March 8, 2017

Dear Iowa State Community:

With nearly 37,000 students and more than 6,000 faculty and staff, Iowa State is proud to educate and employ a diverse community. We understand that while diversity is an ongoing initiative, equity and inclusion truly promote opportunities for meaningful interaction and shared success. Accordingly, a welcoming and safe campus is paramount.

A key emphasis on diversity, inclusion, equity, and safety is embedded throughout the university’s new strategic plan, which launched last fall. Now that we have moved from plan development to full implementation, it is important that we assess the university’s current attitudes and behaviors on these issues. To that end, during the 2017-18 academic year Iowa State will undertake a vital and relevant campus climate assessment.

To ensure full transparency and to provide a more complete perspective, we have contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting to help lead this effort. Rankin & Associates has conducted over 170 campus climate assessment projects over the last 20 years, including Iowa State’s 2004 climate survey. As a result of that assessment, Iowa State adopted more than a dozen recommendations including:

- Creation of the Multicultural Student Center
- Creation of a university-level diversity committee
- Creation of the Ombuds office
- Training of departments and search committees on techniques for improving diversity in search processes
- Development of the Principles of Community

A team from Rankin & Associates is working with a committee of Iowa State students, staff, and faculty to develop and implement the new assessment, which will launch in the fall. The results will better enable us to develop programs and policies that will increase inclusivity and safety in areas which are shown to be problematic, as well as enhance and scale-up programs and policies in areas that are successfully meeting the needs of the community.

A climate project website is being developed to provide communication on the project process and results. We will share this site and additional information about the project as it is available.

I hope that you will join me in supporting this important project to enhance the university environment for all.

Sincerely,

Steven Leath
President