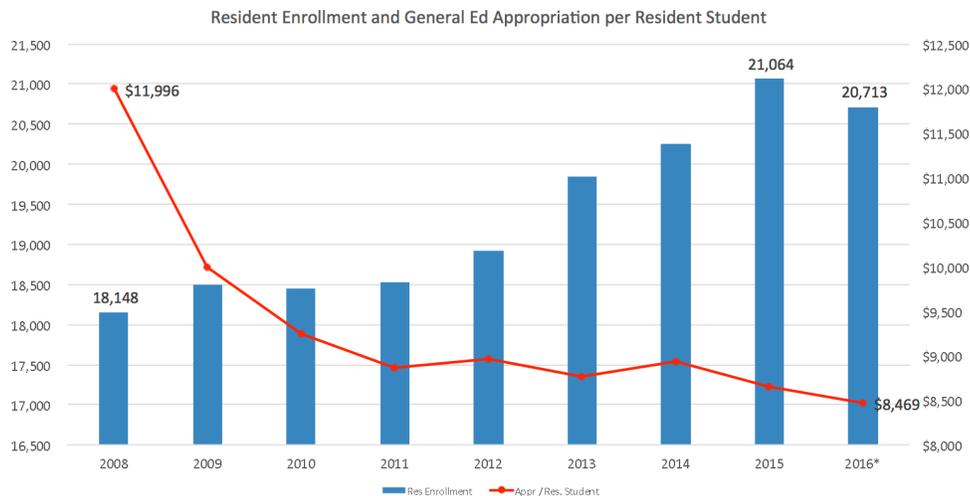


**Iowa State University Faculty Senate President Jonathan Sturm  
Remarks to the Board of Regents, April 20, 2017**

Thank you for the chance to speak on behalf of the faculty and faculty senate at Iowa State University this afternoon. Within the context of Board membership turnover and a deficit spending environment this year, I plan to couch my comments in a slightly different framework than my predecessors may have in past years. Let me begin with a few facts.

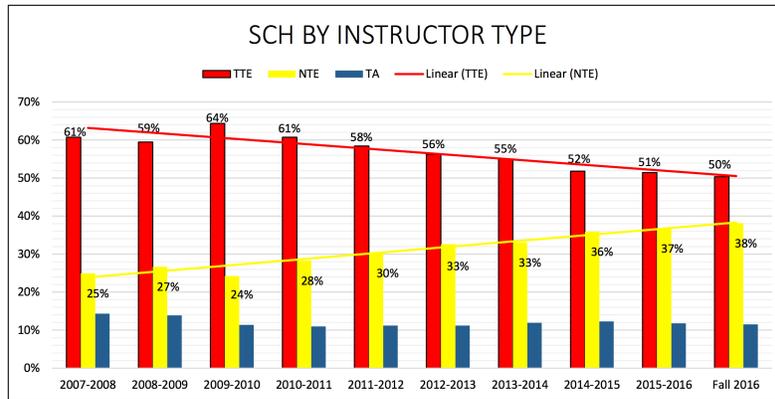
Last year Iowa State University educated over 20,000 Iowa residents. Faculty commitment to teaching brought the first-year retention rate for our students above 88%. The standard of 6-year graduation rates climbed to a record of 74%. 95% of our graduates were employed in their field of study or were continuing their education within 6 months of getting their degree. 1 in 3 students left Iowa State University with *both* a world-class education *and* zero student debt. Additionally, our faculty secured record support from Federal agencies and other outside entities to support their research. The Research Park *employed* over 1,800 Iowans; four of the last five Iowa companies to go public had a connection to Iowa State University, and ISU Economic Development helped to create or retain more than 2,800 jobs for Iowa businesses, achieving over \$400 million in economic benefits. At ISU, the data show we are doing everything right.

If ISU were a publicly owned business, our stock would be rocketing upward, rewarding shareholders and employees alike and drawing new investments to our enterprise. Instead, the Legislature, since 2012, has decreased its funding from \$11,996 to a current \$8,469 per in-state student. In the context of a stellar performance environment, ISU has suffered a 30% cut instead of a 300% stock value increase. It causes me to ask, “What is wrong with this picture?” And this year again, higher education in Iowa took the biggest lashing of all publicly funded entities, with ISU alone suffering close to an \$11.5 million cut to its budget from the state. State support for ISU’s general fund, which in the 1980s was at 75%, now rests at about 25%.



Since 2008, ISU has experienced a 36% increase in students (an additional 10,000 new people on campus). Many applaud this; however, in the same period of time there has been only a 14% increase in faculty hires, of which 1/3 were not hired to a tenure line. Student to faculty ratios in that time have expanded from 15:1 to 19:1. Colleges and departments across the university have seen class sizes rise in some cases from 50 to 300 students in the past decade. One simply cannot teach 300 students in a course with anywhere close to the same attention given to 50. Assignments, faculty-student contact time and interaction, modes of teaching and of testing all must be revised or curtailed.

Year	Students	Faculty	Ratio
2008	26,856	1,723	15:1
2016	36,660	1,969	19:1



SCH = Student Credit Hours. TTE = Tenure Track Eligible. NTE = Non Tenure Eligible. TA = Teaching Assistant

ISU currently employs 1,969 faculty whose average work week, from a recent survey, is over 50.7 hours. In those 50.7 hours, besides teaching, research, extension, outreach, and service, faculty constantly struggle to fulfill the reporting that must be done to meet accreditation expectations, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and continuous improvement reporting, some of which is mandated by the *very same government* that persistently erodes its financial support for the increased workload it requires.

Faculty have worked tirelessly to overcome these deficits, so far with success. But here is the crux of my argument: we have reached a tipping point. The time has arrived when decisions resulting from state and Regent actions will require faculty to consider cutting the curriculum and class offerings. Students will begin to pay a steeper educational price as the best faculty leave the state for greener pastures, and the ones who remain struggle under the increased burden of massive class sizes, and are forced to cancel classes because there are not enough resources to cover the workload.

I expect tuition increases will have to be considered to offset this untenable environment in which we find ourselves. The students have already stated in their own government body a “zero tolerance” attitude toward tuition increases. More fundamentally, passing the state’s support of education on to individuals undermines the very ideal of public education. But if the state will not assume its share of the responsibility to fund public education under the Morrill Act, it then becomes the Regents’ *responsibility* to raise tuition to ensure that ISU can continue to provide a world class education and research agenda.

I wish I could find the one thing to say that would convince our government that educating its people to the highest level is among the most valuable efforts it can pursue and fund for the future of Iowa and of America. Historically, advances in civilization do not come from uneducated cultures. Alex Felker, a current ISU student majoring in Community and Regional Planning, wrote in a recent *Des Moines Register* editorial, “Facts and figures can be pulled from a textbook or the internet . . . but it is the engagement with faculty members and other students, and the analytical, critical writing that cannot be replaced. This is why our universities are so important . . .”

This critical faculty engagement is currently under such pressure from expanded enrollments and state funding cuts, that risks to its future are pronounced. In the final analysis, the Regents need to work together with university administration, faculty, and staff to convince the Legislature *soon* that equating smaller government with smaller education is a poor bargain for the people of Iowa and our nation. It is *past time* for the government, consulting with the Regents, to review its role in this partnership, and to reverse its recent trajectory that places the complete education of its citizens in jeopardy.