

# STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD AND GREEN**

At Iowa State University, fostering connections among students, faculty and staff is essential for a fluidly functional campus and an enriching experience for everyone.

With so much happening on campus, it can often seem overwhelming to find ways to connect and feel a sense of belonging amid the daily hustle and bustle. Therefore, it is crucial to cultivate a sense of harmony both on campus and within the wider community.

Harmony is about collaboration, sharing ideas and supporting one another. Students are a crucial link in the cultivation and nourishment of a harmonious experience here at Iowa State. Through campus-wide ambassadorial programs and initiatives, involving both student organizations and colleges, the breadth and depth of this commitment is vibrant.

## **Cultivating Cultural Communities**

The foundation of harmony encompasses a culmination of diverse backgrounds, unique experiences and various perspectives. To cultivate a world rooted in understanding, it is essential for individuals to connect, share experiences and ensure mutual support.

Iowa State University is proud to be a global community, welcoming students from all over the world. According to the Office of the Registrar, [2,878 international students](#) were enrolled in the fall 2024 semester, representing 9.5% of students.

## **Cultural Ambassadors Program**

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) is dedicated to ensuring that these students receive the social, cultural and personal support they need to thrive during their time at Iowa State University.

One of the key initiatives in fostering this support and connection is the Cultural Ambassadors Program (CAP).

“The Cultural Ambassadors Program aims to bridge the gap between international and U.S. students, fostering cross-cultural connections,” said Jenna Haffner, International Student Engagement Coordinator. “Every student has a unique story to share, and I’m honored that ISSO can provide a platform through CAP for them to do so.”

To foster connection and social sustainability, CAP participants are put into groups of 6-8 students at the beginning of the year. Within these groups, students bond over their shared interests, learn about each other’s cultures and build lasting friendships.



Photo Courtesy of the Cultural Ambassadors Program

As noted by one CAP participant, “Meeting intercultural students at such a large university can be challenging. It’s refreshing to have a dedicated space to come together with a purpose.” Haffner added, “These hangouts are designed to help build connections in groups and explore ISU/Ames! In the past, students have played badminton together, tried new restaurants, gone to CyBowl, attended cultural events and more.”



Photo Courtesy of Cultural Ambassadors Program

Beyond building campus connections, CAP also encourages students to give back to the Ames community. Every year, CAP participants contribute to local service projects, such as creating tie blankets for [ACCESS](#) (Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support) or supporting the Cards for Hospitalized Kids program – providing cards on a local and national level.

Through these efforts, CAP not only fosters harmony among program participants at Iowa State

but also strengthens ties with the surrounding community. For more information about how to get involved and to learn about the group's mission, visit the [Cultural Ambassador Program](#) website.

### **International Student Ambassadors Club**

Another student organization that connects students and offers opportunities to make cultural connections is the International Student Ambassadors Club (ISAC). The group's mission is to make the transition from home countries to Iowa State University as smooth as possible for international students.



Photo Courtesy of the International Student Ambassadors Club

"The club provides a welcoming space where students from diverse backgrounds can connect with each other, share experiences, and find a sense of belonging among peers who understand their journey" said ISAC president, Victoria Comar.

ISAC accomplishes this by pairing incoming international students with current Iowa State students from their home countries. ISAC is not just a resource to connect members, the organization also strives to strengthen connection for the collective international community at Iowa State.



Photo Courtesy of the International Student Ambassadors Club

ISAC is committed to promoting social sustainability and creating an environment where a variety of backgrounds can be experienced and celebrated. Students grow to appreciate multiple cultures through engagement activities; including cultural trivia, collaborative playlists and fun presentations.

"An event I really love is our end-of-semester potluck," said Comar. "Everyone brings food from their home country, and it's a way we found to showcase our culture to each other." Through these events, ISAC creates a space where everyone feels celebrated.

There are many ways for students to get involved in ISAC. The organization welcomes students from all backgrounds

who are passionate about global awareness. Students can either attend activities as a participant or run for leadership positions on the executive board, with elections being held April 24.

For more information about how to get involved and to learn more about the group's mission, visit the [ISAC page](#) on the Iowa State University Student Organization Database website.

### **Achieving Goals**

Ambassadors also play a pivotal role in fostering harmony by helping individuals facilitate the essential connections needed to achieve their professional goals. At Iowa State University, students, faculty and staff alike are continually striving to reach new heights in their work and professional pursuits.

### **Undergraduate Research Ambassadors**

Iowa State is renowned for its groundbreaking research contributions across diverse fields, and its unwavering support for students pursuing their passions and interests.

The Undergraduate Research Ambassadors Program plays a key role in this effort, connecting undergraduate students with researchers across various departments and disciplines through enrichment opportunities, volunteering and social events. A newly established organization at Iowa State, the Undergraduate Research Ambassadors program dedicated to fostering a vibrant



research community. Advocating for undergraduate research across all disciplines, the program helps create an inclusive and collaborative environment.



Photo Courtesy of the Undergraduate Research Ambassadors club

“By bringing together researchers with diverse backgrounds and experiences, we foster a community where meaningful conversations about life, work, and recreation thrive, all within the context of undergraduate research,” said Bradyn Weaver, co-president of the Undergraduate Research Ambassadors.

This collaborative approach not only enhances the research experience of students but also empowers them to engage in transformative learning and allows them to participate in important work that helps create a broader academic community, but also a more sustainable future.

“As an organization of scientists, sustainability is always a key component of our students’ research,” said Weaver. “Coming

from a variety of research disciplines, our members are engaged in work that spans environmental, economic, and social sustainability.”

The Undergraduate Research Ambassadors are always looking to add new members and are excited to invite students to an upcoming Research Show-and-Tell event, happening April 24. This event will offer undergraduate students the opportunity to explore research initiatives led by their peers, engage in meaningful discussions and enjoy complimentary pizza.

For more information about how to get involved and to learn about the group’s mission, visit the [Undergraduate Research Ambassadors page](#) on the Iowa State University Student Organization Database website.



Photo Courtesy of the Undergraduate Research Ambassadors club

### Honors Student Board

Another group helping students reach their academic goals is the Honors Student Board. The Honors Program at Iowa State

University allows students to participate in research, additional class projects and create individualized education plans.

To ensure that students are getting the most out of their experience, the Honors Students Board provides opportunities and programming for students and staff as well as opportunities to give feedback to the Honors committee, faculty and staff.

These opportunities foster harmony by encouraging active communication, inclusivity and shared responsibility. “By encouraging student involvement in decision-making processes, we empower individuals to contribute to the overall well-being of our program,” said Frances Jackson, Honors Student Board president.

The Honors Student Board incorporates sustainability into everything they do. Through their inclusive and collaborative



Photo Courtesy of the Honors Student Board

programming, they help build social sustainability through connections between students, faculty and staff. By advocating for student representation, they also ensure that resources are allocated effectively, contributing to economic sustainability.

These efforts create a harmonized and sustainable environment where honors students are able to thrive and receive the support they need to reach their goals. "The Honors Student Board contributes to sustainability by fostering a culture of academic, social, and personal well-being," said Jackson.



Photo Courtesy of the Honors Student Board

Taking part in the Honors Student Board is an opportunity available through involvement in the Honors Program. Learn about applying for membership in the Honors Program by visiting the Division of Academic Affairs [Honors Program](#) Webpage.

### **Nurturing Involvement**

In addition to campus connections, ambassadors and student representatives play a vital role in the communities they serve by encouraging individuals to engage and participate in

meaningful opportunities. For a community to thrive, nurturing an environment that motivates new activities, ideas and connections, while still celebrating cherished traditions is essential.

### **Student Alumni Leadership Council**

The Student Alumni Leadership Council (SALC), a student organization partnered with the Iowa State University Alumni Association, exemplifies this role. SALC organizes and hosts key events that celebrate and strengthen Iowa State's rich traditions and spirit, such as Homecoming, Senior Week, State Day and the Cyclone Alley spirit section during basketball season.

"We believe this creates opportunities for connecting everyone on campus back to the roots of Iowa State, putting in place something everyone across campus can find common connection in" said SALC advisor, Clarissa Boyd.

The organization not only helps get students engaged in Iowa State activities but serves as a great way for its members to develop important skills.

"SALC has been a supportive community for me to develop my leadership skills and be involved in Iowa State's campus. Being a part of Cyclone Alley and sharing my passion for Iowa State Athletics has been a highlight of my time at Iowa State!" shared Sydney Nordness, SALC's Cyclone Alley co-director.

Through careful event planning, SALC promotes inclusivity by considering the diverse interests of the student body while preserving the core elements of Iowa State.

According to Mackenzy Ruff, SALC president, "SALC provides students with the unique opportunity to unite across all majors and colleges in support of something we all hold dear: Cyclone traditions!"



Photo Courtesy of the Student Alumni Leadership Council

This is achieved not only by reaching out to current students but also by collaborating closely with the ISU Alumni Association, ensuring a bridge between students and alumni that connects them to their shared roots at Iowa State University.

SALC is also committed to practicing economic and environmental sustainability. "The large scale events we put on can create a need for a lot of resources including money, time and space," said Boyd. "Some



of the ways we have created an impact have been financial and environmental sustainability.”

The organization partners with student government during Homecoming planning to implement a spending audit, leading to more accurate funding requests and allowing funds to be redirected to other student organizations. This thoughtful budgeting has also contributed to a reduction in waste from unnecessary purchases.

By blending tradition with sustainability, SALC strengthens both the Iowa State community and the environment. Their work fosters lasting connections, celebrates shared values and ensures that Cyclone traditions continue to thrive for generations to come.



Photo Courtesy of the Student Alumni Leadership Council

To learn more about the mission of SALC and the role of its student representatives on campus, visit the [SALC page](#) on the Iowa State University Student Organization Database website.

### **Connecting with Colleges**

In addition to the harmonious connections offered through student organizations, there are several student representatives in the colleges across Iowa State University that also offer help, encouragement and provide collaboration opportunities between their peers.

Initiatives representing the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Ivy College of Business and the College of Engineering highlight some of the impressive harmonious connections offered through the college experience at Iowa State.

### **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

The CALS Ambassador Program at Iowa State University aims to recruit and support prospective students interested in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). The program provides personalized campus tours, engages with high school and FFA members and represents CALS at events like Admitted Students Day, CALS Advantage Days and the Iowa FFA Convention.

The program fosters a harmonious environment by ensuring that prospective students feel valued and supported, helping them gain a sense of belonging within the CALS community.

Current CALS ambassadors Julia Biehl, Kathleen Zahm and Viviana Ruby fondly remember

their initial encounters with the program, which inspired them to apply for positions.

The support of ambassadors allows students to grow in confidence within their academic careers and make the most of their experience while a CALS student at Iowa State.

When reflecting on the impact ambassadors play, Zahm shared, “Before coming to Iowa State, I was able to meet with ambassadors from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and talk with them about life at ISU. Knowing how big of an impact those meetings had on my decision to come to Iowa State, I knew I wanted to make an impact on students like that...”

Biehl remembered the impact of CALS ambassadors on her decision to attend Iowa State as well. “When I first visited Iowa State, an ambassador gave me a tour, which played a huge role in my decision to attend ISU. Their knowledge and willingness to share their experiences made me feel excited about the opportunities in CALS,” she noted.

CALS ambassadors also commit themselves to helping the families of prospective students as they navigate their loved ones beginning their academic journeys. They achieve this by outreach during times such as CALS Advantage Day. “I am especially proud of CALS Advantage Day because it allowed us to be able to interact with

families in a more personal way,” said Ruby. “The choice of college is difficult for not only the student but the entire families, worrying about not only academics but college life as well.”



Photo Courtesy of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Speaking about other events CALS ambassadors put together, Zahm shared about the work of their committees to create more opportunities to engage with students “We have recently reinstated group socials, like our bowling events that took place a couple of weeks ago,” she said. “When our ambassadors come together, we can work together inside and outside of our events.”

These events allow members to connect and create a welcoming, harmonious and inclusive environment that extends to the students they interact with. Events like these demonstrate the program’s commitment to fostering a community with a foundation in social sustainability.

“CALS Ambassadors contribute to social sustainability by creating connections between prospective students, current students, faculty and professionals,” said Biehl.

“By creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, we help students find their place within the CALS community and find the support and resources they need to succeed.”

Ruby agreed, “I feel very proud of the work of CALS ambassadors are doing to contribute to social sustainability. We bring groups together and show how the individual traits and abilities of each person contributes to that group. We encourage students to embrace their talents and use them to continue adding to the sustainable work of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.”



Photo Courtesy of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

To learn more about the mission and work of the CALS Ambassador Program, visit the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) website.

### **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) also provides a program to help students on their academic journeys through the LAS Ambassadors. Their primary

goal is to provide a student perspective on programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) at Iowa State.

For LAS Ambassadors Julia Pedroza and Emma Peters, one of the most important parts of their role is emphasizing the importance of each individual student within the Iowa State community, ensuring that prospective students feel welcomed and valued.

“Showing how harmonious Iowa State’s community is an essential part of our roles as LAS ambassadors,” said Peters. “For many, the idea of going to a large university like Iowa State can be very intimidating. So, as ambassadors, we want to show just how important and recognized each individual person is to us and all of Iowa State.” The team shared their experiences



Photo Courtesy of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

as current students to help prospective students visualize their own success at Iowa State. “Throughout my time as a student, I have become extremely passionate about Iowa State University and all it has to offer



its students. I truly love Iowa State. So, I have tried to find opportunities that allow me to show how great Iowa State is and how they can also thrive here.



Photo Courtesy of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

One of these amazing opportunities has been being an LAS Ambassador,” said Peters. Pedroza agreed, “I’ve always been passionate about diversity and community building, and this program allows me to work alongside like-minded individuals to ensure that all students feel welcomed, supported, and represented in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.”

LAS ambassadors also believe an important part of their role is to encourage students to make the most responsible and sustainable decisions not only for themselves, but their community and the world around them.

“By providing incoming students with the information they need to make informed decisions, whether about academics, extracurriculars or campus culture, we can help

guide them to be environmentally and socially responsible as they navigate their college experience,” Pedroza shared.

To learn more about the work and mission of the LAS Ambassador Program on campus, visit the [Student Experiences page](#) on the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences website.

### **Ivy College of Business**

Peer mentors are another example of roles students play in creating harmony on campus. In the Ivy College of Business, the Business Learning Teams program offers a learning community for first year and transfer students as part of the required classes BUSAD 1020 and BUSAD 1030.

As part of the course curriculum, new Ivy College of Business members are paired with other students who are further along in their academic journeys to help provide guidance as they navigate their start.

Current Business Learning Teams peer mentors, Claudia Zimmerman and Leah Channell, shared that they see this program creating harmony through the personal connections students can make both in an academic setting and outside of the classroom, and wanted to be a part of making the experience happen for others.

“I was interested in Business Learning Teams because I wanted to help the new students at Ivy,” said Zimmerman. “When I was a freshman, I was very nervous

about the unknowns of college, and my peer mentor really helped me feel more comfortable with the big transition.”

Channell reflected on her experience with peer mentors as well. “I think having that connection with another student made me feel more heard about any hesitations I had. I wanted to pass that on to other students, especially since I know how challenging or intimidating it can be, having been in their shoes.”



Photo Courtesy of Business Learning Teams

Students can meet with their peer mentor multiple times throughout the semester and connect with peer mentors and other business students on a personal, socially sustainable level through activities such as their annual sand volleyball tournament at the beginning of each school year.

“It allows new students and peer mentors to meet each other and become more familiar with their groups or with other students from other sections” Channell said. “It helps to build connections

and allows students to recognize more familiar faces as many of them are in the same classes.”



Photo Courtesy of Business Learning Teams

Zimmerman agreed, “We invite all peer mentors and mentees to this event to foster connections in a non-academic setting. Teams are randomly made, with a combination of both mentors and mentees, so it’s a great way to connect with a variety of people.” For more information about the mission and work of Business Learning Teams, visit the [Ivy College of Business](#) website.

**College of Engineering TEAM** (The Engineering Ambassador and Mentor Program) is a student organization in the College of Engineering dedicated to promoting the college to prospective students. Their mission is to showcase Iowa State’s engineering programs and resources through various initiatives and projects.

Responsibilities include providing campus tours, participating in recruitment events and supporting STEM outreach programs. They aim to represent and highlight the unique opportunities available within the College of Engineering.

TEAM is an inherently collaborative-based club, where all activities and events involve contributions from multiple students. TEAM ambassadors Jaclyn Kowall and Matt Ostergard shared that no task is ever completed alone.



Photo Courtesy of TEAM

“We are an inherently collaboration-based club in all facets of what our student organization does,” said Ostergard. “TEAM promotes harmony in utilizing these principles to provide the level of engagement we have with future engineers and other visitors looking to learn more about ISU through our work.”

Kowall added, “Harmony is integrated in all TEAM activities and initiatives by having people from all different engineering majors constantly involved. We think it is important to see all the different perspectives from within the college by having voices from a variety of majors.”



Photo Courtesy of TEAM

Mentors take great pride in fostering social sustainability by helping students find the right career path for them. “We promote social sustainability by attempting to make sure future engineering students are choosing majors that set them up to have careers that they are happy in and can succeed in,” Kowall shared. “By doing what we can to educate students about their options within the College of Engineering we are trying to help them pick a major that is the best for them.”

By including voices from various disciplines, TEAM ensures that prospective students and visitors receive a well-rounded view of ISU and its offerings. “Being able to assist in showcasing ISU and its resources has been extremely



rewarding and it has encouraged me to be more active in the organization and involved on campus..." said Ostergard.

This collaborative approach fosters deeper engagement, allowing all members to share their unique experiences and insights, enriching the learning environment for future engineers and those seeking to learn more about the university.

To learn more about the mission of TEAM and the role of its ambassadors on campus, visit the [TEAM page](#) on the Iowa State University Student Organization Database website.

The spirit of collaboration, inclusivity and support is at the heart of what makes Iowa State University such a harmonious and welcoming community. Through the efforts of student ambassadors and representatives across various programs, connections are formed that transcend backgrounds and foster a sense of belonging.

As these organizations and initiatives continue to nurture connection and enhance the community, they help ensure that every student feels supported, heard and valued, creating an environment where goals can be pursued and achieved together.

