

## HOUSE REPUBLICAN STAFF ANALYSIS

Bill: HF 437/HSB 52	House Committee: <b>PASSED on 2/12/25 (7-4)</b>
Committee: Higher Education	House Floor: <b>PASSED on 3/18/25 (60-37)</b>
Floor Manager Representative Collins	Senate Floor: <b>PASSED on 4/15/25 (32-15)</b>
Date: February 12, 2025	Governor:
Staff: Kristin Rozeboom (1-3015)	

### Center of Intellectual Freedom Act

- Requires the University of Iowa to establish a Center of Intellectual Freedom within the college of liberal arts and sciences following the parameters laid out below.

### Section by Section Analysis

#### Section 1. Short Title

Act shall be known and may be cited as the Center of Intellectual Freedom Act.

#### Section 2. Section 263C.1 Definitions

“Board” means state Board of Regents.

“Center” means center of intellectual freedom.

“Regents institution” means institution specified in 262.7.

“University” means the State University of Iowa.

#### Section 3. Section 263C.2 Center for Intellectual Freedom-New Section

A center for intellectual freedom is established as an independent academic center within the university.

The center shall conduct teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society.

The board may name the school in accordance with any philanthropic naming policies or practice of the board or university.

#### Section 4. Section 263C.3 Functions of the Center—New Section

The school shall provide scholarship in all of the following subjects:

- The texts and major debates that form the intellectual foundation of free societies, especially that of the United States.
- The principles, ideals, and institutions of the American constitutional order.
- The foundations of responsible leadership and informed consent.

The center shall offer university-wide programming related to the values of free speech and civil discourse.

The center shall work to do all of the following:

- Expand the intellectual diversity of the university's academic community.
- Foster civic engagement among university students and faculty.
- Coordinate with the Center for Cyclone Civics at ISU and the Center for Civic Education at UNI to enable academic offerings that may be offered to students at any one of the Regents institutions either in person or online.

The center, in collaboration with any of the Regents institutions, may offer courses, develop certificates, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs and offer degrees.

The center shall offer at least one three semester credit hour course in American history and civil government. If a regents institution has established general education requirements for undergrad students that include an American heritage course requirement, the center shall ensure that the course satisfied that requirement. The center shall coordinate with the center for Cyclone Civics and the Center for Civic Education to ensure the course is offered to students at each Regents institution either in person or online.

#### Section 5. Section 263C.4 Bylaws-New Section

The center shall establish bylaws governing the center subject to the approval of the board. The bylaws shall include all of the following requirements, which shall take precedence over any other requirements:

1. The center shall educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth.
2. The center affirms its duty to equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind they need to reach their own informed conclusions on matters of social and political importance.
3. The center affirms the value of intellectual diversity in higher education and aspires to enhance the intellectual diversity of the university.
4. The center affirms a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the intellectual freedom of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and welcomes the differences of opinion that naturally exist in a public university community.

#### Section 6. Section 263C.5 Funding—Use—New Section

The center may accept and administer private and external donations and gifts.

Any moneys appropriated to the center, and any private and external donations to the center, shall be used only for the direct operation of the center.

Any additional funding required to operate the center shall be proportionally provided by the Regents institutions, subject to board approval.

#### Section 7. Section 263C.6 Center faculty—New Section

The University shall employ tenure-eligible faculty members to provide instruction through the center. The University shall incrementally increase the number to five faculty based on market research and student demand. Faculty members appointed to the center may hold joint appointments to other academic units of the university. Faculty members who are not affiliated with the center shall have no authority to approve, deny, or modify the terms of appointment of faculty to the school.

#### Section 8. Section 263C.7 Advisory Council—New Section

No later than December 31, 2025, the board shall appoint an advisory council for the center.

The board may appoint a minimum of 9 members to the council. A majority of the members appointed to the council shall constitute a quorum. No more than one member of the council may be an employee of the university.

The board shall determine the initial length of each member's term. A majority of the members initially appointed to the council shall serve terms of 4 years. The remaining initially appointed shall serve 2 years. The board shall appoint new members to fill vacancies on the council.

Section 9. Section 263C.8 Appointment of director—New Section

The advisory council shall conduct a nationwide search for candidates for the director of the center. The council shall adhere to all relevant state and federal laws in conducting the search. The council shall submit finalists for the position to the board. The board, upon approval of a candidate, shall appoint the candidate as director. Subsequent directors shall be chosen in the same way.

The director shall be eligible for tenure.

Section 10. Section 263.9 Duties of director—New Section

The director of the center shall have the sole and exclusive authority to manage the recruitment and hiring process and to extend offers for employment of all faculty and staff of the center and to terminate employment of all staff of the center.

The director shall conduct a market assessment to determine course demand, and the number of faculty required to meet any unmet needs for the center and may conduct additional market assessments as needed.

The director shall have the authority to invite guest speakers to the university on behalf of the center.

The director shall report directory to the board.

Section 11. Section 263C.10 Annual Report—New Section

Beginning in 2026, the director of the center shall submit an annual report to the Governor, the GA, and the Board of Regents by December 31. The report shall provide a full account of the center's achievements and shall identify any opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of the center.