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**BOARD HEARS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE  
CONSOLIDATION AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS**

Huron, a Chicago-based consulting firm says the potential savings throughout Idaho’s higher education system over the next ten years could be as high as \$38 million through consolidation of certain services and functions, and optimization strategies at its four-year college and universities.

Huron delivered its report to the State Board of Education during its regular Board meeting today at Boise State University. Starting in September, Huron conducted an in-depth review of services and personnel at each institution in such functions as purchasing, information technology, and human resources.

The Board hired Huron to conduct the review as part of the recommendations made by Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter’s Higher Education Task Force, which met late last year. The one-time engagement was funded by the Legislature.

“This was a thorough study and report done in a very short period of time,” State Board President Dr. Linda Clark said. “Huron gave us good direction for how we can go about consolidating services. We as a Board need to study this further and work with policy makers to decide what the next steps should be.”

**Student Mental Health**

The Board also heard the presidents of all eight colleges and universities discuss student mental health concerns on their individual campuses calling it “a crisis” in Idaho and at institutions throughout the country.

The presidents described in detail how they are struggling to provide counseling resources to large numbers of students who are suffering primarily from anxiety and depression and how it is affecting academic performance and student retention.

“It is staggering to hear these reports from our presidents,” Dr. Clark said.

“Addressing this has to be a top priority for the Board and state policymakers.”

Board Vice President Debbie Critchfield, who this week [wrote an article on student mental health](#), will lead a series of workgroups, which will develop recommendations to bring back to the Board next spring.

### **Board Actions**

- Approved a common-course numbering list for general education courses to be used at all Idaho public colleges and universities
- Approved a Ph.D. program in Biomedical Engineering at Boise State University
- Approved an online Master of Arts in Spanish program at Idaho State University
- Approved a Master of Science in Computer Science program at Idaho State University
- Approved a Master Science in Clinical Psychopharmacology program at Idaho State University
- Approved a Master of Science in Nutrition program at Idaho State University
- Approved Lewis-Clark State College’s request to name its planned career-technical education center the Schweitzer Career & Technical Education Center. The center will be named for Edmund and Beatriz Schweitzer who pledged a total of \$3 million toward the project, scheduled for completion in fall 2020.
- Approved a new Faculty Senate Constitution at Idaho State University
- Sent a proposal to reduce college tuition fees for Native American students back to the Board’s Business Affairs and Human Resources Committee for further review. The proposal was put forward by the Idaho Indian Education Committee to make postsecondary education more affordable to native students who are members of Idaho’s five federally recommended tribes.

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