
LEGAL UPDATE

Legal Services Division



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REGENTS UNIVERSITIES STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING — NOVEMBER 12, 2021

Purpose. *Legal updates are prepared by the nonpartisan Legal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency. A legal update is intended to provide legislators, legislative staff, and other persons interested in legislative matters with summaries of recent meetings, court decisions, Attorney General Opinions, regulatory actions, federal actions, and other occurrences of a legal nature that may be pertinent to the General Assembly's consideration of a topic. Although an update may identify issues for consideration by the General Assembly, it should not be interpreted as advocating any particular course of action.*

Overview. The Legislative Council approved the appointment of a Regents Universities Study Committee during the 2021 Legislative Interim. The committee is required to examine the administrative costs, staffing levels, and allocation of staff at the institutions of higher learning governed by the State Board of Regents (BOR), as well as graduation and student retention rates for each academic program at each such institution. The committee must submit a report to the General Assembly by December 15, 2021.

Procedural Business. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. in Room 103 of the State Capitol Building. The committee elected Senator Chris Cournoyer and Representative Gary M. Mohr permanent Co-chairpersons and adopted procedural rules. Co-chairperson Mohr made opening remarks and invited committee members and panelists to introduce themselves. Co-chairperson Cournoyer reviewed the charge of the committee.

Panels. Ms. Wendy Wintersteen, President, Iowa State University (ISU); Ms. Barbara J. Wilson, President, University of Iowa (SUI); and Mr. Mark Nook, President, University of Northern Iowa, served on each of the three panels established to respond to committee questions and to participate in discussions involving student recruitment and enrollment, academic offerings, and degree completion. In addition, Mr. Kevin Kregel, Executive Vice President and Provost, SUI, was invited to speak to the committee about academic program collaboration between the universities and the BOR, and coordination of degree programs by the universities; Ms. Aimee Claeys, General Counsel, BOR, provided information to the committee relating to the faculty hiring waiver process each university uses; and Mr. John Lawrence, Vice President for Extension and Outreach, ISU, spoke to the committee about the historical and current role of cooperative extension and its value to Iowans.

Other topics for discussion included recent student enrollment trends and enrollment projections, efforts to provide financial literacy and counseling to students regarding student loan debt; student tuition revenues, the level of state appropriations, and the return on investment for the state and students; the universities' and BOR budget processes; the importance of in-state, out-of-state, and international student recruitment; the effect of concurrent enrollment programs and community colleges transfers on the universities' budgets, retention rates, graduation rates, and student debt loads; collaboration and communication between the universities and business and industry; the costs of providing high-quality online and in-person classes; the accreditation process for new, continuing, and specialized programs; the effect of tenure on marketing and on faculty recruitment and retention; and efforts to improve graduation rates and to increase the number of graduates who remain in Iowa as taxpayers. The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

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