

March 20, 2020

Dear Iowa State Community,

During the past 150 years, Iowa State University has weathered many storms – wars, national crises, economic turmoil, social unrest and more. Throughout our history, Iowa State has responded with dedication, intelligence, compassion and purpose.

Today, the Iowa State Community faces a time of challenge against a new threat that requires us to make innumerable changes in our educational, research and practical operations in the coming weeks and months. I know we are up to this task.

Already I have seen our faculty and staff respond creatively and thoughtfully to a vast array of challenges as we make the important switch to virtual instruction for all courses on Monday. The energy, time and cooperation to make this transformational shift has been phenomenal. Thank you for your extraordinary response.

To our students, I know that this unprecedented situation is causing challenges for you and your families. Educationally, I encourage you to work with this new system in a constructive and understanding manner, while accepting that it may not be ideal for all classes and situations. Socially, we all need to understand our role – not spreading the virus, keeping our distance and elevating our community's needs above our own. Emotionally, it will challenge everyone. All the staff and offices in the student affairs and academic divisions including residence halls, dining, financial aid and more are working to resolve a daunting set of issues. For those who feel emotionally overwhelmed, [campus resources](#) continue to be available.

I want to express my appreciation for every corner of campus that has come together in new formations to tackle our challenges. The list is very long, but I wish to especially thank our police department and emergency operations personnel who have enlisted more than a dozen major working groups. Your efforts on an hourly basis in helping make decisions are incredibly important.

At this time, I ask everyone to be mindful of our need to adapt. Let's be ready to assist others who are overwhelmed by the unexpected growth in their duties, even though this may not be part of your formal job descriptions. If you have extra time – or can make extra time – find a place or situation where you can help lighten the load for others. I encourage everyone to maintain your composure and show compassion for all affected and stressed by these unprecedented events.

In the coming weeks, ISU will live our new branding campaign, *"Innovate at Iowa State,"* as we work to maintain our historic standards of excellence in teaching, research, and extension and outreach. This will require everyone's cooperation, creativity and constructive intent. Working together, with an innovation mindset, we will succeed.

While this state of affairs is less than ideal, Iowa State is committed to making the best of a difficult situation for the good of our students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. It will not be easy and it will not be without sacrifice. But I am committed to moving Iowa State University forward in the best interest of our institution and those who depend on it.

Thank you all for your efforts to create a safe environment for our campus and larger community. I am counting on everyone to do their part as we weather this storm – for Cyclone Nation.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wintersteen  
President