

Review of the Office of the Vice President for External Relations

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Review Committee Members: Sue Gardner (College of Nursing), Robert Cook (CLAS), Tim Havens (CLAS), Megan Foley-Nicpon (College of Education), Laura Ponto (CCOM), Charles Hoslet (Vice Chancellor for University Relations—University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Russell Ganim (CLAS, Faculty Senate President, committee Chair).

I. Executive Summary

During the spring semester of 2018, the President's Office and the Faculty Senate established a committee charged with reviewing the Office of the Vice President for External Relations (OVPER), as well as the current Vice President for External Relations, Peter Matthes. The present report concerns only the OVPER and will be located on the Faculty Senate web site. The report on Mr. Matthes's performance will be filed separately with the President's Office. Basing its initial discussions on the self-study report submitted by the OVPER, the review committee consisting of Sue Gardner (College of Nursing), Robert Cook (CLAS), Tim Havens (CLAS), Megan Foley-Nicpon (College of Education), Laura Ponto (CCOM), Charles Hoslet (Vice Chancellor for University Relations—University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Russell Ganim (CLAS, Faculty Senate President, committee Chair) discussed the self-study and prepared questions for the on-site interviews conducted May 1-2 on the UI campus. The committee also distributed a survey to those colleagues working in the offices that directly report to the VPER. The interview questions, as well as the survey, focused on what is working well within the office, what could be improved, and what future directions the OVPER should take.

What follows is a synopsis of the discussions with the five units that directly report to the OVPER: 1) the Office of Strategic Communication, 2) the Office of Governmental Relations (divided into Federal Relations and State Relations), 3) UI Ventures, 4) the Office of Transparency, and 5) Hancher Auditorium. For reference, the organizational chart of the OVPER is attached. The committee also interviewed: Josh Lehman, Senior Communications Director for the Board of Regents; Laura McLeran, Senior Advisor to the President and Associate Vice President for External Relations; Mark Braun, Executive Director of the Board of Regents; Tom Moore, Media Relations Director and Spokesperson for UI Health Care; and Matt Henderson, Senior Associate Athletic Director, Revenue and External Relations for the UI Athletic Department. Peter Matthes was interviewed as well. On balance, the OVPER is a well-run unit that is upholding its mission to communicate the UI's strategic initiatives to internal and external audiences. Since its reorganization in 2015, the OVPER has focused on developing a consistent engagement strategy that is built on reinforcing partnerships with key communication outlets on campus as well as with external stakeholders, and on responding in a clear and timely manner to issues relating to University policy and priorities. The OVPER is known for its dedication to the

UI and for its willingness to find new ways to collaborate in order to promote the University's mission.

This is a strong unit, and one that has worked in a much more cohesive manner within the past few years. At the same time, questions remain about whether or not the number of UI offices that report directly to the OVPER is appropriate. Similarly, while the OVPER is obviously committed to advancing the University's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, the office may be aided in having a Strategic Plan of its own. Such a plan could be helpful in clarifying lines of communication as well as lines of succession were structural changes or personnel departures to occur. Currently, the OVPER has a distinct sense of its purpose, but like many units at the University, it is heavily dependent on good will and personal relationships in order to function effectively. The OVPER's self-study report makes this very point, suggesting that formalization of reporting structures will put the unit in a better position to succeed in the short term and to weather the inevitable personnel changes in the future.

II. Communication with the Board of Regents: Josh Lehman and Mark Braun

As Senior Communications Director for the Board of Regents (BoR), Josh Lehman's major responsibility is to coordinate communication for the BoR, including regular and special meetings. With respect to the University of Iowa, he is in constant communication with leaders on campus, with much of his effort involving requests from the media. Mr. Lehman has established twice-a-month conference calls with the OVPER. The purpose of these calls is to enhance communication and understanding between his office and the OVPER, with the goal of developing consistent messages so as to avoid surprises with the Board. Similarly, Mr. Lehman coordinates with the Office of Strategic Communications on media requests dealing with the Athletics Department and the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. He is also the BoR's open records officer, and in this role, sometimes interacts with the UI Office of Transparency. Mr. Lehman stated collaborative measures are taken to resolve differences between the UI and the BoR, and stated he could not recall a disagreement between the two parties that was not eventually resolved. Mr. Lehman offered very positive comments regarding the function of the OVPER and did not advance suggestions for further enhancing communication.

Mark Braun describes his job as Executive Director of the Board of Regents as that of a "traffic cop," who provides support—mostly in the form of information—to the BoR with respect to issues such as legislative matters, media response, and organizational processes. In terms of working with the OVPER, Mr. Braun cited the example of tuition modeling, where various ideas were circulated between the Board Office and the Office of Strategic Communications on how best to approach communication on the matter. Mr. Braun had a very favorable impression of the OVPER's ability to take a long-term approach to strategic thinking, to manage multiple issues at once, and to understand the legislative process thoroughly. The one suggestion Mr. Braun had for the OVPER was to try, occasionally, to take a less UI-centric view but rather to understand the Board's perspective with regard to the overall needs of the five

institutions within the BoR system. That said, Mr. Braun stated that the OVPER does understand the big picture and attempts to reconcile it with specific advocacy for the UI.

III. Laura McLeran

In her role as Senior Advisor to the President and Associate Vice President for External Relations, Ms. McLeran operates primarily as a “traditional Chief of Staff.” Her duties include administration of the President’s Office; supervision of scheduling, presidential events, and activities; supervision of the President’s residence; and overseeing the President’s interaction with the Center for Advancement. She also has primary responsibility for interaction with the Board of Regents’ staff. Ms. McLeran shares the Senior Advisor to the President role with Peter Matthes, an arrangement she describes as “unique” to President Bruce Harreld because he is a “team-oriented decision maker.” While the organization chart originally provided with the self-study report lists Ms. McLeran with no direct reports, the following University positions do report to her:

Office of the President:

Senior Human Resources Director
 Program Coordinator
 Presidential Senior Writer/Editor
 Director of Institutional Events
 Senior Financial Analyst
 Office Manager and Presidential Scheduler
 Director of Presidential Events

University Human Resources:

Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President

We note that these positions lie outside the Office of the Vice President for External Relations.

The review committee’s questions for Ms. McLeran focused on lines of communication, responsibility, and reporting both within the OVPER and outside it. Configuration of these lines depends primarily on personal relationships and expertise rather than on functions or organizations. For example, although Ms. McLeran does work with the Center for Advancement, she does so with respect to “presidential engagement.” Mr. Matthes is otherwise responsible for the OVPER’s interaction with the Center. Ms. McLeran stated communication with the BoR staff is “truly seamless” with Board staff and OVPER leadership communicating with whomever is available at a given moment. Ms. McLeran is more likely to speak with Executive Director, Mark Braun, while Mr. Matthes is more likely to speak with State Relations Office, Keith Saunders.

Among the review committee’s concerns are the separation of apparently similar functions across various offices. For example, the Office of the Provost includes an Office of Outreach and Engagement. Is there a logic to separating external-facing operations into academic

(Office of the Provost) and non-academic (Office of the President/OVPER) sides? Ms. McLeran acknowledged the decentralized nature of the institution is a challenge but added—in keeping with the general OVPER culture of privileging individual relationships—that the OVPER has a good working relationship with Associate Provost Linda Snetselaar. Similarly, the UI Museum of Art reports to the Office of the Provost, while Hancher Auditorium reports to the OVPER. The committee wonders if both external-facing units with connection to historically strong academic programs should report along the academic line. Ms. McLeran acknowledged that “this is a good question, and one we ask regularly,” and said she and her colleagues welcome suggestions for a better line of report programmatically and administratively for Hancher. She noted that as the new Hancher opened in late summer 2016, it was a major part of the collective story the Office of External Relations was telling about UI. More broadly, Ms. McLeran is interested in continuing to develop a more “centralized model for communication” that engages collegiate and other unit-centered communications offices in a hub and spoke system.

IV. Office of Strategic Communications

The Office of Strategic Communications (OSC) is the largest and most tightly structured of the units that report to the OVPER. Its links to that office are self-evident and the solid working relationship between the OSC and the OVPER is readily apparent. In 2015, more resources were directed to the OSC when the President’s Office decided not to fill the position of the then-Vice President for Strategic Communications. This move appears to have been beneficial. The most tangible example of the OSC’s impact is *Iowa Now*, the online platform that delivers news and features about prominent individuals, events, and programs at the UI. The Director of the Office of Strategic Communications, Jeneane Beck, explained content for *Iowa Now* is selected in part by triage of online submissions. Decisions are then made based on audience research with the goal of targeting the largest public possible. This includes alumni, state residents, faculty, staff, and students. The OSC works closely with the OVPER in determining content for *Iowa Now* and the audiences it reaches. In addition, the OSC coordinates communication regarding on-going or controversial issues at the UI and serves as the primary link to a variety of media outlets. With respect to the OVPER, members of the OSC touted their close relationship with that office and stated that the two units are now more aligned on strategy, agree on their shared mission, and are working together much more effectively than in previous years.

In terms of areas for improvement, members of the OSC expressed a desire to work more closely with the President’s speech writer. While there is a speech writer in the President’s Office, he works independently of both the OSC and the OVPER. The lack of coordination in this realm struck both the OSC and the review committee as an item to be remedied. This could be accomplished in several ways: having the speech writer report in whole or in part to the OSC, or ensuring there is regular communication between the speech writer and the OSC by having the speech writer attend OSC staff meetings. Additionally, the creation of a web development

strategy was put forth as a suggestion for improvement. At the moment, OSC is working more closely with the newly-organized Information Technology Services (ITS). More resources in web and media design would help align the functions of these units. With respect to how OSC interacts with Hancher, the committee was informed Hancher does have a staff writer who shares information with OSC, but that marketing is largely independent. At times, social media through OSC is involved in promoting Hancher's programming, but overall coordination could be improved.

OSC is a high-performing unit that does a very good job of promoting the UI to external audiences. The review committee recommends internal communication be strengthened so that faculty, staff, and students have a better understanding not only of content, but of the editorial decisions behind that content. *Iowa Now* is a very effective communications tool. At the same time, more could be done to explain how and why stories in *Iowa Now* are chosen. A recurring theme throughout the committee's discussions was that while external communication via the OVPER, OSC, and other units is as strong now as it ever was, more could be done to reinforce these messages for internal audiences as well. With respect to the OVPER's connections to UIHC communications, the relationship is a smooth one, with UIHC mainly interfacing with OSC. Previously, communication between UIHC and OSC lagged, but circumstances have improved to the point where there are now many fewer institutional boundaries. UIHC especially appreciates the OVPER's help in information about the General Assembly. In addition, joint planning meetings between UIHC and OSC have been scheduled on the second Monday of every month to compare content and avoid duplication. Similarly, UI Athletics has a strong working relationship with the OVPER and OSC. The best illustration of this partnership comes in the form of the OVPER working with UI Athletics to understand and promote the University's strategic message. UI Athletics commends the responsiveness of the OVPER and believes the relationship has been trending in the right direction the over the last two and a half years.

V. Office of Governmental Relations—Federal Relations

The review committee interviewed Leanne Hotek, who serves as Director of Federal Relations for the University of Iowa in Washington D.C. Peter Matthes held this appointment from 2010-14—in addition to numerous other duties—but was not based in Washington. When Bruce Harreld assumed the presidency of the UI in November of 2015, he allocated resources to enable the Director of Federal Relations to work exclusively from the nation's capital. Ms. Hotek has been in her current position since August of 2016. Ms. Hotek's job, along with that of the Associate Director, Maddie Bushnell, is to "serve as the eyes and ears of the University of Iowa" in Washington. This involves representing the University's interests with the Iowa congressional delegation, as well as various federal funding agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Along these lines, Ms. Hotek coordinates with faculty to provide information regarding grants and to communicate

with funding agencies on the research UI faculty are conducting. The goal is to help the University secure as much federal support as possible to promote the research initiatives outlined in the UI Strategic Plan. With respect to federal legislation, Ms. Hotek communicates with Mr. Matthes and with the University at large on measures such as the new tax bill, DACA, Veterans issues, and the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Such information helps the University formulate its strategy in light of the political climate in Washington.

Ms. Hotek stated her working relationship with the OVPER is a very good one. They communicate regularly, with Ms. Hotek focusing more directly on policy matters, and the OVPER taking a broader, more strategic perspective. Their goal is to tie the federal relations to the UI Strategic Plan, going over each metric and creating a specific task for each goal. Ms. Hotek's operation is a small one, but she feels fully supported by the OVPER and by the University in general. While she does not point out any perceived weaknesses in the OVPER, Ms. Hotek did state that at times there might be some over-communication that could take time away from other tasks. Moving forward, Ms. Hotek stated more of her work will involve connecting with Iowa alumni in the DC area and building those relationships in a more coherent and systematic way to help the University. The review committee believes the work done by the UI Office of Federal Relations is quite important but would also recommend one of the representatives in that office come from a science background in order to promote grant activity with the NSF, NIH, NASA, and the Department of Energy, among others.

VI. Office of Governmental Relations—State Relations

The committee met with Casey Westlake (Constituent Relations Specialist; reports to Peter Matthes) and Quentin Misiag (Constituent Relations Coordinator; reports to Ms. Westlake). The primary role of the Office of Governmental Relations is to maintain constant communication with state and federal legislators. They do this through a variety of methods, including finding positive stories about how UI is impacting the state and sharing those stories with appropriate policymakers (e.g., members of applicable committees) and sharing faculty profiles. The office also runs the Hawkeye Caucus—the annual UI promotional event at the State Capitol building in Des Moines. The goal of the Hawkeye Caucus is to be a resource for campus and engage as many constituencies as possible in advocating for UI. Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag maintain the Hawkeye Caucus website, help run postcard campaigns with faculty, staff, and students, and help plan advocacy campaigns around the legislative calendar. Ms. Westlake also advises the Hawkeye Caucus student group. There is a Hawkeye Caucus every other year in Washington DC, to engage with the Iowa congressional delegation, as well as area alumni. The Hawkeye Caucus in Washington is a point of contact between federal and state governmental relations. Ms. Westlake and Ms. Hotek work in close collaboration on this event.

The office also plays a role in bringing congressional staff to campus for visits, which they try to do monthly. They indicated most of their focus is on state legislators but see an opportunity to do more with federal legislators in concert with the Director of Federal Relations.

The priorities of the office (i.e., the issues on which they seek to advocate) are set by Peter Matthes and Keith Saunders. It was noted that this office does not deal with legislative bill review or records requests from legislators; that is handled by the Office of Transparency.

Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag indicated the metrics that they measure include social media analytics, as well as open rates and click-through rates on communications that are sent to legislators through the Dispatch System, a system through which alumni and others can enter their home address and automatically send an email to their legislator(s). Other events in which the Office of Governmental Relations participates include the university's presence at the State Fair and RAGBRAI. When asked about accomplishments of the Office of Governmental Relations, Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag indicated they feel they do really well in assisting the other Government Relations staff (presumably those who work on state and federal relations) – Mr. Misiag indicated he thought they “punched above [their] bandwidth.” They also stated they have seen tremendous growth in social media.

Areas they noted for improvement included finding ways to get more legislators to open the emails that are sent to them; determining better what content is of most interest to various policymakers; and improving engagement with shared governance on campus (although they noted they already do a lot with student government.). Despite committee members questioning potential duplication of social media efforts with the OSC, Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag responded their social media efforts focused on different things and were not duplicative.

Both Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag talked about the strengths of the OVPER, stating they “see the entire picture” and it is strategic and thoughtful. The office personnel reportedly sees them as colleagues and does not treat them like subordinates. They are welcoming, inclusive, and open to the ideas of others, and instill a sense of confidence in Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag. At the end of the interview, Ms. Westlake and Mr. Misiag indicated they were not clear whether all of the staff in the other OVPER units know what the people in the Office of Governmental Relations do and, similarly, they were not sure what staff in some of the other units do (e.g., Ms. Westlake indicated she knows little about UI Ventures or Hancher). The review committee feels there may be value in creating more opportunities for OVPER units to get to know each other and their respective work foci to create a greater sense of cohesion. In addition, the committee wondered if this office were sufficiently staffed, as Governmental Relations could potentially use more personnel to advocate for the UI with the General Assembly and the UI Center for Advancement.

The chair of the review committee also spoke with Keith Saunders, the University of Iowa's Director of State Relations. His interview was delayed until after the on-site visit because the Iowa legislature was still in session at the time. Mr. Saunders stated when the General Assembly is meeting, he interacts with the OVPER and the OSC daily. He stated these relationships are quite positive, and that the cooperative nature of these interactions is especially important given the current budget climate. The goal is to convey the same message to legislators about the University's worth and its contribution to the state. Mr. Saunders does have some concerns that the OVPER is getting stretched too thin, and does recommend that, if possible,

more resources be directed toward that office and especially toward the OSC. With respect to the University as a whole, Mr. Saunders recommended the UI invest more time and money in economic development to generate more commercial activity within the state. If such a plan were enacted, the OVPER would play a key role in promoting the initiative.

VII. UI Ventures

The review committee met with Jordan Kaufmann, Director of Startups in the UI Ventures Office (UI-V). Her colleague, Paul Dymerski, Director of UI Ventures, was unable to attend the discussion. Ms. Kaufmann provided an overview of the purpose and operation of UI-V. UI-V's mission is to assist university inventors (faculty, staff, students) to create new ventures based on their research and ideas. The office works closely with the UI Research Foundation (UIRF), the Center for Advancement, the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, UI Protolabs, UI Research Park, and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development to provide members of the University community with the tools necessary to create new spinout ventures or to market their ideas through existing commercial enterprises. UI-V provides education and mentoring on licensing, business creation, funding sources, and commercialization. It serves as an advocate for and an intermediary between the startup company and the UIRF. The office facilitates entrepreneurship rather than manages enterprises by recommending particular individuals or entities or providing start-up capital directly. They manage a portfolio of approximately 80 companies at present, but this list may be streamlined in the near future. Their purpose is to make connections and to provide information and mentoring. As an example of these activities, Mr. Dymerski has presented a faculty innovators workshop described as "a four-week course on commercializing innovative research and technology" (<https://uiventures.uiowa.edu/news/faculty-innovators-program-accepting-applications-fall-workshops>).

Ms. Kaufmann detailed the new Iowa MADE Program that is designed to bring simple, low-volume technology and inventions to market. With the Iowa MADE Program, items with documented clinical use potential (510K exempt), but a limited niche market, are manufactured (e.g., UIHC Machine Shop, machine shop in Hiawatha) and sold on-line at the Iowa MADE website (<https://iowamade.org>). An example of a product available is the Abrons Oral Airway. Revenue from these sales goes 40% to the faculty inventor, 40% to the home department of the inventor, and 20% to MADE. The revenues paid to MADE are then used to facilitate the development of other new products.

UI-V has recently moved from the OVPRED's office to the OVPER's office. Ms. Kaufmann endorsed the move because of the access to the multitude of connections afforded by being under the supervision of Mr. Matthes, especially in regard to access to the media. The question as to the best home for this office is still open and may be resolved with the potential reorganization of the OVPRED. In the meantime, weaknesses were identified with respect to the overall vision, targets, and goals for the UI-V that may be attributable to the recent transition in home. Mr. Dymerski has retired, leaving Ms. Kaufmann as the sole staff member of the UI-V

office. The office is overly dependent on student employees (e.g., biomedical engineering students) and lacks the administrative resources to adequately track operations. The review committee recommends that Mr. Dymerski's position be filled and that an additional staff person be assigned to this office in order to facilitate the efficient operation of the valuable services provided by UI-V. In addition, after the re-evaluation and possible restructuring of the OVPRED, the placement of UI-V within the University hierarchy should align with the UI's plans for economic development and its initiatives regarding discovery to product.

VIII. Office of Transparency (OOT)

The Committee met with Ann Goff, University Transparency Officer, and Aubree Johnson, Program Coordinator in the Office of Transparency. These two individuals represent the entire Office of Transparency staff and have the legally-mandated responsibility to respond to requests filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and requests for information (RFI) to the University of Iowa in accordance with the Iowa Public Records Law. Ms. Goff and Ms. Johnson provided an overview of their operation with handouts detailing the productivity of the office for the period from 2010 through 2017. Specifically, OOT has seen progressive growth in the number of public records requests (from 213 in 2010 to 742 in 2017), for bills (191 in 2014 to 236 in 2017) and requests for information (RFI from 45 in 2014 to 88 in 2017 with 45 year-to-date in 2018). They also compared their requests to our companion regents' institutions UNI and ISU and the Board of Regents office for 2016 (UNI: 43, ISU: 232, UI: 740, BoR: 34), 2017 (UNI: 45, ISU: 312, UI: 755, BoR: 34) and the first quarter of 2018 (UNI: 20, ISU: 112, UI: 194, BoR: 2). The affiliation of requesters for the public records and the category of the request were also detailed for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. When an open records request is received, the OOT staff work with coordinators at different entities within the UI (UIHC, Athletics, Public Safety, etc.) and through the use of the records IT system developed by Ms. Goff to locate the necessary information. The record is reviewed and specific information is redacted when necessary. Legal questions with respect to particular records are directed to staff in the Office of General Counsel. If the release of the particular information/record is anticipated to be potentially controversial, inflammatory, or create positive or negative press, the OOT staff works closely with the Office of Strategic Communications prior to release. It was estimated that between 75 – 80% of requests are responded to within 10 business days. In addition, the OOT staff provided a pamphlet entitled "Overview of Public Records: A Guide for Faculty and Staff" that they produced to educate members of the campus community. They also stated they are open to providing training in open records policies to anyone interested.

The OOT staff believe that they operate in a self-sufficient manner, are trusted by the OPPER, and feel a certain amount of pressure to maintain that trust. They have consistently received excellent performance evaluations. Acknowledging the stellar performance of the OOT, the Committee did express two concerns regarding this office. First, the office is staffed by two very capable individuals performing a legally-mandated operation that do not have any apparent back-ups. There is a need to either expand the staff of this office or, in the least, cross-train other

individuals capable of performing these tasks if either of these individuals were unable to work or chose to leave the University. Secondly, FOIA and public records requests involve legal decisions with respect to the entire record and/or the content that may be redacted within a record, yet neither Ms. Goff nor Ms. Johnson has legal credentials. Working closely with the Office of the General Counsel is not equivalent to working within the Office of the General Counsel. The lack of direct legal supervision of this operation may pose a risk to the University. Consistent with other peer institutions, we recommend that the OOT be moved from the OPPER to the Office of the General Counsel.

IX. Hancher

The review committee interviewed Chuck Swanson, who has been Executive Director of Hancher Auditorium since 2002. He said that development, defined as “creating relationships that are transformative,” is his most important task. He supervises production, marketing, and programming, and was involved in the design of the facility, construction, and opening of the new Hancher in the wake of the 2008 flood. Among his staff are 150–280 *students*. Mr. Swanson said Hancher is UI’s “biggest classroom” with its mission “right in line with the mission of the university—learning, discovering, public engagement.” He said further, “For a lot of people, we’re the touchpoint of the university.”

The committee is curious about Hancher’s fit with the OPPER given Hancher’s alignment with the academic mission of UI. When asked to compare Hancher’s organizational place with that of the Museum of Art (which is housed in the Office of the Provost), Mr. Swanson expressed concern over voice and control rather than with mission fit. He indicated Hancher is “such an external part of the university” and expressed reservations about whether or not the Office of the Provost would sufficiently promote the unit. He indicated additional concern about whether or not Hancher would retain control of its fund-raising if such a move were implemented. In response to committee questions about comparison to university-based performing arts centers at other universities, Mr. Swanson indicated there is no model structure. He suggested perhaps Hancher should report directly to the Office of the President.

Mr. Swanson stated that he would like the OPPER to convey Hancher’s role in a more active manner. He would like to see better connections with OSC, with the hope that the OSC staff would “get to know us [Hancher] a little better.” Mr. Swanson cited an example where an OSC staff writer submitted a piece for *Iowa Now* on the recent residency of costume designer Machine Dazzle, but the story was cut without notice. At the same time, he does not suggest having a permanent presence in the OSC, because he is not sure how effective this presence would actually be.

The review committee is of the opinion that the UI should consider a different reporting structure for Hancher. At present, the unit ostensibly reports to a Vice President. If Hancher were

under the Office of the Provost, it would report to an Executive Vice President, presumably a step up that could enhance its academic and outreach mission. Reporting to the Office of the President could produce a similar effect. At present, the review committee does not see a natural fit between Hancher and the OVPER and believes that both units may actually benefit from a realignment of the reporting hierarchy.

X. Recommendations

The Office of the Vice President for External Relations is an effective unit with a meaningful impact on constituencies both inside the University of Iowa and outside it. The following suggestions are advanced to reinforce the strengths of an already solid UI office:

1. Write a Strategic Plan for the OVPER to better define short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals.
2. Establish clearer lines of communication both within the OVPER and outside it. Current structures depend as much on good will and personal relationships as they do on structured reporting mechanisms.
3. Reduce the number of direct reports to the OVPER:
 - a) Move the Office of Transparency to the Office of the General Counsel.
 - b) Place UI Ventures either in the Office of the Vice President for Research or wherever Economic Development is eventually housed.
 - c) Have Hancher report either to the Office of the Provost or the Office of the President.
4. Enhance messaging from the Office of Strategic Communications to internal audiences. Clarify the questions, “What are we communicating about the UI?” and “Why are we communicating it?”
5. If possible, add staffing resources to both the Office of Strategic Communications and the Office of Governmental Relations.
6. Encourage the Office of Governmental Relations—Federal Relations to connect more closely with Iowa alumni in the Washington DC area.
7. Fill the existing vacancy in UI Ventures, since Paul Dymerski is now retired.

8. Establish a working relationship between the President's Speech Writer and the Office of Strategic Communications.
9. Create communication structures by which the units that report to the OVPER understand each other's goals and functions.
- 10.** Find ways for shared governance to communicate the OVPER's mission to faculty, staff, and students.