January 11, 2016

Dear Iowa State students:

Happy New Year and welcome back to campus! I hope you had a wonderful winter break and took some time to relax, recharge, and reflect.

As we start the new semester, I’d like to reflect on some of the major efforts we initiated in the fall, and talk about how we are moving Iowa State forward.

**Social Media and communication.** I am now on Twitter in an effort to enhance communication with the university community. My twitter handle is [@IASTATE_Pres](https://twitter.com/IASTATE_Pres) with tweets from me, personally, as well as my office. I encourage you to follow me for university news, updates, and announcements. In addition, I encourage you to regularly check the [Info for Students](https://www.iastate.edu/student) webpage for news you should know.

**VEISHEA alternatives.** The Spring Event Planning Committee submitted a proposal for new events and activities following the end of Veishea. Pursuant to the committee’s charge to identify new ways to showcase the university, I have approved the implementation of the following events this spring:

- Celebration in February featuring the sale of cherry pies integrated with other Valentine's Day activities.
- Celebration of arts in April in conjunction with Cyclone Market.

The following events will be implemented next academic year:

- Student-led community service project.
- Parade and college showcase.
- Event to welcome students back to campus for the start of spring semester.

I want to thank the Spring Event Planning Committee, which consisted of faculty and students, for their thoughtful recommendations. Student Government is now spearheading the implementation of these new events and activities.

**Lincoln Way pedestrian safety.** University and city of Ames officials are reviewing pedestrian traffic along Lincoln Way to evaluate possible safety improvements following the [hit and run death](https://www.iastate.edu/student) of an Iowa State student in December. The university is also working with Student Government to identify new safety strategies. Ames Police are still investigating and ask that anyone with information contact them at 515-239-5133, or the anonymous tip line at 515-239-5533.

**Senior Vice President for Student Affairs finalists.** The search for the successor to Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Tom Hill has been narrowed to three finalists. They are:

- Martino Harmon, associate vice president for student affairs, Iowa State University
• Lori Reesor, vice president for student affairs, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks
• Al Thompson, vice chancellor for student affairs and chief diversity officer, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point.

Campus forums have been scheduled to allow the university community a chance to meet each finalist. The public forum schedule is:
• Reesor: Monday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m., Pioneer Room
• Thompson: Monday, Feb. 1, 9 a.m., Campanile Room
• Harmon: Wednesday, Feb. 3, 9 a.m., Pioneer Room

Strategic Plan. We launched the planning and development of our new Strategic Plan. This plan will position Iowa State for excellence over the next six years in academics, research, service, economic development, and the overall student experience while embracing diversity and inclusion in all facets of our mission. I want to thank the members of the six subcommittees who are assisting in the development of actions and metrics to support the plan. I am very pleased that a number of students are highly engaged in this process. A draft strategic plan is due mid-semester to allow the university community plenty of time to provide feedback before the final plan is submitted to me June 1, 2016.

Responding to racism and discrimination. We gained a deeper understanding of how racism and discrimination are affecting our campus. My Nov. 20 email to the university outlined a number of steps we are taking to create a safer, more inclusive, and more welcoming environment for all. Dr. Reginald Stewart began his role as our first vice president for diversity and inclusion and is meeting with students, faculty, and staff to identify other ways we can better support diversity and inclusion on campus. You can reach Dr. Stewart by email: rstewart@iastate.edu or phone: 294-8775.

Campus Climate Survey. We received the results of the Association of American Universities (AAU) Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey. This survey revealed how sexual assault is impacting our campus and identified areas for improvement to help end these crimes and support survivors. A national search is underway for a new permanent director of the Office of Equal Opportunity. Mary Howell Sirna is acting interim director. She can be reached by email: eodirector@iastate.edu or phone: 294-7612.

Student Health Center improvements. We named a permanent director for Thielen Student Health Center. Erin Baldwin assumed her role Jan. 4 and will continue the evaluation and implementation of recommendations made as a result of the Keeling & Associates assessment to improve student care as well as the overall operation of the health center.

As we start a new year and a new semester, I encourage you to work hard, get involved, and take advantage of the great opportunities Iowa State has to offer. Best wishes for a successful semester and Go Cyclones!

Sincerely,

Steven Leath
President
@IASTATE_Pres