legislation such as the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, and the Defense of Marriage Act. The election was a major defeat for Clinton's health care plan, but Clinton's subsequent move to the center helped him, and Congressional Republicans, win re-election in 1996.

What were the lessons both Parties learned and how can this election inform us on the coming November election?

3 Instructors

The course is organized by Professor Luciano de Castro, interim Director of the Center for Intellectual Freedom. Subsection 3.1 includes more information about Professor de Castro, including contact information. The remaining subsections below provide information about the lecturers in the course.

Any questions or general communications regarding the course or your participation in it should be directed to the course grader:

Chediak, Quentin quentin-chediak@uiowa.edu

3.1 Luciano I. de Castro (Organizer)

Luciano I. de Castro is Professor at the Department of Economics, Tippie College of Business, and the Interim Director for the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

He is a professor of economics at the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business. Previously, he has been an assistant professor at Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Management, MEDS), the University of Illinois (Department of Economics), and a visiting profes-

sor at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Department of Economics). He holds a PhD and MSc from IMPA and is an electronic engineer from ITA (Brazil).

He has published in Econometrica, Journal of Economic Theory, Journal of Econometrics, Economic Theory, Energy Economics, and other important journals in economics. His main fields of research are economic theory, energy economics and Brazil's political economy and electricity markets. Recently, he has been investigating properties and applications of quantile preferences and their connection with econometrics, experiments, finance, and other areas of economics.

Campus Address: 116 Calvin Hall.

Phone: (319) 467-1334

E-mail: luciano-decastro@uiowa.edu

3.2 Timothy Hagle

Timothy Hagle. Associate Professor, Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa

Every four years, the media spotlight shines on the state during the prelude to its first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses, and University of Iowa political experts are in serious demand. State, national, and international reporters call upon UI faculty to explain how the caucuses work, and to provide insight into how Iowans are responding to candidates and their campaign strategies. One expert who is helping the University leverage this publicity opportunity is Tim Hagle, associate professor of political science in the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

3.3 Alex Smith

Alex Smith, Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa.

Alex P. Smith is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science. His teaching and research interests include American institutions (Congress & Presidency), legislative negotiation, political theory, and scholarship of teaching and learning. Alex is currently working on a book project about negotiation

strategies used to overcome stalemate in Congress, for which he was selected for a Library of Congress Fellowship in Congressional Policymaking. He has published articles in Public Choice and the Journal of Political Science Education. Before entering academia, Alex worked as a legislative staffer for a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Minnesota House of Representatives. His research areas include American Politics, Public Policy and Administration, and Political Theory."

3.4 Reynolds Cramer

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Reynolds Cramer joined Fareway in 1985, when he began working in the Boone Fareway store at just 16 years old. During college, he moved and worked in the Decorah Fareway store in the meat department for three years. When speaking of this experience, Cramer explains, “I knew it would be important to understand all aspects of our business and why our meat departments are second-to-none.”

After working in two stores as assistant manager he was promoted in 1997 to store manager, opening a new Fareway store in Des Moines. In 2000, he was promoted to district supervisor at the corporate office in Boone, Iowa.

In 2008, he was elected to the Real Estate Committee, and has been instrumental in choosing the strategic placement of new Fareway locations ever since. In 2009, Cramer was elected to the Board of Directors for Fareway, in 2010 he was named as a regional vice president and in 2012 as an executive vice president in charge of all retail operations.

Cramer’s promotion to CEO for Fareway Stores, Inc. occurred in February 2014. He was honored and inducted into the Iowa Business Hall of Fame in 2023.

In addition to his responsibilities with Fareway, Cramer is active in many charitable organizations, including the Muscular Dystrophy Association, ChildServe, Easterseals, Ronald McDonald House, UnityPoint Health Foundation, and he has served as President for Variety-the Children’s Charity. Cramer is also a board member of the Iowa Business Council. He is an advocate for animal rescue, having adopted several animals from various rescue organizations.

A native Iowan and graduate of Boone High School in 1987 and Luther College in 1991. Cramer has two daughters, Ashley, 24, and Zoe, 19. Reynolds and his wife, Sheila, live in Norwalk with their son Benny, 6.

3.5 Eric Dugdale

Eric Dugdale, board of the Society for Classical Studies.

Eric Dugdale is a scholar whose teaching and research focus on the ancient world. He earned a B.A. with Honors from the University of Oxford and a Ph.D. in Classics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received the Tanner Award for Distinguished Teaching. His research centers on Greek theatre and its modern reception. He is the author of two books on Greek theatre, both published by Cambridge University Press, and co-editor (with James Morwood) of the series Greece and Rome: Texts and Contexts. He is currently completing a book on prophecy and power in the plays of Sophocles, forthcoming with Bloomsbury. Dr. Dugdale has taught or studied on every continent except Antarctica.

3.6 Stephen H. Balch

Stephen H. Balch is an American academic, political theorist, and prominent advocate for intellectual diversity and viewpoint pluralism in higher education.

Professor Balch is best known as the founding president of the National Association of Scholars (NAS), a nonprofit organization he led from 1987 to 2009 (and later served as chairman). Under his leadership, NAS became one of the most influential groups documenting and critiquing perceived ideological imbalances, political correctness, and declining academic standards in American universities. Balch earned his Ph.D. in political science from City University of New York and taught at institutions including the City University of New York and the University of Delaware before dedicating himself full-time to NAS and related reform efforts. He has been a vocal critic of what he views as the politicization of the academy, particularly the dominance of progressive/left-leaning perspectives in the humanities and social sciences. Balch has written extensively on the importance of free inquiry, the dangers of ideological conformity, and the need for genuine viewpoint diversity in faculty hiring, curriculum design, and campus culture. His work helped shape debates about academic freedom, speech codes, and the role of universities in a pluralistic society. In recent years he has continued to speak and write on these themes, including as a guest lecturer for initiatives like the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

3.7 Greg Ganske

John Greg Ganske served as a Republican member of the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 2003, representing Iowa's 4th congressional district.

Greg Ganske served as a Republican member of the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 2003, representing Iowa's 4th congressional district. A plastic and reconstructive surgeon by profession, he brought a unique background to Congress, having practiced medicine in Des Moines for many years before entering politics. Elected in the 1994 Republican wave, Ganske quickly established himself as a pragmatic conservative with a particular focus on health care, agriculture, and fiscal responsibility—issues that resonated deeply with his largely rural and Midwestern constituency.During his four terms in the House, Ganske was known for his independent streak and willingness to break with party orthodoxy when he believed it conflicted with Iowa's interests or sound policy. He played a prominent role in debates over Medicare reform, patients' rights legislation (notably cosponsoring the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act), and agricultural policy, including support for ethanol and family farm protections. His medical expertise made him a respected voice on health-related bills, and he often bridged partisan divides to advance legislation aimed at improving access to care while controlling costs. After redistricting in 2002 placed him in a more competitive district, Ganske ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 2002 against Tom Harkin, a race that highlighted his reputation as a principled, moderate Republican.

Following his congressional career, Ganske returned to medicine and public service in Iowa. He has remained active in civic life, occasionally commenting on health policy and political issues, and has been affiliated with organizations promoting limited government and free-market principles. His tenure in Congress is remembered as a period of thoughtful, issue-driven representation at a time of significant partisan polarization.

4 Assignments and Grading

Students in this course will receive one of two grades: S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). These grades do not affect the student's grade-point average (GPA).

To earn an S grade, a student must:

- attend at least 5 out of the 7 in-person lectures;

- complete the required assignment associated with each attended lecture.

In exceptional cases, students who attend only 4 out of 7 lectures may still receive an S grade if they provide a valid justification for the absences.

4.1 Assignments

There are three types of assignments in this course.

Initial and final reflection assignments provide an opportunity for students to articulate their expectations at the beginning of the course and to reflect on the most significant takeaways at the end. The *initial assignment* is a short questionnaire about your expectations, motivations, and prior knowledge related to the course topics. It must be completed and submitted before the first class meeting. The *final assignment* is a brief reflection in which you identify and discuss the main highlights, key insights, or most valuable aspects of the course for you personally. Both assignments are short, ungraded, and intended solely for reflection and instructor awareness. To receive a Satisfactory (S) grade in the course, students must complete and submit **both** the initial and final reflection assignments. No content-based grading will be applied; thoughtful and honest completion is sufficient to meet the requirement.

Required assignments provide an opportunity for feedback and reflection on each lecture. These assignments include a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions and are due by 11:59 pm on the Sunday following the lecture. To earn a Satisfactory (S) grade, students must complete at least 5 of these required assignments. They will not be graded for content; an honest effort to respond thoughtfully to the questions is sufficient to satisfy the requirement.

Optional assignments may be proposed by some lecturers to explore the lecture topics in greater depth. These additional assignments are not required for the S grade, but instructors who offer them may provide feedback, offering valuable opportunities for further learning.

4.2 Attendance and Accommodations

Attendance at all lectures is expected and will be verified. If a student cannot attend a lecture, they should notify the course Teaching Assistant (TA) as soon as possible:

TA: Chediak, Quentin quentin-chediak@uiowa.edu

4.3 Calendar of Course Assignments

This course has no exams. The assignment associated with each lecture must be submitted by 11:59 PM on the Sunday following the lecture.

5 General information to students

5.1 Student Complaints

Students with any complaint should discuss the situation with the instructor and/or the course supervisor (Professor de Castro, see Subsection 3.1).

5.2 Drop Deadline for this Course

The drop deadline for this course is Friday of the second week of classes.

5.3 UI Email

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community.

5.4 Course ICON Site

To access the course site, log into Iowa Courses Online (https://icon.uiowa.edu/) using your Hawk ID and password.

5.5 Academic Honesty and Misconduct

All students are expected to prepare their assignments independently, without consulting classmates or others for assistance in completing them. Failure to do so may constitute academic misconduct.

5.6 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Assignments in this course must be prepared directly by the students. AI tools may be used only to revise grammar and improve clarity, not to generate new content.

5.7 University Course Policies and Resources for Students

Students should consult the University policies on Free Speech and Resources for Students page:

https://provost.uiowa.edu/student-course-policies

This page contains policies regarding:

- Free Speech and Expression
- Non-discrimination Statement
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Absences from Class

- Absences for Religious Holy Days
- Absences for Military Service Obligations
- Classroom Expectations
- Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct and Supportive Measures
- Conflict Resolution
- Mental Health
- Basic Needs and Student Support

F.2 American Culture and Values

Syllabus

CSI:1214:0004 Special Topics II

American Culture and Values

Luciano I. de Castro
Professor of Economics & Interim Director
Center for Intellectual Freedom
The University of Iowa

Spring 2026

Contents

1 Overview of the Course **2**
1.1 Learning Objectives . . . 2
1.2 Outline of Course Topics . . . 3
1.3 Required Textbooks, Readings, and Other Materials . . . 3
1.4 Course Meeting Time and Place . . . 3
1.5 Participation . . . 4

2 Lectures **4**
2.1 Freedom: Its Costs and Benefits . . . 4
2.2 Freedom of Speech . . . 4
2.3 America Has a National Literature . . . 4
2.4 Ideas in The Federalist . . . 5
2.5 Teachers of the Polis: Past and Present . . . 5
2.6 Self-Reliance as an American value . . . 5
2.7 Why Capitalism Rocks! . . . 6

3 Instructors **7**
3.1 Luciano I. de Castro (Organizer) . . . 7
3.2 Richard A. Fumerton . . . 7
3.3 Timothy Hagle . . . 8
3.4 Mark Bauerlein . . . 8
3.5 Alex Smith . . . 9
3.6 Eric Dugdale . . . 9
3.7 Flavio Guimaraes . . . 10
3.8 Mike Whalen . . . 10

1

4 Assignments and Grading **10**
4.1 Assignments . . . 11
4.2 Attendance and Accommodations . . . 11
4.3 Calendar of Course Assignments . . . 11

5 General information to students **12**
5.1 Student Complaints . . . 12
5.2 Drop Deadline for this Course . . . 12
5.3 UI Email . . . 12
5.4 Course ICON Site . . . 12
5.5 Academic Honesty and Misconduct . . . 12
5.6 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy . . . 12
5.7 University Course Policies and Resources for Students . . . 12

1 Overview of the Course

This course is offered by the Center for Intellectual Freedom. It consists of a series of 110-minute lectures held weekly in the evenings. The instructors, drawn from diverse backgrounds and experiences (including but not limited to university professors), will present engaging and thought-provoking topics for discussion in a class limited to 32 students. This small class size fosters open discussion and in-depth exploration of each topic's multiple dimensions.

The courses organized by the Center for Intellectual Freedom aim to inspire students to embark on a compelling journey of discovery and learning about significant issues related to the courses' theme.

The course *American Culture and Values* will explore the foundational ideas, texts, and traditions that have shaped American culture and values. Students are encouraged to grow stronger in their viewpoints and engage in open discussion, civil debate, and conversation.

1.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain the major philosophical, literary, political, and economic ideas and texts that have shaped core American values such as individual liberty, self-reliance, limited government, free speech, and democratic capitalism;
- Engage in respectful, evidence-based, and intellectually rigorous discussion and debate on complex questions related to American culture, governance, and values;
- Formulate and articulate reasoned personal positions on foundational issues of freedom, responsibility, and prosperity in American society while considering diverse viewpoints;

- Recognize the role of intellectual freedom, open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and civil discourse in sustaining the principles and institutions of a free society.

These objectives reflect the course's commitment to fostering critical thinking, intellectual independence, and informed engagement with the ideas that define American culture and values.

1.2 Outline of Course Topics

The following is an outline of the lectures planned for this course:

Week	Dates	Title	Lecturer
1	3/26	Freedom: Its Costs and Benefits	Richard Fumerton
2	4/2	Freedom of Speech	Timothy Hagle
3	4/9	America has a National Literature	Mark Bauerlein
4	4/16	Ideas in The Federalist	Alex P. Smith
5	4/23	Teachers of the Polis: Past and Present	Eric Dugdale
6	4/30	Self-Reliance as an American Value	Flavio Guimaraes
7	5/7	Why Capitalism Rocks!	Mike Whalen

See Section 2 for a detailed description of each lecture. See Section 3 for information about the instructors.

1.3 Required Textbooks, Readings, and Other Materials

All reading materials will be available on ICON. No textbook is required for this course.

1.4 Course Meeting Time and Place

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:20 PM on Thursdays
Location: S107 Pappajohn Business Building (PBB) — See Figures 1 and 2.
Dates: March 26 – May 7, 2026

Figure 1: Pappajohn Business Building

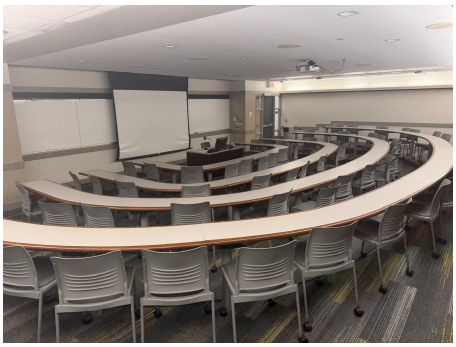


Figure 2: S107 PBB

1.5 Participation

This course is designed to foster lively, open, and frank discussion. All students are warmly invited to contribute their perspectives, challenge ideas, and explore diverse viewpoints in an intellectually engaging environment. Students are expected to maintain a high level of respect during discussions, treating all participants with courtesy and openness, even when disagreeing or challenging ideas. Disruptive, disrespectful, or personal attacks of any kind will not be tolerated.

2 Lectures

2.1 Freedom: Its Costs and Benefits

Lecturer: Richard A. Fumerton (Philosophy Dep., Univ. of Iowa)

In his classic discussion of freedom, John Stuart Mill predicted in the 19th century that "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised over the individual…is soon likely to make itself recognized as the vital question of the future." That future is our present, and Mill's prediction seems accurate. While the United States still has a reputation for being the "land of the free," there is no shortage of controversies concerning what regulations a state should be allowed to place on its citizens. Through influential writings from a few historically important figures and contemporary philosophers, we'll critically evaluate philosophical views about how to address controversies concerning freedom, illustrating those views with issues that are front-and-center in the news of today.

2.2 Freedom of Speech

Lecturer: Timothy Hagle (Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa)

This session will examine aspects of free speech. This will include discussion of the First Amendment and how the Supreme Court has interpreted the right. We will also consider aspects of speech such as "hate" speech, cancel culture, and political violence in relation to speech.

2.3 America Has a National Literature

Lecturer: Mark Bauerlein (Emory University & Trustee, New College of Florida)

In this class session, we will read representative works of American literature—that is, works that embody something that is essential to the American experience and the national character. They constitute a corpus of poems, essays, memoirs, and fiction that give flesh and humanity to our civic ideals. We will discuss

- Franklin, Autobiography (Chapter 1)

- Irving, "Rip van Winkle"
- Emerson, "Self-Reliance"
- Thoreau, Walden (Chapter 2)
- Whitman, "Song of Myself"

2.4 Ideas in The Federalist

Lecturer: Alex Smith (Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa)

The Federalist is a series of essays written by supporters of the US Constitution during the state ratification conventions. These essays provide justifications for the design of the newly proposed national government and the expanded set of powers granted to the national government. During this session we will discuss the purpose of The Federalist essays, the arguments they were responding to, and the authors' descriptions of representation, separation of powers, and federalism in the proposed system of government. These arguments help us better understand the institutional design of the national government amidst contemporary concerns about American government and politics.

2.5 Teachers of the Polis: Past and Present

Lecturer: Eric Dugdale (board of the Society for Classical Studies)

In ancient Athens, poets and playwrights were more than entertainers—they were the *teachers of the polis* (Plato, *Laws* 659a), shaping civic values and sparking public debate. Young Athenians didn't just study democracy—they *performed* it, acting in tragedies and comedies at the packed Theater of Dionysus as part of their civic education. The timeless dramas of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides wrestled with questions of justice, responsibility, and the common good, while comic playwrights like Aristophanes used satire to challenge power and defend freedom of speech.

Fast forward to today: Who plays that role now? Where do we turn to learn our shared values—and from whom? Do art, film, and literature still teach us the values of our community, or have social media platforms like TikTok become the new stage for civic discourse? And do these new art forms shape our American culture and values or reflect them? Join us for an exploration of how art, performance, and popular culture play a part in democracies then and now.

2.6 Self-Reliance as an American value

Lecturer: Flavio Guimaraes (Radix Engineering & Software)

The lecture will be divided in 3 parts:

1. History of self-reliance as an American value

2. Challenges that self-reliance faces in present days
3. A framework of resources to help to overcome these challenges

This class explores self-reliance as a core American value, tracing its evolution from the practical independence of early pioneers on the physical frontier to Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophical emphasis on self-trust and the integrity of the mind. It then examines a contemporary crisis of dependency in which digital technologies, algorithmic influence, and economic pressures increasingly shape individual thought and behavior, risking mental passivity and loss of autonomy. The class introduces a framework of mental resources to help students understand these challenges and develop individual strategies for sustaining intellectual independence and self-direction.

2.7 Why Capitalism Rocks!

Lecturer: Mike Whalen (Pres. and CEO, Heart of America)

This presentation will discuss the human and economic reasons why capitalism not only works but rocks, providing superior benefits to humanity in comparison to all other economic systems. The lengthy and rather miserable history of almost all human existence will be briefly explored. This long period of pretty crappy stasis was followed by an explosion of wealth and freedom in just the past few hundred years. This explosive launch, often termed "The Great Enrichment", is the most dynamic thing that has happened in human history. It has elevated and liberated, in a relatively very short time, a good deal of humankind out of the mud and from crippling disease, grinding subsistence, short life spans, and general misery, and it continues to do so for millions of people every year.

This pro human explosion was a result of the growth of the radical concept of personal liberty and its companion free market capitalism.

The reason why capitalism generally makes humans better people and why capitalism is more fun will be explored. The inherent inferior structural dynamics of the dominant competing economic models, alternatively termed collectivism, authoritarianism, Marxism, fascism, and communism according to its variants of large state control, will be discussed as well.

3 Instructors

The course is organized by Professor Luciano de Castro, interim Director of the Center for Intellectual Freedom. Subsection 3.1 includes more information about Professor de Castro, including contact information. The remaining subsections below provide information about the lecturers in the course.

Any questions or general communications regarding the course or your participation in it should be directed to the course grader:

Chediak, Quentin quentin-chediak@uiowa.edu

3.1 Luciano I. de Castro (Organizer)

Luciano I. de Castro is Professor at the Department of Economics, Tippie College of Business, and the Interim Director for the Center for Intellectual Freedom.

He is a professor of economics at the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business. Previously, he has been an assistant professor at Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Management, MEDS), the University of Illinois (Department of Economics), and a visiting professor at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Department of Economics). He holds a PhD and MSc from IMPA and is an electronic engineer from ITA (Brazil).

He has published in Econometrica, Journal of Economic Theory, Journal of Econometrics, Economic Theory, Energy Economics, and other important journals in economics. His main fields of research are economic theory, energy economics and Brazil's political economy and electricity markets. Recently, he has been investigating properties and applications of quantile preferences and their connection with econometrics, experiments, finance, and other areas of economics.

Campus Address: 116 Calvin Hall.

Phone: (319) 467-1334

E-mail: luciano-decastro@uiowa.edu

3.2 Richard A. Fumerton

Richard A. Fumerton, Philosophy Department, Univ. of Iowa.

Professor Fumerton is the author of Metaphysical and Epistemological Problems of Perception (1985), Reason and Morality: A Defense of the Egocentric Perspective (1990), Metaepistemology and Skepticism (1995), Realism and the Correspondence Theory of Truth (2002), Epistemology (2006), Mill (with Wendy Donner, 2009), Knowledge, Thought and the Case for Dualism (2013), and A Consequentialist Defense of Libertarianism (at press). He is the co-editor (with Diane Jeske) of Philosophy Through Film (2009) and Readings in Political Philosophy (2012). His present teaching and research interests include epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and value theory.

3.3 Timothy Hagle

Timothy Hagle. Associate Professor, Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa

Every four years, the media spotlight shines on the state during the prelude to its first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses, and University of Iowa political experts are in serious demand. State, national, and international reporters call upon UI faculty to explain how the caucuses work, and to provide insight into how Iowans are responding to candidates and their campaign strategies. One expert who is helping the University leverage this publicity opportunity is Tim Hagle, associate professor of political science in the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

3.4 Mark Bauerlein

Mark Bauerlein, Emeritus Professor, Emory University & Trustee, New College of Florida.

Mark Bauerlein earned his doctorate in English at UCLA in 1988. He taught at Emory from 1989-2018, with a two-and-a-half-year break in 2003-05 to serve as the Director, Office of Research and Analysis, at the National Endowment for the Arts. Apart from his scholarly work, he publishes in popular periodicals such as The Wall Street Journal, The Weekly Standard, The Washington Post, TLS, and Chroni-

cle of Higher Education. His latest book, The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future; Or, Don't Trust Anyone Under 30 was published in May 2008. He also co-edited a collection of essays entitled The State of the American Mind: 16 Leading Critics on the New Anti-Intellectualism, published in 2015.

3.5 Alex Smith

Alex Smith, Political Science Dep., Univ of Iowa.

Alex P. Smith is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science. His teaching and research interests include American institutions (Congress & Presidency), legislative negotiation, political theory, and scholarship of teaching and learning. Alex is currently working on a book project about negotiation strategies used to overcome stalemate in Congress, for which he was selected for a Library of Congress Fellowship in Congressional Policymaking. He has published articles in Public Choice and the Journal of Political Science Education. Before entering academia, Alex worked as a legislative staffer for a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Minnesota House of Representatives. His research areas include American Politics, Public Policy and Administration, and Political Theory."

3.6 Eric Dugdale

Eric Dugdale, board of the Society for Classical Studies.

Eric Dugdale is a scholar whose teaching and research focus on the ancient world. He earned a B.A. with Honors from the University of Oxford and a Ph.D. in Classics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received the Tanner Award for Distinguished Teaching. His research centers on Greek theatre and its modern reception. He is the author of two books on Greek theatre, both published by Cambridge University Press, and co-editor (with James Morwood) of the series Greece and Rome: Texts and Contexts. He is currently completing a book on prophecy and power in the plays of Sophocles, forthcoming with Bloomsbury. Dr. Dugdale has taught or studied on every continent except Antarctica.

3.7 Flavio Guimaraes

Flavio Guimaraes, co-founder, Radix Engineering & Software

Flávio Niemeyer Guimarães is a Co-Founder and the Chief Practices & Alliances Officer of Radix, a global technology solutions company that delivers the most innovative, best-in-class solutions to scale and accelerate the digital transformation journey of asset intensive industries. Flávio has an extensive background in engineering and business, holding a B.Sc. and Master's in Chemical Engineering (UFRJ) and an MBA in Business Management (FGV, Brazil). A former faculty member at FGV with executive training from MIT Sloan, Rice, and Singularity University, Flávio brings a global perspective to the study of individual self-governance. Since 1995, he has been a dedicated student of Logosophy and currently serves as the Director of the Logosophical Foundation in the U.S.

3.8 Mike Whalen

Mike Whalen, CEO, Heart of America.

Mr. Whalen is the founder of Heart of America Group and has served as President & CEO since 1978. Through Mr. Whalen's entrepreneurial leadership and vision, the company has grown from a single restaurant operation to a profitable and growing real estate development and hospitality enterprise. Mr. Whalen received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Illinois in 1975, receiving the distinction of Bronze Tablet Scholar, and his law degree from Harvard Law School with honors in 1978.

4 Assignments and Grading

Students in this course will receive one of two grades: S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). These grades do not affect the student's grade-point average (GPA).

To earn an S grade, a student must:

- attend at least 5 out of the 7 in-person lectures;

- complete the required assignment associated with each attended lecture.

In exceptional cases, students who attend only 4 out of 7 lectures may still receive an S grade if they provide a valid justification for the absences.

4.1 Assignments

There are three types of assignments in this course.

Initial and final reflection assignments provide an opportunity for students to articulate their expectations at the beginning of the course and to reflect on the most significant takeaways at the end. The *initial assignment* is a short questionnaire about your expectations, motivations, and prior knowledge related to the course topics. It must be completed and submitted before the first class meeting. The *final assignment* is a brief reflection in which you identify and discuss the main highlights, key insights, or most valuable aspects of the course for you personally. Both assignments are short, ungraded, and intended solely for reflection and instructor awareness. To receive a Satisfactory (S) grade in the course, students must complete and submit **both** the initial and final reflection assignments. No content-based grading will be applied; thoughtful and honest completion is sufficient to meet the requirement.

Required assignments provide an opportunity for feedback and reflection on each lecture. These assignments include a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions and are due by 11:59 pm on the Sunday following the lecture. To earn a Satisfactory (S) grade, students must complete at least 5 of these required assignments. They will not be graded for content; an honest effort to respond thoughtfully to the questions is sufficient to satisfy the requirement.

Optional assignments may be proposed by some lecturers to explore the lecture topics in greater depth. These additional assignments are not required for the S grade, but instructors who offer them may provide feedback, offering valuable opportunities for further learning.

4.2 Attendance and Accommodations

Attendance at all lectures is expected and will be verified. If a student cannot attend a lecture, they should notify the course Teaching Assistant (TA) as soon as possible:

TA: Chediak, Quentin quentin-chediak@uiowa.edu

4.3 Calendar of Course Assignments

This course has no exams. The assignment associated with each lecture must be submitted by 11:59 PM on the Sunday following the lecture.

5 General information to students

5.1 Student Complaints

Students with any complaint should discuss the situation with the instructor and/or the course supervisor (Professor de Castro, see Subsection 3.1).

5.2 Drop Deadline for this Course

The drop deadline for this course is Friday of the second week of classes.

5.3 UI Email

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community.

5.4 Course ICON Site

To access the course site, log into Iowa Courses Online (https://icon.uiowa.edu/) using your Hawk ID and password.

5.5 Academic Honesty and Misconduct

All students are expected to prepare their assignments independently, without consulting classmates or others for assistance in completing them. Failure to do so may constitute academic misconduct.

5.6 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Assignments in this course must be prepared directly by the students. AI tools may be used only to revise grammar and improve clarity, not to generate new content.

5.7 University Course Policies and Resources for Students

Students should consult the University policies on Free Speech and Resources for Students page:

https://provost.uiowa.edu/student-course-policies

This page contains policies regarding:

- Free Speech and Expression
- Non-discrimination Statement
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Absences from Class

- Absences for Religious Holy Days
- Absences for Military Service Obligations
- Classroom Expectations
- Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct and Supportive Measures
- Conflict Resolution
- Mental Health
- Basic Needs and Student Support

Appendix G

Faculty and Student Fellowships

G.1 Faculty Fellowship

Center for Intellectual Freedom

Faculty Fellowship Program

Applications Opening Soon — Cohort Beginning Fall 2025

About the Fellowship

The **Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) Faculty Fellowship** recognizes outstanding professors whose scholarship, teaching, and public engagement reflect a deep commitment to the principles of free inquiry, open discourse, and the pursuit of truth. Faculty Fellows join a distinguished community of intellectuals affiliated with the Center, contributing to and benefiting from a network dedicated to sustaining the conditions for genuine academic freedom.

The inaugural cohort will comprise **four to five (4–5) Faculty Fellows**, selected for their intellectual distinction and alignment with the Center's mission.

Fellowship Benefits

Research Support

- **Annual Research Award:** $4,000 per year, available to support scholarly activities including travel to conferences, research materials, archival work, and other project-related expenses at the fellow's discretion.

Institutional Resources

- **AI and Technology Subscriptions:** Access to artificial intelligence tools and premium software subscriptions provided by the Center, supporting research productivity and pedagogical innovation.
- **Recognition on the CIF Website:** Fellows will be prominently listed on the Center for Intellectual Freedom's official website, recognizing their affiliation and contributions to the Center's intellectual community.

Intellectual and Community Engagement

- **CIF Events and Lectures:** Participation in all events, lectures, and public programming organized by the Center.
- **Guest Speaker Engagements:** Opportunities to meet and engage with distinguished visiting scholars and public intellectuals, including dinners and private conversations.

1

- **Special Retreats and Discussions:** Participation in curated small-group retreats and scholarly discussions with fellow affiliates, faculty, and invited guests.
- **Educational and Scholarly Trips:** Invitations to accompany the Center on educational visits to conferences, institutions, and sites of intellectual and civic significance.

Committee Participation

Faculty Fellows may be invited to serve on Center committees, contributing their expertise and professional judgment to the institutional life of CIF. Committee opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Hiring and personnel committees
- Course and curriculum development committees
- Event planning and programming committees
- Advisory and strategic planning committees

Committee service is voluntary and undertaken by invitation. **Fellows who serve on committees will receive additional compensation commensurate with the time and effort devoted to that work**, reflecting the Center's commitment to fairly valuing faculty contributions beyond the standard fellowship activities.

Fellow Obligations

The CIF Faculty Fellowship is built on a spirit of mutual engagement. Fellows are expected to:

- Participate meaningfully in the intellectual life of the Center throughout the fellowship year.
- Attend CIF-organized events and engage with visiting scholars and student fellows where possible.
- Serve as mentors and intellectual resources for student fellows affiliated with the Center.
- Represent the Center's values of open inquiry and free expression in their professional activities.

Inaugural Cohort

The Center for Intellectual Freedom will welcome an inaugural cohort of **four to five (4–5) Faculty Fellows**. This intentionally small cohort ensures deep integration into the Center's activities, meaningful relationships among fellows, and a high-quality experience for all participants.

Timeline

Milestone	Details
Applications Open	Coming Soon
Fellowship Start	Fall Semester 2025
Cohort Size	4–5 Faculty Fellows
Research Award	$4,000 per fellow per year
Committee Compensation	Provided separately, commensurate with time

How to Apply

Applications for the inaugural Faculty Fellow cohort will open soon. Interested faculty are encouraged to monitor the Center for Intellectual Freedom's website and communications for announcements regarding eligibility criteria, application materials, and deadlines.

We look forward to building a distinguished community of scholars who share our commitment to intellectual freedom and the life of the mind.

Program Costs

The following table summarizes the projected annual costs associated with the Faculty Fellowship Program, based on a cohort of five fellows.

Cost Item	Unit Value	#	Total
Research Award	$4,000	5	$20,000
AI Subscriptions	$600/year	5	$3,000
Dinners with Speakers	$80, 4 dinners	5	$1,600
Committee Compensation	Variable	—	TBD
Total (excl. committee)	$4,920	5	$24,600

G.2 Student Fellowship

Center for Intellectual Freedom

Student Fellowship Program

Applications Opening Soon — Cohort Beginning Fall 2026

About the Fellowship

The **Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) Student Fellowship** is a distinguished program designed to cultivate the next generation of thinkers, advocates, and leaders committed to the principles of open inquiry, free expression, and rigorous intellectual engagement. Fellows join a vibrant community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to exploring and defending the conditions necessary for genuine intellectual life.

Each fellow receives a **total award of $2,500**, as support toward tuition, in recognition of their commitment and participation in the life of the Center. We expect to have a total of 10 fellows.

Fellowship Benefits

Financial Support

- **Tuition Assistance:** $2,500 per year applied toward tuition costs

Intellectual and Community Engagement

Fellows gain access to a rich array of programming and community experiences, including:

- **CIF Events and Lectures:** Priority participation in all events and public lectures organized by the Center, spanning a wide range of topics in law, philosophy, politics, and culture.
- **Guest Speaker Engagements:** Opportunities to meet, greet, and dine with distinguished visiting speakers, fostering meaningful intellectual exchange beyond the lecture hall.
- **Special Retreats:** Participation in small-group retreats designed to deepen conversation and build lasting collegial bonds among fellows, faculty, and Center affiliates.
- **Educational Trips:** Curated travel experiences to conferences, institutions, and sites of intellectual and civic significance.
- **Dinners and Receptions:** Regular fellowship dinners offering informal settings for discussion with scholars, practitioners, and fellow students.

1

Fellow Obligations

The CIF Fellowship is a reciprocal relationship. In exchange for the support and opportunities provided, fellows are expected to engage actively with the Center's mission and programming. Obligations are intentionally modest but meaningful:

- **Attend at least two (2)** CIF-organized events during the fellowship year.
- **Assist in the planning or execution of at least two (2)** CIF events, contributing their time and talents to the Center's public programming.

These requirements reflect the Center's belief that intellectual community is built through both participation and service.

Inaugural Cohort

The Center for Intellectual Freedom will welcome an inaugural cohort of **ten (10) fellows** for the first year of the program. This small cohort size is intentional, ensuring that each fellow receives personal attention, robust mentorship, and a genuine sense of belonging within the Center's community.

Timeline

Milestone	Details
Applications	Coming Soon
Fellowship Start	Fall Semester 2025
Cohort Size	10 Fellows
Award Amount	$2,500 per fellow

How to Apply

Applications for the inaugural cohort will open soon. Prospective fellows are encouraged to visit the Center for Intellectual Freedom's website and follow our announcements for updates on the application process, eligibility requirements, and deadlines.

We look forward to welcoming our first class of CIF Fellows and to building a community of intellectual courage and curiosity together.

Costs to the Center

Cost Item	Unitary Value	#	Total
Tuition award	$2,500	10	$25,000
Dinners with Speakers	$60, 4 dinners	10	$2,400
Educational Trip	$2,500	10	$25,000
Total	$5,240	10	$52,400

APPENDIX H

Report “Issues Facing the Center”

This appendix reproduces, in full, the report "Issues Facing the Center Since Its Inception" that I presented on April 9, 2026 in a presential meeting at the Capitol (see Section 15.7) and sent to Regents on an email on Monday, April 13, 2026, 4:04 pm.

The pages that follow contain the PDF of the original document, resized to 90% to fit the page of this report.

Center for Intellectual Freedom

Issues Facing the Center Since Its Inception

August 2025 – January 2026

A Review of Challenges

by Luciano I. de Castro
Professor of Economics, Interim Director

April 8, 2026

Document at a Glance	
Covering Period	August 2025 – January 2026
Prepared by	Luciano I. de Castro, Interim Director
Institution	Center for Intellectual Freedom, University of Iowa
Established	House File 437, signed June 11, 2025
Preview	Executive Summary
Cases	Sections 1—12
Conclusion	Summary of Core Obstacles and Path Forward

Executive Summary

The Center for Intellectual Freedom was established by House File 437, approved by the Iowa General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds on June 11, 2025. Professor Luciano de Castro was appointed Interim Director at the Board of Regents meeting on July 30, 2025.

Since his appointment, Professor de Castro has encountered persistent and substantial obstacles to fulfilling the Center's mission. This report documents the most significant of those obstacles.

> **Central Finding.** The University of Iowa has used its influence over Board of Regents Executive Director Mark Braun to hinder the Center's operations.

As of this writing, none of these conflicts have been resolved. Resolving the structural tension between the Center and the University is the single most urgent priority; without such resolution, the Center's core mission cannot be carried out.

> **Note on the correspondence quoted below.** All bold emphasis appearing in the emails and other quoted communications throughout this report has been added by the author and do not appear in the original messages.

1. The Visit of Professor Richard Lowery

In a short-term plan dated July 20, 2025—shared with Advisory Council and Board of Regents members at their respective meetings—Professor de Castro described plans for short-term visits by professors to help develop the Center. Professor Richard Lowery agreed to assist with developing both the Center's bylaws and its proposed courses. To arrange the visit, Professor de Castro asked his contact in the Provost's office for assistance with logistics. The following message was received in response.

> **From:** Amy [Office of the Provost]
> **Date:** August 26, 2025, 1:06 pm
>
> Hi Luciano,
>
> I had a discussion with Provost Kregel about some other things this morning and mentioned that you were having a visitor to Iowa City next week. Given that everything is new here with the Center, he asked for guidance from the Board Office on whether this was an allowable expense. I've been asked to follow up with you about this and to let you know that outlays such as this **need to be approved by the Executive Director of the Board of Regents**. It sounds like we are good to go with the

> administrative support, the website/communication plan, and the market demand survey, but that **invited visitors need to wait until later in the semester** after some of these other things are more fully developed.
>
> I will await further word from you.
>
> Amy

Rather than challenging this decision, but recognizing that it set an undesirable precedent and judging that the visit was important enough to proceed regardless, Professor de Castro replied on August 27 at 12:22 pm, saying he would pay for the visit himself. He later learned that upon receiving his email, Provost Kregel telephoned Executive Director Braun. Just two hours later, at 2:51 pm, the following message arrived:

> **From:** Mark Braun <mark.braun@iowaregents.edu>
> **Date:** August 27, 2025, 2:51 pm
>
> Luciano,
>
> It has come to my attention that you are trying to arrange for Professor Lowery to visit campus from September 2nd through September 12th to help in the development of the Center.
>
> While I appreciate your enthusiasm, **this is premature and should be postponed.** As you and I have discussed on several occasions, there is a specific **cadence** in the law (HF 437). As we discussed this past Monday, the initial Advisory Council appointments will be made at the September Board meeting.
>
> After your appointment, the Advisory Council is the next step in developing the Center. They are there to provide direction on the Center's development, and those conversations will be very insightful in standing up the Center. Additionally, the Center needs to develop bylaws so it is clear how things are done when conducting Center work.
>
> To reiterate our past conversations, the **order** should be:
>
> - Hire support staff (if you have not already extended an offer)
> - Appointment of the initial members of the Advisory Council
> - Draft bylaws to present to the Board for approval
> - Search for the permanent Director of the Center (run by the Advisory Council with support from Center and Board Office staff)
> - Conduct a market survey to gauge interest in courses and their content
>
> Again, I applaud your enthusiasm, and we all have a vested interest in the Center being successful and complying with the law that was passed creating it.
>
> Regards,
> Mark

Because Professor de Castro was spending *his own money*, he did not alter his plans. On Friday, August 29, he called Amy to obtain the hotel's contact information so that he could secure the reservation with his personal credit card. She informed the Provost, and later that day wrote: **"I strongly encourage you to get Mark Braun's approval before you bring your guest to Iowa City, even if you are paying for it out of your own pocket."**

2. Hiring Faculty

Iowa Code section 263C.9 provides that "the Director of the Center shall have the sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process, and to extend offers for employment, of the Center, and to terminate employment of all staff of the Center in accordance with state and federal law." To prepare courses for the spring semester, Professor de Castro asked his assistant, Collin Sawyer, to request a meeting with Human Resources to learn the process for hiring temporary faculty. On October 1, HR replied that the Associate Provost and the Provost would need to consult the Board Office before proceeding. Two days later, on October 3, the following message arrived:

> **From:** Alaina Hanson, Senior Director of Faculty HR
> **Date:** October 3, 2025
> **To:** Luciano de Castro and Collin Sawyer
>
> Luciano and Collin,
>
> I wanted to share a quick update regarding next steps. **Provost Kregel was able to connect with the Board and at this time, please hold off on taking any steps toward hiring.** If you have questions in the meantime, please direct them to Mark Braun.
>
> Additionally, the Board office is currently awaiting the draft bylaws for the Center.
>
> Thanks for your understanding and please let me know if you need any further clarification.
>
> Best regards,
> Alaina Hanson
> Senior Director of Faculty HR
> Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

Following this message, Professor de Castro sought alternative approaches to offering courses without hiring additional staff. **Instead of complaining**, he organized courses with various lecturers, circumventing the need to hire faculty.

3. Board Counsel and the Bylaws

Iowa Code section 263C.4 requires that the Center establish bylaws governing its operations, subject to approval by the Board. This means that Board Counsel's role was to review and comment on bylaws prepared by the Center—not to draft them unilaterally.

In early October, Professor de Castro learned that Advisory Council members were required to complete Iowa Open Meetings training by the end of September. Board Counsel Aimee Claeys informed him that a lawyer from an outside firm could provide the training on the first day of the inaugural event (Friday, December 5). Uncertain whether a Friday was ideal, Professor de Castro asked whether the training could be moved to Saturday, December 6. Her reply was as follows:

> **From:** Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
> **Date:** October 7, 2025, 5:41 pm
>
> **No, I am not going to ask** an outside law firm to conduct a training on a weekend.
>
> The fact that you do not have a plan for this event is **problematic.** I also have yet to receive a copy of your proposed bylaws, which is equally **problematic.** I am concerned that you will not be able to meet any of the November BOR meeting deadlines that I communicated on our last call.
>
> Aimee

At 5:44 pm—three minutes after the above message was sent, and before Professor de Castro had read it—he emailed Board Counsel the draft bylaws. Her reply was:

> **From:** Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
> **Date:** October 7, 2025, 5:55 pm
>
> Thank you. I encourage you and Regent Hensley to reach out to the Board office to ensure that the CIF Advisory Council is meeting its **legal obligations.** I am concerned that you are presently creating **unnecessary risk.**
>
> Aimee

Professor de Castro read this message as a warning that Board Counsel might pursue legal action against him. He shared his concerns with Regent Christine Hensley, worried that the Board Office would create endless obstacles that would ultimately make the December event impossible to hold. This prompted Regent Hensley to request a meeting with the Governor.

A week later, on October 13, Board Counsel sent the following message:

> **From:** Aimee Claeys, Board Counsel
> **Date:** October 13, 2025, 3:25 pm
> **To:** Regent Hensley and Professor de Castro
>
> Regent Hensley and Professor de Castro: I have reviewed this draft document a number of times and am confident that it does not represent a form of bylaws that should be presented for consideration by the CIF Advisory Council and/or the Iowa Board of Regents. I cannot recommend Board approval of the current form and structure.
>
> I am happy to have further conversations with the drafting team, but **it is not a productive use of my time** to attempt to red-line the current draft into a workable form.

The following day, Board Counsel announced that she was drafting her own version of the bylaws. By the end of October 15, she circulated an **incomplete** draft containing provisions that could be considered undesirable and even unlawful. After he flagged those provisions the following morning, she sent a revised version that incorporated much of the original draft. No significant errors or omissions were pointed in the draft submitted by Professor de Castro.

4. Bylaws: The Expenditure Authority Dispute

One of the most contentious issues in the bylaws negotiations concerned authority over the Center's expenditures. Professor de Castro sought explicit language vesting that authority in the Director. The draft dated October 18, 2025, contained a provision stating that the authority for the use of funds resides with the Director. The justification offered for this provision was straightforward: as a Director of Finance & Budget Operations at the University confirmed in an October meeting, most college-level expenses at the University of Iowa are managed at the college level, with the sole exception of deans' travel. The proposed provision would simply apply the same standard to the Center. However, the Board office rejected this language.

Following intense negotiations, Professor de Castro sent revised bylaws on October 30. These were included in the agenda for the Board of Regents meeting of November 11–13, 2025; however, the version posted as Attachment A differed from the version Professor de Castro had submitted. Upon discovering this, he sent the following message:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro <luciano-decastro@uiowa.edu>
> **Date:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025, 4:54 pm
> **To:** Mark Braun <mark.braun@iowaregents.edu>
> **Cc:** Christine Hensley

> **Subject:** Correction to Board of Regents Agenda (Nov 11–13)
>
> Executive Director Mark Braun,
>
> In the Board of Regents meeting agenda for November 11–13, released today, the following sentence was included:
>
> > "Interim Director De Castro prepared the proposed bylaws contained in Attachment A."
>
> This statement correctly reflects Iowa Code §263C.4, which stipulates: "The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board." In other words, the authority to establish the bylaws rests with the Center—not the Board Office or any other party.
>
> However, the statement is factually incorrect: the bylaws in Attachment A are **not** the ones I prepared.
>
> As you know, I have made numerous efforts to accommodate your suggestions. Since the bylaws I previously submitted have not been included, I formally request that you replace Attachment A with the file attached to this email, which contains the **final version** of the bylaws proposed by the Center for consideration and approval by the Board of Regents.
>
> Respectfully,
> Luciano

The agenda document was never corrected. The version currently posted on the Board of Regents website for that agenda item remains the modified version prepared by the Board Office, not the one submitted by the Center.

At the November 11–13 meeting, the Board directed that the bylaws be presented to the Advisory Council for approval first. The version ultimately approved by the Advisory Council and then by the Board at its December 3, 2025 meeting contains no provision addressing expenditure authority. Professor de Castro's plan is to address this gap through operational policies.

5. Inaugural Event: Organization and Related Obstacles

Following the difficult exchanges with Board Counsel described in the previous sections, Professor de Castro called Regent Hensley on October 8 to inform her that he could not organize the inaugural event under these conditions—that the Board Office's approach would consume so much of his time and energy as to make the task impossible.

As a result, on October 13, 2025, a meeting was convened with Executive Director Braun and Regent Hensley, at which it was agreed that expenditures related to the

event would be approved expeditiously. After the meeting, Regent Hensley called Professor de Castro to ask his assessment of the outcome. He replied that he was not comfortable, and that organizing the event would be "hell"—but that he would proceed as she wished, knowing that the Board Office would continue to create obstacles. This prediction was correct, as documented below.

5.1 Email Summarizing Outstanding Issues

On November 25, 2025, Professor de Castro became aware of an email sent by Executive Director Braun to Regent Hensley summarizing outstanding issues related to the inaugural event. This communication was sent without any prior notice to the Interim Director and appeared intended to convey to a Board member that the Center was mismanaging the event.The email did not serve to provide constructive guidance or highlight actions to be taken; rather, it seemed designed to portray the Center negatively.

> **From:** Mark Braun `<mark.braun@iowaregents.edu>`
> **Date:** November 25, 2025, 8:16 am
> **To:** Chris [Regent Hensley]
> **Subject:** CIF Update — November 24, 2025
>
> Chris,
>
> Per our conversation yesterday, below are some outstanding updates and issues regarding the CIF Inaugural Event.
>
> **November 24, 2025 — CIF Update**
>
> The contract for the rental of Old Capitol has not yet been signed by CIF (sent to CIF on Nov 13).
>
> The catering order was submitted on Friday, November 21. IMU Catering noted that a two-week notice is generally not acceptable but they will provide the service requested; however, there will be limited menu choices due to the order delay. The Thanksgiving holiday break is compounding this problem.
>
> A transportation company has been contacted for Dec 5 and Dec 6 (for shuttle between Old Capitol and IMU). It is unclear if there is a contract at this point.
>
> Security: UI Public Safety is working with Pentacrest Museum staff to plan for this event. Also, an outside vendor (Best) will be hired, as they will be responsible for controlling entry points and any ID checks that are necessary.
>
> UI's chief procurement officer has signed a speaker "event agreement" with Central Park Speakers (dated Nov 20, 2025). The invited speaker is Christopher Rufo and the agreement is for a speaking engagement on Dec. 6. The fee listed is $50,000, plus $4,000 for travel. The agreement is proceeding through UI workflow and should be to ED Braun for approval within the next few days.

> Alcohol: A UICA account has been established for CIF. As of 12:00 PM today (Nov 24), there are no funds in the account (zero balance). This is the account that will need to be used to pay for alcohol that is planned to be served on Friday and Saturday evening. An alcohol order has been submitted to IMU catering. Alcohol will be available for the Friday evening reception/dinner, the Saturday afternoon reception, and the Saturday evening dinner. Wine, beer and a variety of liquors are included in the order. We cannot use the appropriation to pay for alcohol.

It must be emphasized that the Center received no prior communication about any of these matters. Professional courtesy would have required that issues needing the Center's attention be communicated directly to the Interim Director, so that they could be addressed in a timely fashion. Responding to the criticism contained in this email was extremely time-consuming during the most demanding phase of event preparation.

5.2 Interference Regarding the Open-Meeting Designation

Another significant point of conflict concerned whether the inaugural event should be classified as a public meeting subject to Iowa's Open Meetings law. This determination was made by the Board Office **without any coordination** with Professor de Castro, who was responsible for all aspects of event planning.

After the decision was communicated—but before the event took place—Professor de Castro consulted Alexander Lee, J.D., Agency Counsel at the Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB). Mr. Lee confirmed Professor de Castro's interpretation: the inaugural event did not qualify as an open meeting of the Advisory Council. The Board Office's position was incorrect. On December 4, Professor de Castro sent the following summary to Regent Hensley:

> **From:** Luciano de Castro
> **Date:** December 4, 2025
> **To:** Chris [Regent Hensley]
> **Subject:** Open Meetings and Livestreaming — Summary
>
> Dear Chris,
>
> Before the inaugural event, I won't have time to formally challenge the Board Office's interpretation, and that's not my usual approach anyway—**when I encounter an obstacle, I prefer to find a practical way forward rather than get stuck in disputes**.
>
> That said, I wanted to briefly update you on a few points regarding the open-meetings and livestreaming issues, so you have the full picture.
>
> 1. Livestreaming misunderstanding
>
> Josh Lehman informed Nicholas (UI) that he should not livestream the event, based

> on his reading that it was "not required" for an in-person meeting. He appears to have conflated "not required" with "not allowed."
>
> My original intent was not primarily compliance-driven; I simply wanted to preserve a historic record of the session describing the Center's creation. This miscommunication nearly prevented us from recording this historic moment. Fortunately, I was able to make alternative arrangements (details in a separate e-mail).
>
> 2. Open-meeting classification
>
> Both the attorneys who trained us and, more importantly, a counselor at the Iowa Public Information Board confirmed that the inaugural event does not qualify as an open meeting of the Advisory Council. The Board office's contrary position was incorrect. See below my email to Alexander Lee, Agency Counsel of the Iowa Public Information Board, and his reply to me.
>
> 3. Communication pattern
>
> On several occasions, **the Board office have chosen not to copy or contact me directly**, even when the matters concerned plans I was leading. Instead, they have routed decisions or concerns through you.
>
> I believe direct communication with the individual responsible for both organizing events and making day-to-day operational decisions for the Center is far more efficient and professionally appropriate. For my part, whenever I have updates or responses for the Board office, I address them directly, as I did in three separate emails since Friday.
>
> **I raise this not to create conflict, but because clearer and more direct communication channels will save everyone time and reduce the risk of future misunderstandings.**
>
> Thank you for your continued support.
>
> Best regards,
> Luciano

The highlighted language after point 3 above — regarding the Board office's failure to copy the Center's director on communications — was repeated on several other occasions. This issue is discussed in further detail in Section 8 below.

6. Expenditure Approval by the Executive Director

On July 29, 2025, the first day Professor de Castro met Executive Director Braun, Braun stated that the University requires approval for expenditures and commented: "It seems just so natural that I would be the person approving the expenses." At the time, Professor de Castro viewed this as a routine administrative arrangement. He later came to understand that it was, in practice, a mechanism for controlling the Center's operations.

The University repeatedly insisted on this approval requirement. For example, the following message was sent by Suzanne Stratton, Director of Finance & Budget Operations at the Office of the Provost:

> **From:** Suzanne Stratton <suzanne-stratton@uiowa.edu>
> **Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025, 1:39 pm
> **To:** Collin Sawyer <collin-sawyer@uiowa.edu>
> **Subject:** Follow Up
>
> I just wanted to follow up after our meeting today, if you ever have any questions on policy, spending, balances, etc. please don't hesitate to reach out to me. Happy to help in any way I can. I also want to reiterate that **we should not be spending money on events or travel without receiving prior approval from Mark Braun**, if there is ever a time where money is spent prior to approval we will need to address that quickly to get the proper approval.
>
> Thanks!
> Suzanne Stratton
> Director, Finance & Budget Operations
> Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

Additionally, the Center was informed that the University of Iowa Center for Advancement (UICA) would not respond directly to Center staff on any matters related to account balances or deposits; all such communication was required to pass through Suzanne Stratton. When Professor de Castro requested to serve as account controller, UICA directed him to Stratton without offering any alternative. The following "intent language" was defined for our UICA account:

> To be used to support the Center for Intellectual Freedom at the discretion of the Director of the Center, with expenditures subject to prior **approval by the Executive Director of the Board of Regents**.

7. The Monitors Incident

Executive Director Braun sent to Regent Hensley the following message without first raising the matter with Professor de Castro:

> **From:** Mark Braun
> **Date:** November 25, 2025, 8:16 am
>
> IT provided two computers and 15 monitors to CIF. On Nov 21, there were only three of those monitors present in the CIF space in Calvin Hall. CIF staff were told that

> they needed to provide the location of the other 12 monitors, as they are UI-tagged property. On Nov 24, seven of the missing monitors were returned to Calvin. **There are still five monitors not accounted for.** In addition, one monitor was dropped (off site) and damaged. It was sent to Surplus.

This matter was raised directly with a Board member rather than with the Interim Director—clearly implying that he had mismanaged University property. In fact, IT's accounting was incorrect: the Center received only 11 monitors, not 15. All 11 were accounted for. Written confirmation of this from the IT department was subsequently obtained. Professor de Castro requested a formal apology from the Provost and the Executive Director. None was received.

8. Communication

Since November 2025, Executive Director Braun has substantially reduced direct communication with the Interim Director, preferring instead to communicate exclusively with Regent Hensley. Professor de Castro raised this concern explicitly in his December 4 email (Section 5.2). On December 4, Regent Hensley wrote:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** December 4, 2025
>
> "I will visit with Mark this morning and ask that all communication from the Regent office always include both of us, regardless of the content."

The practice did not change. On January 13, Executive Director Braun sent an email concerning intellectual property policies at the University solely to Regent Hensley, without copying Professor de Castro.

On March 5, 2026, Braun sent correspondence addressed to Collin Sawyer rather than to the Interim Director. Professor de Castro wrote to Regent Cramer asking that the Executive Director be directed to include the Center's Director in all future communications involving the Center. No change in behavior resulted. On April 8, 2026, Professor de Castro learned that the University had received an order to change the Center's URL—a change that had been requested—but the Board Office never informed the Center of this development.

9. Other University Requests

Regent Hensley requested that the CIF Director be invited to participate in meetings of the Council of Deans:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** December 31, 2025
> **To:** Kevin [Provost Kregel]
> **Subject:** Council of Deans Request
>
> Good morning Kevin,
>
> I am respectfully requesting that the Executive Director of the newly established Center for Intellectual Freedom be included, as appropriate, in the Council of Deans.
>
> As you know, the Center was created to advance core academic values, open inquiry, intellectual diversity and academic freedom, including curriculum.
>
> Allowing the Centers Director to participate would ensure the Center's work remains fully aligned in the University's academic mission and governance structure.
>
> I realize the model for the Center is unique and we are working to maximize its impact.
>
> Thank you for considering this request. Would welcome a conversation.

The Provost replied on January 3, 2026:

> **From:** Kevin Kregel, Provost
> **Date:** January 3, 2026
> **To:** Regent Hensley
>
> Regent Hensley,
>
> As you may know, the University of Iowa's Council of Deans is composed of just the deans (along with the University Librarian). Each member of the Council reports directly to me in my capacity as the university's Executive Vice President and Provost. On occasion, I invite individuals to participate in a portion of a meeting to address issues of relevance to the deans (e.g., finance and operations, human resources, federal and state relations). Our meetings, however, are closed to ensure candid, confidential discussion.
>
> If there is a circumstance in which it would be useful for the deans to engage with the CIF's executive director during a Council of Deans meeting, I would invite them to participate.
>
> Regards,
> Kevin

Following this exchange, Regent Hensley was advised not to communicate directly with the University President or Provost. Subsequently, in a meeting with the President of the University requested by the Board Office, Regent Hensley was not invited to attend. In that meeting, the University complained that Collin Sawyer had been asking "inconvenient" questions about a vendor that had declined to work with the

Center due to "misalignment."

Professor de Castro also submitted a formal request to change the Center's URL to a simpler address such as `cif.uiowa.edu`. The University replied that it would not make the change without a direct order from the Board Office. Despite multiple follow-up requests, no closure has been provided. Regent Hensley formally raised the matter in her April 6, 2026 email:

> **From:** Christine Hensley
> **Date:** April 6, 2026
> **To:** Mark Braun
> **Subject:** Three Open Items
>
> Mark,
>
> Per our discussion there are three different items I want to make sure we have closure on.
>
> - URL and request to change
> - Listing of CIF courses in the University catalog
> - Research and intellectual policy (wanting to write a book with various chapters written by professors attending the inaugural event)
>
> Appreciate your response to the above.

No response from Executive Director Braun had been received as of April 9, 2026.

10. Courses at the University

Professor de Castro was able to offer courses in the Spring 2026 semester only because he identified a supportive contact in University College who agreed to host the courses through that unit. However, that contact has made clear that this arrangement is not sustainable in the long term, and the Center must ultimately be authorized to offer courses independently.

To explore that authorization process, Professor de Castro asked Collin Sawyer to request a meeting with the relevant University office. Instead of scheduling a meeting, Provost Kregel sent the following email directly to Sawyer, without copying Professor de Castro:

> **From:** Kevin Kregel `<kevin-kregel@uiowa.edu>`
> **Date:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:20 am
> **To:** Collin Sawyer `<collin-sawyer@uiowa.edu>`
> **Cc:** mark.braun@iowaregents.edu; Kathryn Andrews
> **Subject:** FW: CIF Admin — Subject Code & MAUI Workflow Creation

> Collin,
>
> The request you sent last week to multiple Office of the Provost units has been forwarded to me for review.
>
> Because the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) is an entity of the Board of Regents, **it cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa.** Academic units operate within a structure that reports to deans and ultimately to the provost, and CIF's current placement does not align with that framework.
>
> If CIF is considering additional course offerings in the future, I recommend coordinating directly with Executive Director Braun (copied here).

It is useful to compare this position with the statutory text. House File 437, section 263C.2, states: *"A center for intellectual freedom is established as an* ***independent academic center under the board at the university****."*

The Provost's position that the Center "cannot function as an academic unit" is difficult to reconcile with this statutory description of the Center as an "independent academic center ... at the university." Professor de Castro brought this conflict to Regent Hensley's attention on March 23, 2026, and has asked the Board of Regents for a formal position on this question multiple times since. No response had been received as of April 9, 2026.

11. Policies

On February 17, 2026, Professor de Castro submitted three proposed policies to the Board Office:

1. Development, Approval, Amendment, and Management of Policies
2. Institutional Neutrality and Freedom of Expression
3. Content Development and Intellectual Property

The third policy is of particular practical importance, as it directly relates to the book announced during the inaugural event—a volume with chapters contributed by professors in attendance. Prior to this submission, the Board Office had raised the possibility that the University might claim copyright over the book. Professor de Castro consulted members of the Advisory Council's Scholar Committee, who confirmed that universities do not typically assert copyright over books published by faculty; copyright concerns in academic settings are generally limited to patents and commercially valuable inventions, not scholarly publications.

Despite this, Executive Director Braun forwarded the following internal email chain to Regent Hensley only, without copying Professor de Castro:

> **Forwarded by:** Mark Braun <mark.braun@iowaregents.edu>
> **Date:** January 13, 2026, 11:18 am
> **To:** Christine Hensley <regent.hensley@iowaregents.edu>
> **Subject:** Fwd: UI Policies
>
> *[Forwarded from Aimee Claeys, January 12, 2026, 3:07 pm:]*
>
> Just FYI.
>
> *[Original message from Erin Feltes, January 12, 2026, 3:05 pm, to Provost Kregel, Aimee Claeys, Stephanie Griffin, R. Boon:]*
>
> Hi all,
>
> Here is the link to the UI Intellectual Property Policy — section 4 specifically addresses copyright determinations:
> IP Policy
>
> Here is the link to the UI Authorship Policy:
> Authorship
>
> Finally, here is the link to the Ethics and Responsibilities for University of Iowa Staff policy, which includes statements regarding the unauthorized use of University resources:
> Use of Resources
>
> Let us know if you have any questions or need further information from us.
>
> Thanks,
> Erin

12. Narratives

Over the past several months, the University and/or the Board Office have circulated a number of characterizations of the Center's work that Professor de Castro views as misleading. He learned of most of these narratives through indirect channels. The principal ones are addressed below.

1. **"Now that the law has been approved, we want the Center to succeed."**

   Comment: In all the months since the Center's establishment, not a single concrete act of support from University administrators has been identified. As one Advisory Council member put it: "This might be true—if 'success' means doing nothing."

2. **"Luciano was going too fast."**

   Comment: Moving quickly to carry out the Center's legislative mandate was treated as a deficiency. From the perspective of parties who prefer the Center to be inactive, any rate of progress above zero is, by definition, too fast.

3. **"The event expenses were a surprise—far above budget."**

   Comment: The original event budget was $60,000. A speaker who had initially indicated willingness to participate without a fee ultimately requested $50,000, which Professor de Castro negotiated down to $30,000. The realistic budget was therefore $90,000 ($60,000 for the event plus the $30,000 speaker fee). The total actual cost was approximately $87,000—*less* than the adjusted projection.

4. **"Luciano does not produce a budget."**

   Comment: Suzanne Stratton sent the first budget framework for the Center on October 7, 2025. Professor de Castro submitted a budget shortly after being asked, on October 19, 2025. He was not asked for another budget until three months later, on January 19, 2026. It should be noted that until January the Center did not have direct access to expenditure reports; all information about actual spending had been provided by Suzanne Stratton.

5. **"The budget keeps moving."**

   Comment: After being asked for a new budget three months after the first was submitted, the subsequent criticism was that the budget figures had changed. The changes were not substantial.

13. Summary of Core Obstacles

The events documented in this report point to three fundamental, structural obstacles that currently prevent the Center from fulfilling the mission assigned to it by the Iowa General Assembly. Until these obstacles are resolved by the Board of Regents, the Center's operations will remain severely constrained.

Obstacle 1: The Center Cannot Hire.

Iowa Code section 263C.9 explicitly grants the Director sole and exclusive authority over recruitment and hiring. In practice, this authority has been nullified. The Provost's office, acting in coordination with Executive Director Braun, has directed the Center to suspend all steps toward hiring until the Board Office grants permission. No such permission has been forthcoming. As a result, the Center has been unable to hire the faculty needed to develop and deliver its academic programming—a core function of its legislative mandate. Going forward, we need also to have clarity on funds to hire faculty.

Obstacle 2: The Center Cannot Offer Courses Independently.

The Center's current course offerings exist only because a single sympathetic

contact within University College agreed to host them informally through that unit. This arrangement is explicitly temporary and not scalable. When the Center sought to establish a formal pathway for offering courses under its own authority—as envisioned by House File 437, which describes the Center as an "*independent academic center at the university*"—the Provost ruled that the Center "**cannot function as an academic unit within the University of Iowa**" and directed all inquiries to Executive Director Braun. No resolution has been provided. Without the ability to offer courses independently, the Center cannot fulfill its educational mission.

Obstacle 3: The University Administration Is Not Supporting the Center's Operations.

Throughout the period covered by this report, the senior leadership—including the President, the Provost, and the Executive Director of the Board of Regents—has consistently placed obstacles in the path of the Center rather than facilitating its work. The pattern is documented in detail across the preceding sections: hiring has been blocked, expenditures have been subjected to approval requirements that apply to no comparable academic unit, communications have been deliberately routed around the Interim Director, bylaws have been altered without authorization, and open requests for policy guidance have gone unanswered for months. No evidence of active institutional support for the Center's mission has been observed. This posture of institutional non-cooperation, sustained over the entire first semester of the Center's existence, represents the most serious obstacle to its long-term viability.

Path Forward. Resolving these three obstacles requires direct action by the Board of Regents. Specifically, the Board should:

(1) emphasize to the above-mentioned administrators the Director's statutory authority regarding hiring decisions and other matters relevant to the Center;

(2) issue a formal ruling that the Center has the authority to offer courses as an independent academic unit, consistent with Iowa Code §263C.2;

(3) direct University leadership and the Executive Director to provide active cooperation in support of the Center's operations;

(4) secure funds for the Center to support faculty hiring.

Without such actions, the Center will remain unable to carry out the mission for which it was created.

APPENDIX I

Proposal to Change CIF Organization Status

Proposal to Change the Organization Status of the Center for Intellectual Freedom

Luciano I. de Castro
Interim Director

April 13, 2026

1 Legal Basis and Mandate

Iowa House File 437 (HF 437) establishes the Center for Intellectual Freedom (CIF) as an independent academic unit under the Board of Regents at the University of Iowa. Under the provisions of this law, the Center is not merely an administrative office but a recognized academic body with the authority and obligation to offer courses to students and to give tenure. HF 437 thus places CIF as an academic unit that more closely resembles that of a college at the University of Iowa.

In light of this legal framework, it is necessary to implement an organizational structure that faithfully reflects what the law envisions. This document proposes specific structural changes required to accomplish that alignment and outlines the practical mechanisms through which CIF can begin to exercise its full legal mandate.

2 Current Organizational Structure and Its Limitations

Under the current hierarchy, the Center for Intellectual Freedom is classified as a department-level entity (Unit 0136) whose parent organization is Org Unit 02, the Office of the Provost. This arrangement means that all administrative, curricular, and operational workflows must pass through the Provost's office. As a result, CIF cannot offer courses directly or autonomously, which is a fundamental requirement under HF 437, and lacks the administrative independence necessary to fulfill its academic mission. Every action requiring institutional approval is subject to Provost-level oversight, creating bureaucratic bottlenecks that are inconsistent with the Center's legally mandated independence.

3 Proposed Restructuring

Table 1, extracted from this University's webpage, shows some of the most important organizational units at the University of Iowa.

Org Unit	Description
	Central Administration
01	Office of the President
02	Office of the Provost
03	VP Medical Affairs
04	VP Research
05	VP Finance and Operations
06	VP General Counsel
07	Human Resources
09	VP External Relations
49	Division of Student Life
	Colleges
11	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
12	Tippie College of Business
13	College of Dentistry
14	College of Education
15	College of Engineering
16	College of Law
17	Carver College of Medicine
18	College of Nursing
19	College of Pharmacy
20	College of Public Health
21	Inst. Clinical & Translational
29	Graduate College
	Other Academic
33	Library
35	University College

Table 1: Some of the University of Iowa Organizational Units

To resolve these structural conflicts, CIF must be elevated from a department-level entity to an Org Unit-level entity within the *Other Academic* Organizational Group, together with *Library* and *University College*. The Center would continue, as the law mandates, to report directly to the Board of Regents, but it would enjoy the privilegies of being an independent organization at the University, as other Colleges are.

Becoming its own independent organization would directly solve two critical issues. First, it would enable CIF to offer courses natively, fulfilling the academic mandate set forth in HF 437. Second, it would allow the Center to operate under its own institutional web presence at `cif.uiowa.edu`, rather than being hosted under the Provost's domain hierarchy. It must be emphasized that CIF should be accorded the same prerogatives as a college, including independent control over its curriculum, academic identity, and administrative operations. These prerrogatives should become clear to all involved entities at the University, specially the Registrar.

4 Administrative Services and Support

To maintain operational independence while minimizing overhead, the Center should not be required to hire full time personnel to build dedicated HR, IT, or Finance teams. Instead, CIF will establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to contract these administrative services from an established college or unit on campus. This configuration will detach CIF from its current reliance on Provost-level shared services—including Provost HR, IT, Finance, and USS—and route those workflows to the designated organizational partner, working as a service provider to the Center.

The SLA will specify that staff performing these functions on behalf of CIF will receive compensation in addition to their existing salary, rather than through a reallocation of their current salary from the CIF budget. This structure will preserve a clear, professional client-vendor relationship with the partner unit and mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

5 Registrar and MAUI Integration

As part of this transition, CIF's curriculum management within MAUI must be updated to reflect its new Org Unit status and its direct reporting line to the Board of Regents. Two specific changes are required:

1. **Academic Subject Code Authority:** The Center must be mapped in MAUI as the primary organizational owner of its academic subject code.
2. **Custom MAUI Workflow Routing:** Because CIF does not report to the Provost, its curriculum and course approval workflows in MAUI must be custom-routed to bypass the standard College and Provost approval queues.

APPENDIX J

Suggestions for Higher Education Legislation

This document presents a suggestion for the establishment of the Academic Council for the Iowa Board of Regents.

1. Definition: *Scholar* means a tenured or formerly tenured professor at an R1 institution.
2. An Academic Council for the Board of Regents shall be established, composed exclusively of scholars who are not currently employed by any Regents institution. The Council shall consist of at least five members.
3. The Academic Council shall advise the Board of Regents on all academic matters pertaining to the Regents institutions, particularly with respect to:
   (a) Tenure decisions;
   (b) The creation or modification of departments, colleges, undergraduate minors and majors, and graduate programs;
   (c) The appointment of presidents, provosts, deans, and departmental heads;
   (d) Any questions or issues raised by the Board of Regents;
   (e) Any other matters the Academic Council deems relevant and appropriate to bring to the attention of the Board of Regents.
4. The ombudsman offices of all Regents institutions shall report directly to the Academic Council, and the director of each ombudsman office shall serve at the pleasure of the Academic Council.
5. The Academic Council shall have the authority to request any information from the Regents institutions, subject to applicable legal restrictions.
6. The Academic Council may recommend the removal of any administrator within a Regents institution or the Board office, including presidents, provosts, deans, or department heads. Any such recommendation shall be submitted for a vote at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Regents.
7. The members of the Academic Council shall be appointed by the General Assembly. For each vacancy, the Board of Regents shall conduct a national search and submit to the General Assembly a list of at least three qualified candidates. The General Assembly may appoint a candidate from the list or request a new search.
8. Members of the Academic Council shall receive a stipend established by the General Assembly and shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The Board of Regents shall provide administrative support to the Council from its existing budget.

References

Armstrong, John (2025). "How Do You Decolonize Mathematics?" In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on pages 4, 13).

Board of Regents, State of Iowa (Sept. 2026). *Center for Intellectual Freedom: Operational & Financial Management Framework*. Agenda item CIF 1, Board of Regents meeting of September 16–17, 2026. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/0926_CIF_1__Center_for_Intellectual_A55CD18DE1DFE.pdf (visited on 10/02/2026) (cited on page 194).

Carreon, Zack (Feb. 5, 2025). *Faculty Feel "Kept in the Dark" as "Intellectual Diversity" Centers Come to Ohio Campuses*. WVXU. URL: https://www.wvxu.org/education/2025-02-05/intellectual-diversity-centers-ohio-colleges-faculty (cited on page 9).

Carrese, Paul O. (2024). "Civic Thought and Leadership: A Higher Civics to Sustain American Constitutional Democracy". In: *Laws* 13.2, p. 19 (cited on page 7).

Center for Intellectual Freedom (Dec. 3, 2025a). *Bylaws of the Center for Intellectual Freedom*. Approved by the Advisory Council on November 18, 2025, and by the Iowa Board of Regents on December 3, 2025. University of Iowa. URL: https://cif.uiowa.edu/sites/cif.uiowa.edu/files/2026-02/Bylaws.pdf (visited on 10/02/2026) (cited on pages 9, 47, 86, 136, 196).

– (Nov. 2025b). *First Meeting of the Advisory Council, November 18, 2025*. URL: https://cif.uiowa.edu/node/91 (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 45).

– (2026a). *Advisory Council*. URL: https://cif.uiowa.edu/advisory-council (cited on page 40).

– (2026b). *Center for Intellectual Freedom, The University of Iowa (website)*. URL: https://cif.uiowa.edu/ (cited on page 39).

Chediak, Quentin, Ben Murrey, and Hoang-An Andy Nguyen (Apr. 29, 2026). *Market Demand Assessment – University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom*. Research report. Common Sense Institute. URL: https://commonsenseinstituteus.org/iowa/research/education/market-demand-assessment-university-of-iowa-center-for-intellectual-freedom/ (visited on 10/08/2026) (cited on page 50).

City Journal (May 22, 2026). "Conservatives in Iowa Will Finally Have a Voice on Campus". In: *City Journal*. URL: https://www.city-journal.org/article/university-of-iowa-center-for-intellectual-freedom-kim-reynolds (cited on page 233).

Could the Center for Intellectual Freedom Become Its Own UI College? (2026). The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/could-the-center-for-intellectual-freedom-become-its-own-ui-college/article_a3a44014-79cd-49a5-b2ea-2ab17d67232c.html (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 45).

Coyne, Jerry A. and Luana S. Maroja (2025). "The Ideological Subversion of Biology". In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on page 4).

Draisey, Brooklyn (Nov. 16, 2023). *Regents Approve DEI Study Group Recommendations on Diversity, Inclusion Programs*. Iowa Capital Dispatch. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/?p=35717 (visited on 10/12/2026) (cited on page 114).

– (Dec. 6, 2025). "Center for Intellectual Freedom officials learn from other centers, look to future". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2025/12/06/center-for-intellectual-freedom-officials-learn-from-other-centers-look-to-future/ (cited on pages 48, 133).

– (Sept. 1, 2026a). "Center for Intellectual Freedom advisers debate oversight of activities, curriculum". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/09/01/center-for-intellectual-freedom-advisers-debate-oversight-of-activities-curriculum/ (cited on pages 52, 204).

– (Oct. 2, 2026b). *Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council Advances Director Candidates*. Iowa Capital Dispatch. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/10/02/center-for-intellectual-freedom-advisory-council-advances-director-candidates/ (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 46).

– (Jan. 23, 2026c). "First course at University of Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom pushed to March". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/01/23/first-course-at-university-of-iowas-center-for-intellectual-freedom-pushed-to-march/ (cited on page 49).

– (July 29, 2026d). "Iowa Board of Regents expands oversight of UI's Center for Intellectual Freedom". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/07/29/iowa-board-of-regents-expands-oversight-of-uis-center-for-intellectual-freedom/ (cited on pages 144, 166).

– (Sept. 22, 2026e). "Nearly half of Center for Intellectual Freedom advisory council members resign". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/09/22/nearly-half-of-center-for-intellectual-freedom-advisory-council-members-resign/ (cited on page 198).

– (Sept. 16, 2026f). "Regents give initial approval for Center for Intellectual Freedom organizational plan". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/09/16/regents-give-initial-approval-for-center-for-intellectual-freedom-organizational-plan/ (cited on pages 198, 213, 224).

Duarte, José L., Jarret T. Crawford, Charlotta Stern, Jonathan Haidt, Lee Jussim, and Philip E. Tetlock (2015). "Political Diversity Will Improve Social Psychological Science". In: *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 38, e130 (cited on page 4).

Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (2025). *University of Iowa. 2026 College Free Speech Rankings*. URL: https://www.thefire.org/colleges/university-iowa/free-speech-rankings (visited on 10/07/2026) (cited on page 14).

Gillen, Andrew (July 28, 2026). *How to Depoliticize Higher Education. A New Model of Competitive Coexistence Could Restore Ideological Balance to America's Colleges*. Minding the Campus. URL: https://mindingthecampus.org/2026/07/28/how-to-depoliticize-higher-education/ (visited on 10/06/2026) (cited on page 4).

Gross, Neil (Apr. 2013). *Why Are Professors Liberal and Why Do Conservatives Care?* Illustrated. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, p. 400 (cited on page 2).
Gross, Neil and Solon. Simmons (July 2014). *Professors and Their Politics*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 376 (cited on page 2).
Gutiérrez, Rochelle (2017). "Political Conocimiento for Teaching Mathematics: Why Teachers Need It and How to Develop It". In: *Building Support for Scholarly Practices in Mathematics Methods*. Ed. by Signe E. Kastberg, Andrew M. Tyminski, Alyson E. Lischka, and Wendy B. Sanchez. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, pp. 11–37 (cited on page 13).
Hayek, Friedrich A. (1949). "The Intellectuals and Socialism". In: *University of Chicago Law Review* 16.3, pp. 417–433 (cited on page 8).
– (1960). *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (cited on page 8).
Honeycutt, Nathan (Nov. 2024). *The Politics of University Faculty*. PsyArXiv preprint. Working paper. URL: https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/dnxqh_v1 (cited on pages 3, 4).
Horsman, Geoff (2025). "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: The Dismal Pseudoscience Threatening Science". In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on page 4).
Inbar, Yoel and Joris Lammers (2012). "Political Diversity in Social and Personality Psychology". In: *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 7.5, pp. 496–503 (cited on page 243).
Inside Higher Ed (Sept. 24, 2026). "Faculty Advisers Resign After Call for 'Reset' of Iowa Civics Center". In: *Inside Higher Ed*. URL: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/state-policy/2026/09/24/faculty-advisers-resign-after-call-iowa-civics-center-reset (cited on page 198).
Iowa Board of Regents (2016a). *Board of Regents Policy Manual § 7.06 (Purchasing) and Related Purchasing-Authority Provisions*. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/ (visited on 09/12/2026).
– (Oct. 2016b). *Meeting Agenda and Docket, October 19–20, 2016 (University of Northern Iowa)*. Audit/ Compliance and Investment Committee, Agenda Item 3, "Report on Compliance Review". URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/meetings/past-meeting-agendas/october-19-20-2016#:~:text=%C2%A03.%20Report%20on%20Compliance%20Review%20(PDF)%C2%A0%C2%A0Review%20of%20Travel%20Policies%20and%20the%20Use%20of%20State%0A%C2%A0%C2%A0%C2%A0%20%C2%A0%C2%A0Equipment%20(PDF) (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on page 201).
– (Dec. 2016c). *Meeting Agenda, December 5–6, 2016 (Telephonic Meeting)*. Audit/Compliance and Investment Committee, Item 1, Minutes of the October 20, 2016 Committee Meeting. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/meetings/past-meeting-agendas/december-5-6-2016#:~:text=and%20Investment%20Committee-,1.%C2%A0%C2%A0%C2%A0%C2%A0,-Minutes%20of%20October (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on page 201).
– (Dec. 2025a). *Meeting Agenda, December 3, 2025*. Approval of Center for Intellectual Freedom bylaws. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/meetings/past-

meeting-agendas/december-3-2025#:~:text=Center%20for%20Intellectual%20Freedom%20Bylaws%20(PDF)%C2%A0%20Bylaws%20(PDF)%C2%A0%C2%A0VIDEO (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 47, 86).

Iowa Board of Regents (Nov. 2025b). *Meeting Agenda, November 11–13, 2025*. Governance, Evaluation and Human Resources Committee, Center for Intellectual Freedom bylaws, Attachment A. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/meetings/past-meeting-agendas/november-11-13-2025 (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on page 84).

– (Sept. 2025c). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council". In: *Board of Regents News, September 17–18, 2025 Meeting Preview*. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/news/newsletter/board-of-regents-news/september-17-18-2025-meeting-preview/ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-advisory-council (cited on page 40).

– (2026a). *Board Policy Manual § 2.2 (Business Procedures): Purchasing*. § 2.2.6.C.1: competitive bid thresholds for goods and services ($25,000 / $50,000); § 2.2.6.B.5: institutional purchases of goods and services "need not be reported to or approved by the Board of Regents". URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/22-business-procedures (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on page 195).

– (2026b). *Board Policy Manual § 2.3 (Property and Facilities): Project Descriptions and Budgets*. § 2.3.10.2–4: capital improvement project budget thresholds — up to $1 million approved by the institution, $1–3 million by the Board Office, over $3 million by the Board. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/23-property-and-facilities (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on page 195).

– (Sept. 30, 2026c). *Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council: Meeting Notice, October 2, 2026*. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/100226_CIF_Meeting_Notice_316D2BD38044D.pdf (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 46).

– (Sept. 2026d). *Meeting Agenda, September 16–17, 2026 (University of Northern Iowa)*. Center for Intellectual Freedom Committee, 3:10 p.m., Sept. 16, 2026: "Center for Intellectual Freedom Independent Unit" and "Clarification of Number of Finalists". URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/meetings/past-meeting-agendas/september-16-17-2026 (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 189, 197).

Iowa General Assembly (June 2025). *House File 437: An Act Establishing a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa (Governor's Transmittal Letter and Enrolled Act)*. URL: https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/91/Attachments/HF437_GovLetter.pdf (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 58, 70, 77, 127, 150, 197, 232).

Iowa Law Puts Center for Intellectual Freedom at Center of New Graduation Requirements (June 8, 2026). The Daily Iowan. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2026/06/08/iowa-law-puts-center-for-intellectual-freedom-at-center-of-new-graduation-requirements/ (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 45).

Iowa Public Radio (Dec. 8, 2025). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom hosts inaugural event with conservative leaders". In: *Iowa Public Radio*. URL: https://www.

iowapublicradio.org/education/2025-12-08/university-of-iowa-ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-event (cited on page 48).

Iowa Regent Barker's U.S. Assistant Secretary Service on Hold Due to Shutdown (Oct. 2025). The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/higher-education/iowa-regent-barkers-u-s-assistant-secretary-service-on-hold-due-to-shutdown/ (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 115).

Iowa State University Office of Internal Audit (Dec. 2016). *ISU Flight Service and University Owned Aircraft*. Tech. rep. Iowa State University. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/ISU_Flight_Service_and_University_0_BF7913F1791FE.pdf (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 201, 202).

Kaufmann, Eric (Mar. 1, 2021). *Academic Freedom in Crisis: Punishment, Political Discrimination, and Self-Censorship*. Report 2. Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (cited on page 243).

KCRG (June 2, 2026a). "Courses will be required at University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom". In: *KCRG*. URL: https://www.kcrg.com/2026/06/03/courses-will-be-required-university-iowa-center-intellectual-freedom/ (cited on page 231).

– (Mar. 6, 2026b). "University of Iowa Center for Intellectual Freedom classes set to begin". In: *KCRG*. URL: https://www.kcrg.com/2026/03/06/university-iowa-center-intellectual-freedom-classes-set-begin-after-spring-break/ (cited on page 49).

– (July 29, 2026c). "University of Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom pauses courses amid search for director". In: *KCRG*. URL: https://www.kcrg.com/2026/07/29/university-iowas-center-intellectual-freedom-pauses-courses-until-2028/ (cited on pages 232, 233).

Klein, Daniel B. and Andrew Western (Mar. 2005). "Voter registration of Berkeley and Stanford Faculty". In: *Academic Questions* 18.1, pp. 53–65 (cited on page 2).

Krauss, Lawrence M., ed. (2025). *The War on Science: Thirty-Nine Renowned Scientists and Scholars Speak Out About Current Threats to Free Speech, Open Inquiry, and the Scientific Process*. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on pages 4, 5).

Krylov, Anna and Jay Tanzman (2025). "Spotlight on Scientific Censorship". In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on page 4).

Langbert, Mitchell (2018). "Homogeneous: The Political Affiliations of Elite Liberal Arts College Faculty". In: *Academic Questions* 31.2. This study includes data on engineering and physics faculty affiliations among other disciplines., pp. 186–197 (cited on page 2).

Langbert, Mitchell, A J Quain, and Daniel B. Klein (2016). "Faculty voter registration in economics, history, journalism, law, and psychology." In: *Econ Journal Watch* (cited on page 2).

Langbert, Mitchell and Sean Stevens (Jan. 2020). *Partisan Registration and Contributions of Faculty in Flagship Colleges*. URL: https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/partisan-registration-and-contributions-of-faculty-in-flagship-colleges (cited on page 2).

Lowery, Richard (Sept. 24, 2026). *The Civics Center That Had Every Advantage – and Failed Anyway. A Cautionary Tale from Iowa Shows That Civics Schools Need Independence from Universities in Order to Succeed*. National Review. URL: https://www.nationalreview.com/2026/09/the-civics-center-that-had-every-advantage-and-failed-anyway/ (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 219).

Luhmann, Kadin (June 8, 2026). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom council begins planning for required civics courses". In: *Iowa Capital Dispatch*. URL: https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2026/06/08/ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-council-begins-planning-for-required-civics-courses/ (cited on pages 45, 231, 232).

Messer-Kruse, Timothy (Oct. 6, 2026). *'Civics' Is a Right-Wing Plot – and They're Not Even Hiding It*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. URL: https://www.chronicle.com/article/civics-is-a-right-wing-plot-and-theyre-not-even-hiding-it (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 10).

Miller, Vanessa (Oct. 2025). *David Barker, in Resigning, Urges Regents to Sign Trump's Higher Ed Compact*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/higher-education/david-barker-in-resigning-urges-regents-to-sign-trumps-higher-ed-compact/ (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 114).

– (Sept. 22, 2026a). *'Vote of No Confidence' in Regents Prompts Center for Intellectual Freedom Mass Resignations*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/vote-of-no-confidence-in-regents-prompts-center-for-intellectual-freedom-mass-resignations/article_d8af9300-0884-45da-b16c-7ce3071aa0a3.html (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on pages 218, 219).

– (Sept. 14, 2026b). *Iowa's Center for Intellectual Freedom Still Undecided on Director Applicants to Advance. Regents to Consider Making Center Its Own 'Independent Academic Unit'*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/iowa-s-center-for-intellectual-freedom-still-undecided-on-director-applicants-to-advance/article_0118f3cb-4517-4c62-99ed-e95cf582d1ae.html (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 224).

– (Sept. 25, 2026c). *Luciano de Castro Not a Finalist for Center for Intellectual Freedom Director's Job*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/luciano-de-castro-not-a-finalist-for-center-for-intellectual-freedom-director-s-job/article_801db72a-354c-4508-8c90-c17bb8cdcf55.html (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on pages 219, 224).

– (Sept. 2026d). *Regents Won't Let Center for Intellectual Freedom Interim Director Attend 3 Conferences*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/regents-won-t-let-center-for-intellectual-freedom-interim-director-attend-3-conferences/article_3e15ab81-1020-495c-88ab-5996b687c11b.html (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 52, 204, 231).

– (July 18, 2026e). *Report: UI, Regents Tried to Suppress Common Sense Institute Report*. The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/report-ui-regents-tried-to-suppress-common-sense-institute-report/article_97cc2462-8dec-4c73-a84f-8f058f2c4c23.html (visited on 10/11/2026) (cited on page 158).

Novak, Michael (Jan. 1978). *American Vision: An Essay on the Future of Democratic Capitalism*. AEI Press, p. 1 (cited on page 244).

Peterson, Lance (Sept. 26, 2026). *CIF Executive Committee Announces Four Finalists for Center's Director Position*. The Daily Iowan. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2026/09/26/cif-executive-committee-announces-four-finalists-for-centers-director-position/ (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 224).

Pinker, Steven (2025). "A Five-Point Plan to Save Universities from Themselves". In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on page 5).

Quinn, Ryan (Dec. 11, 2024). *Has Chapel Hill's 'Civic Life' School Become a Conservative Center?* Inside Higher Ed. URL: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/curriculum/2024/12/11/chapel-hills-civic-life-school-conservative-center (cited on page 9).

– (Sept. 24, 2026). *Faculty Advisers Resign After Call for 'Reset' of Iowa Civics Center*. Inside Higher Ed. URL: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/state-policy/2026/09/24/faculty-advisers-resign-after-call-iowa-civics-center-reset (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on pages 216, 219).

Redding, Richard E. (2025). "Depoliticizing Science Requires Revolutionary Reform of the Professoriate". In: ed. by Lawrence M. Krauss. New York: Post Hill Press (cited on page 5).

Regent Questions UIHC Justification for New Patient Tower Next to Kinnick (Aug. 2025). The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/article/regent-questions-uihc-justification-for-new-patient-tower-next-to-kinnick/ (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 114).

Rothman, Stanley, S. Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte (2005). "Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty". In: *The Forum* 3.1. Survey-based study covering faculty political leanings, including engineering and natural sciences. (cited on page 2).

Schumpeter, Joseph A (1942). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Harper & Brothers (cited on page 244).

Siddiqi, Shiri Spitz and Michael Regnier (Dec. 2025). *The New Landscape of "Civics Centers" in Higher Education: An Analysis of Missions, Structures, and Legislative Origins Across U.S. Colleges and Universities*. Research Brief. Heterodox Academy (cited on pages 5–7, 9, 10).

Stewart, Todd T. (Oct. 2016). *Review of Travel Policies and the Use of State Equipment*. Memorandum, Chief Audit Executive to Robert Donley, Executive Director, Iowa Board of Regents. URL: https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/Audit_Review_Summary_Oct_2016_BOR_M_D077BB6A5B200.pdf (visited on 09/12/2026) (cited on pages 201, 203).

Storey, Benjamin and Jenna Silber Storey (May 14, 2025). *Why Civic Thought?* American Enterprise Institute. URL: https://www.aei.org/social-cultural-and-constitutional-studies/why-civic-thought/ (cited on page 7).

The Daily Iowan (Nov. 18, 2025a). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom Advisory Council approves bylaws, executive committee". In: *The Daily Iowan*. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2025/11/18/university-of-iowa-center-for-intellectual-

freedom-advisory-council-approves-bylaws-executive-committee/ (cited on pages 45, 47).

The Daily Iowan (Dec. 6, 2025b). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom hosts two-day inaugural event". In: *The Daily Iowan*. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2025/12/06/ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-hosts-two-day-inaugural-event/ (cited on page 48).

– (Mar. 31, 2026a). "Center for Intellectual Freedom optimistic for future". In: *The Daily Iowan*. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2026/03/31/center-for-intellectual-freedom-optimistic-for-future/ (cited on pages 49, 232, 233).

– (June 21, 2026b). "UI Center for Intellectual Freedom sparks backlash in Iowa City". In: *The Daily Iowan*. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2026/06/21/ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-sparks-backlash-in-iowa-city/ (cited on page 233).

The Gazette (Dec. 7, 2025). "Gov. Kim Reynolds on UI Center for Intellectual Freedom: 'It's a chance to lead America'". In: *The Gazette*. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/article/gov-kim-reynolds-on-ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-its-a-chance-to-lead-america/ (cited on page 48).

– (Apr. 8, 2026a). "GOP invited to Center for Intellectual Freedom event, Dems weren't". In: *The Gazette*. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/gop-invited-to-center-for-intellectual-freedom-event-democrats-weren-t/article_b7405595-de7e-4b6f-be0e-2574783d7eb0.html (cited on pages 233, 238).

– (Sept. 2026b). "Regent to Center for Intellectual Freedom committee chair: 'Get on board' or resign". In: *The Gazette*. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/regent-to-center-for-intellectual-freedom-committee-chair-get-on-board-or-resign/article_82bf49f2-4f3c-4acb-aefe-2a09f27cfdcc.html (cited on page 198).

– (Apr. 30, 2026c). "Report: UI Center for Intellectual Freedom can create demand". In: *The Gazette*. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/education/report-ui-center-for-intellectual-freedom-can-create-the-demand-it-lacks/article_a6b180e7-ae79-47aa-9d8d-aa9ac747179c.html (cited on pages 50, 232, 233).

UI Receives D- Freedom of Speech Grade (Sept. 14, 2026). The Daily Iowan. URL: https://dailyiowan.com/2026/09/14/ui-receives-d-freedom-of-speech-grade/ (visited on 10/07/2026) (cited on page 14).

UIHC to Have 'Honest Conversation about Feasibility' of $1.5B Inpatient Tower (June 2025). The Gazette. URL: https://www.thegazette.com/news/healthcare/uihc-to-have-honest-conversation-about-feasibility-of-1-5b-inpatient-tower/article_ffcaa4ab-4eab-593e-99f0-bc7143c830f9.html (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on pages 114, 115).

University of Iowa Health Care Nixes Plans for New $2B Inpatient Tower (Sept. 2026). The Gazette. URL: http://www.thegazette.com/news/university-of-iowa-health-care-nixes-plans-for-new-2b-inpatient-tower/article_2bf14732-bfde-4ed3-9ed2-f7c4ca5d9094.html (visited on 10/10/2026) (cited on page 115).

University of Iowa, International Studies Program (2026). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*. URL: https://internationalstudies.uiowa.edu/diversity (visited on 10/09/2026) (cited on page 11).

Warner, John (Apr. 10, 2026). *Incivil (and Wasteful) Civic Centers*. Academic Freedom on the Line (Substack). URL: https://academicfreedomontheline.substack.com/p/incivil-and-wasteful-civic-centers (cited on page 233).