

June 18, 2020

Dear Iowa State Community,

In 2002, Gov. Tom Vilsack signed legislation recognizing Juneteenth in Iowa, known as Juneteenth National Freedom Day. A [Juneteenth celebration](#) will be held here in Ames tomorrow afternoon. Virtual celebrations in Des Moines are being held by the Iowa Juneteenth Observance and can be found at www.iowajuneteenth.org.

Historically, Juneteenth refers to the date, June 19, 1865, when the Union General Gordon Granger arrived by boat with a regiment of soldiers and announced to the citizens of Galveston, Texas, that "...all slaves are free."

Although the Emancipation Proclamation had formally freed all slaves almost two and a half years earlier, and the American Civil War had largely ended with the defeat of the Confederate States in April, Texas was the most remote of the slave states, with a low presence of Union troops, so knowledge of the proclamation had been slow and inconsistent.

Juneteenth is a day of celebration. It is also a time to reflect on the work that still needs to be done here at Iowa State and across the nation to address the racism and prejudice experienced by the Black community. In addition to the celebrations that will take place this weekend, the past week has provided excellent opportunities to reflect, listen, and learn.

- Student Government hosted a social justice forum on Tuesday afternoon. I was pleased to join Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Reg Stewart, Dean of Students Sharron Evans, Chief of Police Michael Newton, Student Government President Morgan Fritz and Black Student Alliance President India Robinson for a discussion on social justice issues and the Black experience. A recording is available [here](#).
- Vice President Stewart also moderated a panel discussion on policing and justice with Chief Newton and Ames Police Chief Charles Cychosz on June 11. This panel was hosted by the Ames chapter of the NAACP and a recording is available [here](#).
- The Office of Diversity and Inclusion held a Campus Conversation, "What should I do? White action and accountability to combat anti-blackness and systems-based racism." Nearly 400 faculty and staff participated in the event yesterday. I

appreciated the candid and insightful comments from the panelists and creating a space to take an introspective look at how we can and must do better.

I am grateful to our students, faculty, staff, and community partners who coordinated these events. These conversations are an important step towards greater understanding and reflect the open dialogue upheld in ISU's [Principles of Community](#). I encourage everyone to educate yourself about these issues of racial injustice and the Black Lives Matter movement, then use your understanding to help improve our campus and community. Even the message from a protestor's poster might help shed some light: *"We said, Black Lives Matter. Never said, Only Black Lives Matter. We know, all lives matter. We just need your help with #BlackLivesMatter for Black Lives are in Danger."*

Wendy Wintersteen
President

In addition to the recordings above, please consider these other educational resources:

- Office of Diversity and Inclusion [Educational Tools](#)
- University Library [Juneteenth Guide](#)
- Iowa Department of Human Rights [History of Juneteenth](#)
- Iowa Juneteenth [Observance](#)