

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

Empowerment is foundational to fostering a thriving college campus. Empowering students to feel confident and capable on campus is critical for unlocking their full potential.

At Iowa State, empowerment means making sure students have the resources, support and confidence to excel academically and personally. Through student organizations, Iowa State empowers students to embrace challenges and break barriers to create an impact that extends beyond campus.

In this month's addition of Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green, we are excited to highlight a few of the many student organizations on Iowa State's campus that empower students. [Veterinarians as One Inclusive Community for Empowerment](#) (VOICE), [Minorities in Ag, Natural Resources and Related Sciences](#) (MANRRS), the [National Organization of Minority Architecture Students](#) (NOMAS) and the [Society of Women Engineers](#) (SWE) each play a huge role in creating opportunities for students to make contributions on campus and in the community.

Empowerment Defined and Practiced

Empowerment is defined and practiced in a diversity of ways through the initiatives of student organizations on campus – all dedicated to fostering a space for students to connect and thrive.

VOICE is dedicated to fostering inclusivity and diversity within veterinary medicine.



Image Courtesy of VOICE

The organization's mission is to empower members of the community, to increase inclusiveness in veterinary medicine and promote diversity. Quincie Donth, VOICE's president, said, "We hope that through our actions we provide a safe environment for our members so that they can thrive within the College of Veterinary Medicine community and their careers."

Empowerment, as defined by VOICE, means creating an environment that is welcoming to all and building an inclusive environment that promotes diversity within veterinary medicine. This approach ensures that everyone who aspires to a career in veterinary medicine has a place in the profession.

"Veterinary medicine is one of the least diverse professions and we hope to change that as much as we can," according to Donth. This approach of welcoming people from a variety of backgrounds not only allows inclusivity for those that want to pursue a career in veterinary medicine but also the clients and patients they serve. "Everyone has a place in veterinary medicine if they desire," Donth noted.

MANRRS empowers its members by promoting professional development and academic

excellence across diverse fields in agriculture and natural resources. Their mission is to empower and uplift members to pursue fields of their choice without barriers. Zion Bloom, MANRRS president, said, "The entire purpose of MANRRS is to empower individuals to take their education and professional image into their own hands."



Image Courtesy of MANRRS

For MANRRS, empowerment means encouraging members to take charge of their personal and professional growth. The organization encourages all their members to take action to continually improve their professional skills, challenge their limits and make new connections. Bloom added, "By educating members on different aspects of professionalism and helping them gather lifelong skills and connections, we empower our members in their academic and professional journeys."

NOMAS is the student arm of the National Organization of Minority

Architects and is part of a larger body of 36 professional and 86 student chapters around the U.S. NOMA's mission is to empower local chapters and members to foster justice and equity in communities of color through outreach, community advocacy, professional development and design excellence.



Image Courtesy of NOMAS

“At Iowa State, our chapter works towards this by creating a space of support, community and resource-sharing for minority design students,” said NOMAS event management chair, Kristiana Tu. Creating a strong and supportive community for minority architects empowers the organization to respond to the concerns that affect marginalized communities and people.

To NOMAS, empowerment means equipping students and professionals with resources to thrive in a professional space where ethnic minorities are truly a minority. Tu noted, “According to the most recent census of U.S. design professionals, only 2% of architects are Black, 11.8% are Hispanic and less than 1% are Native American. It’s all too common for minority architects to be the only one of their racial or cultural group in a design

firm.” NOMAS works diligently to empower their members by creating a sense of community, support and recognition.



Image Courtesy of SWE

SWE empowers primarily female-identifying graduate students in engineering and STEM to achieve their full potential as engineers and leaders. The organization aims to expand the image of engineering and technology as transformative professions that contribute to improving quality of life. Through mentorship, professional development and resources tailored to support growth, SWE works to address barriers that women in STEM often face.

“We inspire individuals to pursue and excel in impactful roles, creating a ripple effect of empowerment within the broader community” said Fatemeh Ganji, president of SWE. By giving members the confidence needed to excel, SWE challenges traditional narratives in the dicipline of engineering.

For SWE, empowerment means providing members with the confidence, resources and opportunities needed to thrive as leaders in STEM fields. “Our initiatives build strong networks, develop skills and ensure open

communication, enabling members to achieve their goals,” Ganji added. These core values create an environment that supports mentorship, professional excellence and trust.

Impact on Campus and Opportunities to Get Involved
Student organizations at Iowa State create impacts on campus that extend beyond, empowering students to make meaningful contributions to their fields and communities. In offering a diversity of ways to get involved, these organizations are creating impact and equipped to make positive change.



Photo Courtesy of VOICE

VOICE hosts events and participates in a variety of events for the College of Veterinary Medicine students as well as events within the Ames community. “Some of our events include lunches with guest lecturers, game nights to build community and volunteering with Food at First in Ames,” Donth said.

VOICE is open to all members of the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine’s community. They invite all members of the community to on and off campus events, whether they are VOICE members or not. “We are always open to new leadership and eagerly

welcome new ideas and opinions,” Donth added.



Photo Courtesy of MANRRS

MANRRS members attend events that improve their own skills, open them up to new opportunities and contribute to the organization’s goal of empowering individuals and their community as a whole. “I’m proud to say that our organization has been able to attend the MANRRS 38th Annual Training Conference and Career Expo and the 2024 Regional MANRRS Cluster within the past year, allowing members to practice their professional skills and meet peers, professionals, and like-minded individuals from across the nation,” Donth added.

By joining together with driven members nationwide, club members can motivate, inspire and connect with their respective fields, peers and communities. Anyone is welcome to join their meetings to get a glimpse of what MANRRS is about. “There are opportunities to join and create committees, help in events, and hold a position within our organization in addition to joining us as a member,” Bloom added.

NOMAS is proud and honored to equip students with as many opportunities and connections as possible while attending Iowa State University.



Photo Courtesy of NOMAS

This past semester, NOMAS partnered with both local and national firms to host a two-day firm crawl. One day was spent taking students to firms around Des Moines to gain exposure, make connections and hear about professional architecture life. The next day, they hosted a virtual firm crawl, hearing from acclaimed national firms like SOM, Pickard Chilton, Slaggie Architects and others, about their work and involvement with minority-focused initiatives. “We are an open chapter and always excited to connect with new students,” Tu offered.



Photo Courtesy of SWE

SWE organizes a variety of events to inspire and educate the community, including workshops on resume writing, tours of the ISU Creamery (to provide entrepreneurial insights) and participation in the DMACC Boone STEM Festival. SWE also collaborates with elementary schools to deliver hands-on

engineering activities. “We host a variety of professional, social, membership and outreach events each semester, open to all graduate students, regardless of gender,” Ganji noted. “Leadership opportunities are primarily available at the end of the spring semester and occasionally at the end of the fall semester, announced through the engineering department and members circulations.”

Sustainability through Empowerment
At Iowa State University student organizations play a vital role in sustainability on campus. Through their unique missions and initiatives, organizations demonstrate how sustainability can be integrated into diverse fields of study and professional development. VOICE, MANRRS, SWE and NOMAS each embody commitment to sustainability through empowerment.



Photo Courtesy of VOICE

VOICE empowers its members through a commitment to social sustainability. By fostering an inclusive environment, this organization equips its members to create a more socially sustainable campus.

"Many of our efforts go into creating an environment within our community that supports all," Donth said. By empowering its members, VOICE not only strengthens its community but also ensures that future veterinarians are prepared to lead with empathy and advocate for a sustainable and equitable society.



Photo Courtesy of MANRRS

MANRRS integrates sustainability into its organization through professional development and networking opportunities. This organization aims to promote an equitable work environment in the future workforce and create a level playing field for members and their respective fields.

"By expanding members' networks and connecting them with driven individuals from around the country, we encourage students to challenge their perspectives, be open to personal growth and build a strong support network," Bloom noted. With these interests, MANRRS hopes to encourage members to reach each of their goals.



Photo Courtesy of NOMAS

NOMAS is conscious of all types of sustainability as architecture itself must be. As a community building and empowering organization, the organization is largely focused on advancing all pillars of sustainability.

"We believe the three are intertwined and cannot be accomplished separately from each other," Tu said. NOMAS is constantly highlighting firms, projects and research which prioritize environmental, social and economic sustainability.



Photo Courtesy of SWE

SWE contributes to sustainability by addressing environmental, economic and social pillars through initiatives grounded in the organization's core values of integrity, mutual support, professional excellence and trust.

"We promote environmental responsibility through participation in the Adopt-A-

Flower-Garden program, we promote economic responsibility by empowering individuals to build sustainable careers and we promote social sustainability by empowering our members to be inclusive," Ganji said. These efforts create a supportive network, strengthen diversity and inspire future STEM leaders. "We empower individuals to drive lasting economic and social impact by integrating these principles," Ganji added.



Photo Courtesy of VOICE

Empowerment is a fundamental principle for success and impact on campus and within community. Organizations like VOICE, MANRRS, NOMAS and SWE illustrate this vividly. By fostering an inclusive environment and including sustainability in their efforts, these groups empower students to break barriers and achieve their personal and professional goals.

As we celebrate these student organizations, we are reminded of Iowa State University's diverse and collective efforts toward ensuring a sustainable future. Learn more about [VOICE](#), [MANRRS](#), [NOMAS](#) and [SWE](#) by visiting their webpages on the Iowa State University Student Engagement website.

