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## Opinion: Stop over-funding the bloated UI administration

December 15, 2014 Melissa Zimdars Community/News No comments

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Recently, the University of Iowa has been making some questionable decisions in the name of finances. Courses are being cut in Intermedia (despite waiting lists and TA's ready to teach them), fellowships that traditionally fund underrepresented minorities are being eliminated, graduate students are inconsistently funded or underfunded and the number of part-time, non-benefit-receiving adjunct faculty is growing.

The University of Iowa perhaps rightly claims that it is facing a shrinking budget, especially in consideration of reductions in state support over the last fifteen years as well as the Deloitte Audit and the Regent's financial restructuring plans, yet cuts are not being planned for where they are needed most: the administration.

The problem is not just that UI pays its administrators high six-figure salaries, but also that we have an ever-increasing number of deans, associate deans and strategic communication specialists. And these administrators, among numerous other positions, are not only paid high six-figure salaries, but also receive other financially lucrative benefits. For example, in 2011, UI President Sally Mason collected an additional \$455,000 in deferred-compensation, largely paid for by tuition and tax revenue. Making the matter worse is the fact that this administrative-glut is taking place while universities simultaneously rely more on underpaid, contingent labors to educate undergraduates.

According to the American Institutes for Research, low paid part-time faculty and teaching assistants now account for half of all instructional staff at universities and colleges across the nation, whereas they accounted for around one third in 1987. Over the same time period, and at a rate of growth twice that of the number of enrolled students, administrative and professional staff positions have more than doubled. While the number of faculty, including full-time and part-time, has increased by 50 percent in the last 40 years, the number of administrators increased by 85 percent and administrative staffers by 240 percent.

In Iowa City, Bruce Rastetter, President of the Iowa Board of Regents, recently challenged faculty at a senate meeting to work toward making the University of Iowa a Top 10 research institution. In addition to supporting faculty research, for this goal to even be in the realm of possibility, the UI needs to fully support graduate students, lecturers and adjuncts who do some of the most innovative research on campus. In other words, instead of over-funding an overabundant administration, we need to more adequately start funding a greater number of the researchers/educators currently on campus.

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

**MEDIT. For Kids a** Children's Meditation Class  
Quaker Friends Meeting House 5:45 PM

**Iowa Men's Basketball**  
Carver-Hawkeye Arena at UI 6:00 PM

**Southern Valentine with New Pi's Matt**  
New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville 6:00 PM

**PYO Knit & Wine**  
Home Ec. Workshop 6:00 PM

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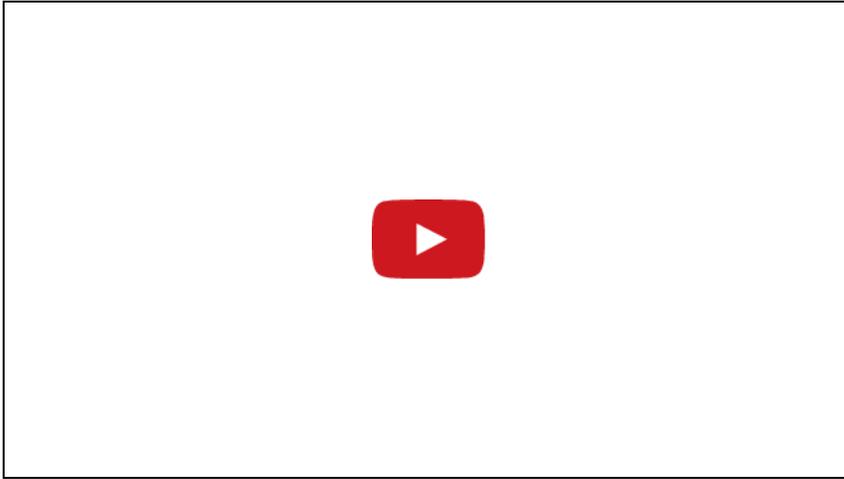
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In consideration of all of this, and the fact that it scares me how strongly I'm starting to identify with Howard Beale's famous "Mad as Hell" speech in the 1976 film *Network*,

I decided to start a petition as a first step in trying to change this troubling status quo. It reads:

The amount of money the University of Iowa pays an ever-increasing number of administrators while simultaneously cutting programs, failing to adequately support TAs/RAs/Adjuncts, and eliminating fellowships for traditionally underrepresented groups is unacceptable.

We believe that the University of Iowa, at minimum, needs to "freeze" (or lower) the salaries and other lucrative fringe benefits administrators receive. By making the budget less 'top heavy' there will be more money available to adequately fund educators and researchers across campus.

Further, among numerous other potential changes including reducing the number of administrative positions currently in existence at the University of Iowa, we believe that the faculty senate and student senates on campus should vote to approve all newly created administrative positions in the future.

As current and former members of the University of Iowa community and advocates for public education, we can at least begin working toward change by collectively expressing our concerns to the administration.

The high cost of university administration is a problem at institutions of higher education across the nation. The University of Iowa has a chance to become the leader in reversing this unfortunate trend.

[Here is the petition](#) if you're also "mad as hell" and want to sign or share it with others.

*Melissa Zimdars is a graduate student in Communication Studies and is worried about the direction the University of Iowa is headed.*

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### About Melissa Zimdars

*Melissa Zimdars is a doctoral student in Communication Studies at the University of Iowa, specializing in all things television.*

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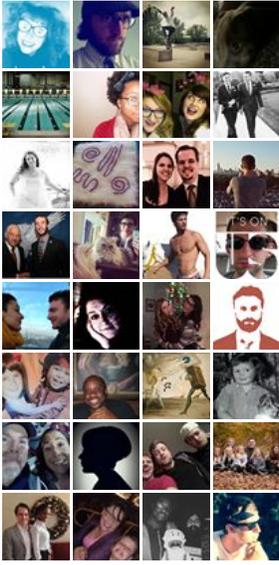
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