

Iowa State University
2022-2031 Strategic Plan
REVISED DRAFT as of January 29, 2025

Iowa State University comprises a community of students, faculty, and staff who constantly strive to understand our world, impart new knowledge, and solve the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. Our identity as a leading science and technology land-grant university requires us to think innovatively about strategic planning and develop a framework that focuses our future endeavors.

Dynamic and different, the Iowa State University Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2031 was designed specifically to move us forward to achieving what Iowa State truly plans to be in the future. It prepares the university for capturing continuous input, for proving our agility in taking advantage of new opportunities and for sharing our stories of innovation and progress. That’s why the plan takes a longer view — nine years — comprising three-year segments.

Mission

Iowa State University will create, share, and apply knowledge to make our students, Iowa, and the world better.

Vision

Iowa State University will advance the land-grant ideals of putting science, technology, and human creativity to work.

Values

Iowa State University embraces the values of our Principles of Community* (Respect, Purpose, Cooperation, Richness of Diversity, Freedom from Discrimination, Honest and Respectful Expression of Ideas) and the values of Access, Excellence, and Integrity.

**Developed through a Student Government-led effort that began in 2005, the Principles of Community were formally approved by President Gregory Geoffroy in 2007.*

Our Statements of Aspiration

Five aspirational statements define what Iowa State University desires to be and how the university plans to position itself over the next nine years. These “to be” statements will drive an ongoing strategic process of evaluation and investment. What Iowa State University wants to be will compel what Iowa State does — to take action to move us closer to our aspirations. In nine years, Iowa State University strives:

To be the most student-centric leading research university

~~To be the university that cultivates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where students, faculty and staff flourish~~

REVISED: To be the university that cultivates a welcoming and respectful environment where all students, faculty and staff flourish

To be the university that fosters lifelong learning

To be the university that creates opportunities and forges new frontiers

To be the trusted partner for proactive and innovative solutions

Our Pillars

Four pillars encompass the themes of acknowledged university areas of excellence. These strengths are ingrained in the daily work and lives of our faculty, staff, and students, and have been proven time and again throughout Iowa State University's history. Intersected and interwoven throughout the pillars are our land-grant university hallmarks of teaching, research, service, and extension. Most importantly, the pillars give structure and direction on how we make a difference for our state and world in the years ahead. By leveraging these strengths, we will make progress fulfilling our "to be" statements.

Innovative Solutions. Innovation, creativity, and an entrepreneurial attitude will inspire the curriculum, decision making and outlook for Iowa State University. We will bring forth expertise, technologies, novel perspectives, and ideas. By striving to bring a creative mindset and unique solutions to the grand challenges of our local and global communities, ISU will be recognized for its distinctive approach to environmental, social, economic, and cultural sustainability, and meeting the needs of society with integrity.

Education Experience. Promoting an excellent educational experience focused on student engagement, knowledge growth, transformative educational opportunities, and access to a ~~diverse, inclusive, and welcoming~~ educational environment will create a strong foundation for success and prosperity for a well-educated graduate with life-long relationships to Iowa State University.

REVISED: **Education Experience.** Promoting an excellent educational experience focused on student engagement, knowledge growth, transformative educational opportunities, and access to a welcoming and supportive educational environment will create a strong foundation for success and prosperity for a well-educated graduate with life-long relationships to Iowa State University.

Community Engagement. Through active participation in and partnership with the local, state, and global communities, Iowa State University advances its land-grant mission to serve society by engaging our stakeholders to understand and address their needs and challenges.

Knowledge and Discovery. We will enhance our understanding of our universe and ourselves and create and discover new methods, pedagogies, thought processes, and knowledge. Through deep

analysis, research, and collaboration, we will bring forth new technologies, science, perspectives, and ideas to benefit a changing world.

Our Dynamic Process

Built into the nine-year plan is an innovative process to regularly assess where we stand, infuse new ideas, and respond to a dynamic state, nation, and world landscape. A new Director of Strategic Initiatives will report to the President and will oversee our strategic process, which provides a mechanism for input, reflection, evaluation, review, and decision-making on investments in strategic projects.

This dynamic approach that engages both our campus community and external stakeholders will facilitate how we thoughtfully work to achieve what we aspire “to be.” Our process will gather input that will guide planning, prioritization, evaluation, and measurement of success on an annual basis throughout the strategic plan. Strategic project ideas will be solicited and evaluated based on how they align with the university’s priorities, thematic pillars, “to be” statements, and success factors. Progress and successes will be communicated to the Iowa State stakeholders, where input will be gathered, and the process repeats anew.

Our Success Factors

Tracking progress on our “to be” statements will involve measuring success factors for each and creating consonance with university investment strategies. For each statement, the university will track metrics that align with the broader priorities and specific objectives in the Iowa Board of Regents’ 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, as well as success factors unique to the programs at Iowa State. A table of specific goals and metrics is found in Appendix 1.

A. TO BE THE MOST STUDENT-CENTRIC LEADING RESEARCH UNIVERSITY.

A.1 Retention and graduation rates

Iowa State will monitor graduation and retention rates for our students, with goals to increase first to second year retention for all students ~~and to close the gaps of graduation rates for traditionally underrepresented students.~~

REVISED: Iowa State will monitor graduation and retention rates with goals to increase first to second-year retention and to improve graduation rates for all students.

A.2 Students participate in high-impact practices

The education experiences of our students will be enhanced by expanding and tracking access to high-impact practices and increasing the access to and participation in those practices by all students.

A.3 Accessibility and affordability

Accessibility and affordability will be monitored by tracking the average student loan debt and the percent of students who graduate with debt. Increasing accessibility for low-income families will

be achieved by increasing scholarship funding through proactive fundraising. Tactical tools such as increasing the use of open educational resources and completion grants will be evaluated.

B. TO BE THE UNIVERSITY THAT CULTIVATES A ~~DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE~~ ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF FLOURISH.

REVISED: B. TO BE THE UNIVERSITY THAT CULTIVATES A WELCOMING AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF FLOURISH.

B.1 ~~Faculty, staff and student demographics~~: Access to excellence

~~Aligned with A.1, the university will take action to recruit a diverse student body and track and examine demographic gaps. The university also will take actions to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff, and track and examine demographic gaps.~~

REVISED: B.1 Student, faculty and staff recruitment: Access to excellence

The university will recruit talented students, faculty and staff who enhance the university's teaching, research and extension missions by contributing diverse intellectual and philosophical perspectives.

B.2 ~~Faculty, staff and student~~ retention: Success

~~Aligned with A.1, the university will monitor student, staff, and faculty demographics, develop professional training and development programs for employee career advancement, promote safe and inclusive learning and working spaces, and attract and retain world-class faculty and staff. Specifically, gaps in one-year retention rates for underrepresented students will be monitored with a goal to reduce the gap by 40%.~~

REVISED: B.2 Student, faculty and staff retention: Success

Aligned with A.1, the university will improve the retention of all students through a holistic approach that identifies and addresses students' individual needs to help them persist to graduation. The university will enhance professional training and development programs for employee career advancement, promote supportive learning and workplace safety to retain world-class faculty and staff.

B.3 Campus ~~climate~~

The university will ~~regularly assess and report on~~ the campus climate for different populations in ~~our campus community through regular~~ surveys and other relevant tools. ~~In addition,~~ long-standing participation in the COACHE survey ~~to assess faculty well-being will continue.~~

REVISED: B.3 Campus experience

The university will monitor the campus experience by assessing and reporting on employee engagement and well-being through surveys and other relevant tools such as long-standing participation in the COACHE survey.

B.4 Faculty/staff salaries

Faculty salaries will continue to be tracked and compared to peers. Staff salaries will be reviewed through conventional market-based benchmarks through University Human Resources.

C. TO BE THE UNIVERSITY THAT FOSTERS LIFELONG LEARNING.

C.1 Expand online learning environment

Iowa State will deliberately expand online programs to meet student, industry, and state needs in partnership with our strategic industry partners and our community partners statewide. The goal is to increase online enrollment by 30% and develop new degrees or credentials to meet workforce needs.

C.2 Learning across Iowa

As a commitment to service to Iowans and our Community Engagement thematic pillar, Iowa State will continue to monitor and enhance its learning opportunities across the state by tracking and reporting outcomes of our Extension and Outreach, continuing education, and professional development programs, and ~~growing access to those programs in underserved communities.~~

REVISED: As a commitment to service to Iowans and our Community Engagement thematic pillar, Iowa State will continue to monitor and enhance its learning opportunities across the state by tracking and reporting outcomes of our Extension and Outreach, continuing education, and professional development programs, and increasing service efforts to provide opportunities for underserved populations.

C.3 Continued learning by ISU graduates

Complementing the online, C.1, and extension education, C.2, efforts, Iowa State will track continuing education needs and opportunities for alumni, early engagement of pre-baccalaureate students, and certificate/badging participation of nondegree seeking professionals.

C.4 Engaging new students/student pipelines

Iowa State students, past, present, and future, expect excellence and innovation in their education experiences. New student pipelines will be created as programs expand to meet demand.

C.5 Enhancing ISU human capital through career development

Enabling our campus community to flourish with lifelong learning and professional development for faculty and staff will be regularly assessed, and new opportunities will be developed.

D. TO BE THE UNIVERSITY THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES AND FORGES NEW FRONTIERS.

D.1 Innovation in curriculum

Iowa State is committed to providing innovations in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or field, whether in person or through other delivery mechanisms. Iowa State will develop new curricula, expand entrepreneurship opportunities, and extend the impact of research.

D.2 Innovation and entrepreneurship

Knowledge and discovery feed the innovations that lead to solutions for global challenges. Faculty and students will be encouraged to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship, and student enrollment ~~will be tracked~~.

REVISED: Knowledge and discovery feed the innovations that lead to solutions for global challenges. Faculty and students will be encouraged to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship, and student enrollment in classes and programs will be tracked.

D.3 Research impact

Research funding is one metric for gauging impact; targets include increasing research expenditures by 3% per year. Iowa State also measures research impact by tracking new intellectual property disclosures, patents filed, and licensing revenues that are generated annually.

D.4 Organizational excellence

Organizational excellence will be met through the university's capital planning process, assessment of stakeholder engagements for improvement, and reprioritization of efforts based on the annual input process built into the strategic plan.

E. TO BE THE TRUSTED PARTNER FOR PROACTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS.

E.1 Collaborative research initiatives

Iowa State will monitor and report on collaborative and large-grant funding growth, industry partner expansion, the engagement with external partners and our core research facilities, and the key partnerships built in each Iowa county through Extension and Outreach offices.

E.2 Impact of partnerships

Iowa State prides itself on its partnerships, whether through the engagement of communities across Iowa through Extension and Outreach, engagement of industries in our region, or through collaborations formed with Ames Laboratory, the Regents' universities, and other researchers around the globe. Iowa State will grow its industry-funded projects and its strategic partners. Innovative solutions for industry partners also include current and future workforce development through education experiences and expanding our partnerships in the Iowa State University Research Park and through our other economic development programs.