STUDENTS LIVING CARDINAL, GOLD AND GREEN

Building a More Sustainable Campus

As students return to campus each fall, Iowa State University begins to gain new life. Buildings fill up with people, the walkways buzz with activity and the grounds take on the familiar rhythm of a new semester. But the campus environment students experience on a day-to-day basis does not simply appear. It is built, sustained and shaped by the people working behind the scenes.



Photo Courtesy of Iowa State University

Systems that Support Campus

The word "building" often brings to mind the physical structures around us. However, it can also describe the process of creating, preserving and improving the spaces and systems that support a community. Building a sustainable campus happens in more ways than constructing new buildings or adding new infrastructure. It also happens through everyday work that keeps campus functioning smoothly.

Two operational units that contribute to building sustainable efforts on campus are Central Stores and ISU Surplus, both a part of Logistics and Support Services at Iowa State University.

Central Stores provides university departments with supplies including janitorial items, maintenance hardware, tools, safety materials and office supplies. Departments can order materials through the Central Stores online catalog with items available for pickup or free campus delivery. Central Stores is located in the General Services Building at 700 Wallace Road.

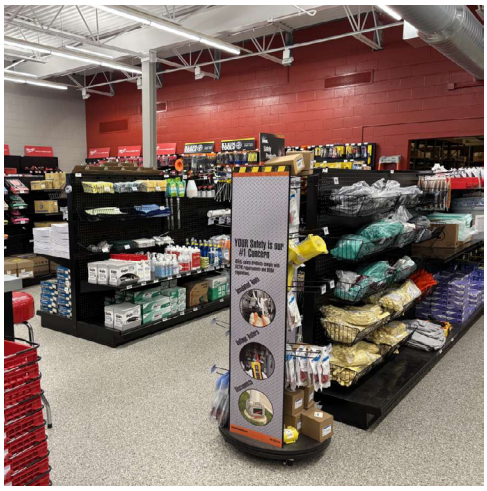


Photo Courtesy of Central Stores

ISU Surplus facilitates the opportunity for excess university items to be resold, reused or recycled rather than simply discarded. The facility handles university property that is no longer needed and makes items available for internal reuse and public sale. ISU Surplus is located at 925 Airport Road.



Photo Courtesy of ISU Surplus

While their work looks different, both entities help manage resources that are integral in building the Iowa State community. And both employ students that ensure collective success and impact through day-to-day work and responsibilities.

While much of this effort is behind the scenes and unnoticed by students, faculty, staff and visitors, for the students employed in these units, the building effort is quite visible and evident. Five student employees of Central Stores and ISU Surplus, whose work supports and furthers the building of campus, are highlighted in this month's Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green.

Students Building Campus

For some Iowa State students, building a more sustainable campus is part of their everyday work. Carson Crane and Liam Perreault, student employees with Central Stores, and Albert

Ady, Ruadhri Deans and Tyler Halbur, student employees with ISU Surplus, each contribute to the way campus resources are managed, reused and made available to the university community. Through their different roles, they showcase how sustainability is being built into the everyday operations of Iowa State University.

For Carson Crane and Liam Perreault contributing to the campus in a way that makes a difference to the community, aids them in their professional endeavors as well.

Carson Crane, second-year business analytics student, was drawn to Central Stores due to the relation to his future career field. "What drew me to my current campus job was that it gives me a little bit of an idea of what I will be doing in my career," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Liam Perreault, a third-year student studying agricultural engineering with a focus on power and machinery, found his position when someone he met during his job search recommended Central Stores. "After touring the warehouse and meeting some of the team, I was happy to accept the offer of employment," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Liam Perreault

For Albert Ady, Ruadhri Deans and Tyler Halbur, ISU Surplus has provided an opportunity to contribute to the campus in a way that gives university resources new purpose as well as furthering their career goals. Their work helps give items ranging from computers and phones to furniture and other equipment new life.

Albert Ady, a third-year management information systems student, found his way to ISU Surplus through his interest in information technology. After seeing the position on CyHire, he decided to apply. "I was drawn to working at Surplus ... because I had always seen myself leading a career in IT," Ady said.

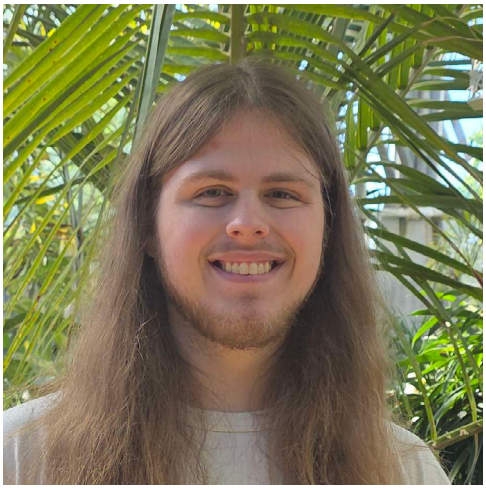


Photo Courtesy of Albert Ady

Ruadhri Deans, a fourth-year environmental engineering student, took on his position at ISU Surplus after his experience with the Live Green Team piqued his interest. "I took on the position at ISU Surplus after collaborating with them as a CCE intern for Live Green!," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Tyler Halbur, a fourth-year computer science student, has worked at ISU Surplus for over a year. With a career goal in information technology, Halbur found the position through

CyHire. He had been a customer at ISU Surplus before becoming an Iowa State student. “I shopped here before I started attending Iowa State and thought it sounded cool to work at the quirky little store I frequented,” he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Building Sustainability Through Everyday Work

Though having different focus, the work of Central Stores and ISU Surplus both involve everyday operations that keep resources moving and campus building.

At Central Stores, Perreault helps to ensure campus departments have access to the materials they need. He spends most of his time “pulling online orders for various places around campus and staging them for delivery.”

He also helps delivery drivers with large deliveries, assists walk-in customers, restocks products and takes on tasks as needed to keep the operation running smoothly.

For Perreault, one of his favorite parts of the job is the opportunity to contribute to the campus through the resources Central Stores provides. “My favorite task here has been the overall ability to work to provide resources that help to create a better environment for everyone on campus,” he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

By organizing and delivering supplies across campus, Central Stores helps reduce transportation and logistics expenses over time. The supplies distributed through the operation also contribute to the everyday experience of the Iowa State community. “We provide much of the supplies needed to keep buildings clean, restock paper products, and to keep up on building maintenance,” Perreault added.

Crane’s main task is updating the item descriptions for the Central Stores website. This has become his favorite task because it makes him feel like he is making a difference. “Updating those item descriptions to make it easier for people to find things gives me the feeling that what I’m doing matters and helps,” he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Although students and visitors may not think about where these supplies originate, this work helps build the foundation for the buildings and spaces they use, and depend on, every day.

At ISU Surplus, the work changes throughout the week depending on what materials are received for processing. Halbur and Ady are part of the student IT team, which helps prepare items for the weekly public sale. Halbur’s responsibilities include processing computers, destroying hard drives, and packaging discarded items for recycling.

Halbur described the work of ISU Surplus as “huge sustainability-wise,” but the day-to-day responsibilities extend beyond any single task. “Of course, being Surplus, everything is always subject to change, and we

frequently have to switch gears to make sure things of importance get done," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Ady's role also involves processing a variety of electronic devices. He checks in equipment that has been slated for disposal by university departments and processes each item according to its needs.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

"Everything we do involves ensuring that there is no data left from whoever previously used the device before it came to us," Ady said. His work includes erasing hard drives and solid-state drives from iMacs and MacBooks, as well as processing mobile devices including iPhones, iPads and Android devices.

Deans is responsible for preparing the sales floor -- pricing, repricing and other storefront needs. He also helps with testing the usability of electronic devices as well as power and heat capabilities. In addition, he focuses on "directing the item to its most appropriate place... or scrapping it for various materials before discarding the reduced waste," he said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

A favorite project of Deans has been the organization and separation of lost and found bins. "With all departmental lost and found items coming to ISU Surplus after a 60-day retention window, being able to see all the different things left behind and how we are able to reuse them is very interesting," he noted.

Building a Sustainable Future

Collectively, these students are helping build a campus where resources are not simply used and discarded but managed toward a more sustainable purpose. The work of Central Stores and ISU Surplus demonstrates how sustainability is built environmentally, economically and socially.

Environmental

For Crane and Perreault, sustainability has a strong environmental connection through the way materials are managed and distributed across campus. By organizing orders and delivering supplies efficiently, Central Stores reduces transportation resources needed to move materials between locations.

While their roles are primarily focused on keeping campus operations supplied, the way those resources are managed contributes to a more efficient and less impactful supply chain.

At ISU Surplus, reuse and keeping resources in circulation is their mission. Instead of immediately discarding older devices, student employees process the items so they can be used again. "We are uniquely suited to reducing, reusing and recycling at the ISU Surplus facility," Halbur said.



Photo Courtesy of Liam Perreault



Photo Courtesy of Albert Ady

Halbur's work focuses on expanding the number of older computers that can be processed. One of his projects involved creating a custom Linux image for machines with limited memory. As a result of these efforts, ISU Surplus went from being able to process machines with around 2 GB of memory to machines with roughly 256 MB of memory and potentially less.

"It keeps older machines out of the landfill," Halbur said. "Secondly, it gets older machines into the hands of enthusiasts, which makes me happy because I know they will see a renewed life cycle...," he added.

Ady has also worked to give older technology new opportunities. One of his favorite projects involved putting select older Apple computers on the sales floor as ready-to-use setups. The project allowed the machines to be displayed as collector pieces while also giving keyboards and mice enhanced purpose.

"It's good to give all of our computers a second chance, and I think that should apply to obsolete machines as well," Ady said. These efforts demonstrate how extending the life of existing resources can help build a system focused on reuse rather than disposal and waste.

Deans described his work as building environmental protection through "decreasing landfill intake". Being able to reuse old technology and otherwise discarded items greatly contributes to decreasing the amount of landfill waste.

Economic

Sustainability also involves making thoughtful use of financial resources.

At Central Stores, Perreault said the process of packaging and delivering goods to different locations on campus "saves transportation and logistics expenses over time." The supplies provided by Central Stores also help support the needs of campus buildings and spaces. Crane noted that campus units and departments "...purchase many of the items that keep our campus clean and up to maintenance."

At ISU Surplus, reselling university property allows value to be recovered from items that are no longer needed for their original purpose. Halbur added the facility also "provides affordable options to the public, particularly when it comes to technology."

Students can find electronics, furniture and other supplies at affordable prices, while also making more sustainable purchasing choices. "My personal favorite aspect is the economic benefit, where college kids may find school laptops, phones and computers to meet their schooling needs," Halbur said.



Photo Courtesy of ISU Surplus

Halbur has experienced that benefit himself. His school laptop came from Surplus for $100, and his room includes other items purchased there, including a chair that cost $0.25 and a metal desk for $10.

For Halbur, buying secondhand is a way students can contribute to a more resource-conscious campus. "Secondhand can often present the same quality as new and for a fraction of the cost, with the added environmental benefit of keeping something that would otherwise be trashed out of landfills," he said.

Deans noted how the reuse of products decreases the total net energy and fuel required for more material to be produced. Reusing "... allows departments to purchase equipment for research and education purposes at a largely discounted rate," he said.

Social

Social sustainability connects people to beneficial systems. The work of Central Stores, supports the daily experience of the Iowa State community by providing the necessary supplies used to clean and maintain campus buildings.

Although having a seamless appearance to the campus community, Perreault noted how vital this role is as it "shapes the daily experience of everyone who walks through campus without many of them even realizing."

Halbur said the facility also "creates a welcoming community among its workers and customers," which has allowed him the opportunity to meet people and make new connections through his work.



Photo Courtesy of ISU Surplus

Together, the students' work illustrates that building sustainability is not only about protecting natural resources but also about building systems that support people and ensure necessary functions.

Building for the Future

Creating a more sustainable campus is an ongoing process that involves everyone. While large projects and long-term planning help shape campus sustainability, everyday choices also play a role in how campus resources are managed and ensured. Students, faculty and staff can all contribute to a more sustainable future.

Learning more about the work happening at Central Stores and ISU Surplus is one way to start. Exploring these resources raises the awareness of the Iowa State community to better understand where campus materials come from, where they go and how they are used.

"I would say to be sure to learn more about sustainability at ISU and to just be conservative with your use of resources that the university has to offer... a more widespread good impact on everyone around," Perreault said.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Crane urged students who "want to help with sustainability on campus to clean up after themselves." Proactively keeping campus clean is vital in sustaining a healthy environment.



Photo Courtesy of Inside Iowa State

Halbur encouraged students to look for secondhand options whenever possible, whether they are shopping for clothing, technology, or furniture. Ady similarly advised students to think about what happens to their belongings when they no longer need them. “Think about what can be thrown away and what can be repurposed,” he said.

Deans urged students to look for sustainability initiatives around them. “ISU Surplus does not look like a full-scale sustainability initiative from the exterior, but when you see the different actions that take place, you understand some of the benefits that come from the work,” he said.

Ady also recommended visiting ISU Surplus and considering alternative transportation when moving around campus such as walking or public transport options, including CyRide.



Photo Courtesy of CyRide

Getting involved in sustainability can mean many different things, but simply starting can create a cascading impact -- whether improving a delivery system, extending the life of an old computer or finding a new purpose for something that might otherwise be discarded.

Explore the Live Green Tips and 10 Ways to Live Green sections on the Get Involved webpage of the Iowa State University Office of Sustainability website to build sustainability into daily life.

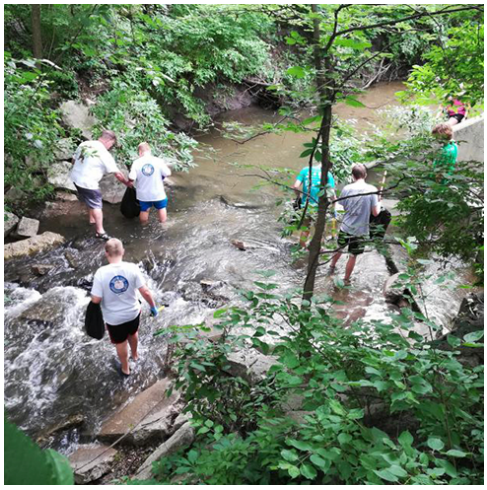


Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Ady, Crane, Deans, Halbur and Perreault represent just a few of the many student workers providing services vital in building a sustainable campus. Ensuring the Iowa State University experience for future generations of Cyclones.

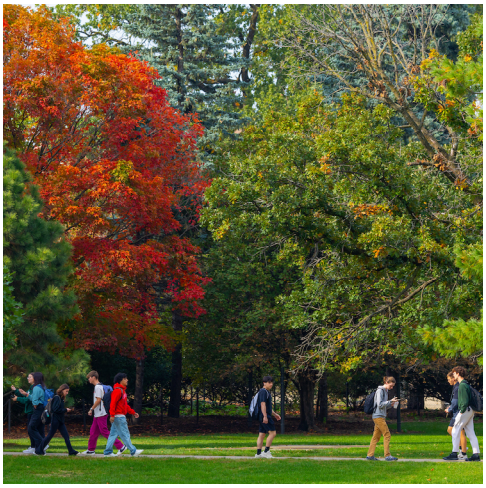


Photo Courtesy of Iowa State

Learn more about the sustainable work and impact of Central Stores and ISU Surplus on their respective webpages on the Iowa State University Logistics and Support Services website.