

May 15, 2017

Dear Iowa State Community:

I write to inform you of the tuition proposal currently under consideration by the Board of Regents. As a result of significant state funding cuts, Iowa State University supports the Board's [supplemental plan](#) to increase tuition by \$216 per year for all students beginning in fall 2017. This is in addition to the tuition rates that were approved in December of last year. We value our students and recognize the substantial investment they are making in their college education, which is why we take seriously our responsibility to communicate openly and honestly about such university issues.

As a public institution, Iowa State relies primarily on two sources of revenue to support day-to-day operation of the university: tuition/fees and state appropriations. The 2017 legislative session was one of the most challenging and disappointing sessions for Iowa State in recent history. Our request for a 2 percent or \$3.7 million funding increase was denied, and instead, the legislature cut our base appropriation by 6.25 percent or \$11.5 million.

The supplemental tuition increase is estimated to generate approximately \$7 million to help offset some of these cuts. Moreover, Iowa State remains committed to running as efficiently as possible by keeping operational and administrative costs down; administrative spending at Iowa State has consistently been nearly half that of our peer institutions. We are concerned, however, with our ability to attract and retain top faculty and staff and reduce class sizes. Our student-to-faculty ratio (19:1) is the highest of the Regents institutions and our faculty salaries are among the lowest of our peer group. High-quality faculty and staff are essential to carry out our mission and enhance the value of an Iowa State degree. Accordingly, our tuition proposal for fall 2018 will reflect adjustments necessary for compensation and hiring needs.

The supplemental tuition plan was developed through the shared governance process and received support from student, faculty, and staff leadership. That being said, we fully understand the frustration and hardship this increase may cause students and their families, particularly given the late timing of this decision for the second year in a row. This should not become a new precedent. We have expressed our concerns to the governor, legislative leaders, and the Board of Regents. We have also encouraged the Board to explore a fundamentally different approach to tuition – an approach that is reasonable, transparent, and predictable in aligning tuition with the cost of providing a world-class education as we face inadequate state support. The Board is now working to convene a task force that will review tuition long-term.

The Board of Regents will vote on the supplemental tuition plan during its next meeting, June 6-8. Information about the Regents tuition task force is forthcoming, and we will work with the task force to inform its recommendations. We appreciate your understanding of this challenging situation and ask for your cooperation in pursuing a sustainable, long-term solution to ensure the quality of our university.

Sincerely,
Benjamin J. Allen

Benjamin J. Allen
Interim President