VISION
To ensure equal access to employment and educational opportunities in support of the university's commitment to equal opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity.

MISSION
Iowa State University’s Office of Equal Opportunity is committed to promoting a working and learning environment free of discrimination or harassment by complying with all federal, state and local laws pertaining to anti-discrimination, the American with Disabilities Act, and Title IX. To that end, we work toward a campus climate that is supportive of equity through complaint resolution, advice, education, outreach, and intervention.

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During the COVID-19 pandemic it is important that all students have access to resources needed to ensure academic and personal success. Though Iowa State is acting in prudence, by practicing social distancing and suspending in person classes, many low income students are experiencing difficulties due to a lack of resources. For example, NPR referenced a 2018 study done by researchers at Temple University and Wisconsin HOPE Lab and found that 36% of college students experience food insecurity. The same study discovered that a similar number of students struggle with housing insecurity. Both of the aforementioned numbers increased when community colleges students are included in the results. A Temple University professor noted, “[Food or housing insecurity] really undermines [a student’s] ability to do well in school. Their grades suffer, their test scores appear to be lower, and overall, their chances of graduating are slimmer.” Unfortunately, people of color are over-represented in such groups.

Similarly, the organization at Global Citizen found that 24 million people do not have access to high-speed internet, and roughly 20% of households do not have a computer in the US. This development creates a digital divide between those with and without access to technology.

Students who depend on the college campus experience for resources like technology, housing, or food experience increased uncertainty and insecurity when staff, faculty, and students must work remotely. As a member of this community, it is important to exercise patience and provide the needed resources for all students. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage administrators of higher education to ensure the continuity of safe housing and continuity of meal programs for dependent students. Staff and faculty must also continue to help students who struggle with internet and/or technology access during the pandemic. The Office of Equal Opportunity is committed to working with faculty and staff to help with providing equitable and inclusive education and resources to our Cyclones. Visit www.diversity.iastate.edu/covid-19 for useful resources and information to guide us all through this unprecedented time.
Like thousands of other students nationwide, Iowa State’s student body has been relegated to remote work environments. The COVID-19 pandemic has left many students to study and learn in environments that are harmful for their academic success. While access to resources such as food and shelter may be available, staff and faculty must exercise care and patience with students who struggle with chaotic work spaces, disorganized living, or poor familial support. One source found that “a positive and a good learning environment is important for student’s success as it promotes academic achievements.” To foster such an environment, Concordia University-Saint Paul offered advice that includes making time for online courses, minimizing distractions, and having an organized study space. Each of these components may not be readily available to all students during this time. Many home environments are simply not conducive to academic success, but in extreme cases, homes may even be dangerous. For instance, the pandemic has resulted in an unfortunate increase in domestic violence.

Domestic violence is defined as violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner. The United Nations Secretary-General states "the number of women calling support services has doubled" while "healthcare providers and police are overwhelmed and understaffed." Multiple news outlets found that police departments nation wide are seeing an increase of at least 15% in domestic violence calls. Unfortunately, women are at higher risk to be perpetrated against. Staff and faculty must continue to maintain contact with the student body. In extreme cases, Iowa State University’s community must be prepared to provide the Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (national) and 1-800-770-1650 (Iowa). Along with the Office of Equal Opportunity, staff and faculty must continue to provide and advocate for the safety of students during this pandemic.
Kizzmekia Corbett is an American viral immunologist at the Vaccine Research Center at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health based in Seattle, Washington. Corbett majored in biology and sociology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and earned a doctorate from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 2014. At only 34, she is leading a team of scientists and together they have moved to the first-stage trials for a coronavirus vaccine, with the fastest progress for the pathogen. With the work from her and her team, COVID-19 will become a preventable disease. Being the only woman and person of color in the room, many other scientists around the world doubt her or double check her, but she knows her worth and remains a consistent leader.

"There was, and is, already a fair amount of pressure," Corbett said. "A lot of people are banking on us or feel that we have a product that could, at least, be part of the answer this world needs. And, well, whew, just saying that out loud is not easy."
Most organizations are in uncharted territory when it comes to working while in a global pandemic, working remotely and utilizing technology is becoming the new reality. In this unusual and social distant time, practicing inclusivity is vital. Here are a few ways employers or professors can engage in inclusivity with employees and students.

**Design Accessible Meetings:**

Meetings should provide a similar, if not the same, experience virtually as they do physically. For example, if usually you intend people to collaborate or side bar separately during a meeting, allow virtual breakout rooms for remote participants to have the same opportunity to process in small groups.

**Set Achievable Expectations:**

Remote learning or working is not always a privilege and it’s important to keep that in mind while setting expectations and guidelines. Consistently discuss how things are changing and how you as an organization are planning to move forward, as well as sharing detailed information on the new assignments or expectations. A lack of communication and organization causes anxiety and stress leading to loss of motivation.

**Proactive and Positive Communication**

Generally, we maintain and strengthen relationships through in-person contact, like small talk. Stay social by vocalizing gratitude and being active in asking if anyone needs help. Check in with your colleagues!
May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month!
Look out for monthly InclusAbility blog posts starting this month at www.eoc.iastate.edu/resources-and-policies/inclusability
Covid-19 Resources are now available at diversity.iastate.edu/covid-19
ReACT applications are due May 15th check out this link for more information! https://www.museums.iastate.edu/art/exhibitions/react-exhibition/

Welcome Elliot!
Join us in welcoming Elliott M. Florer to the Office of Equal Opportunity. He comes to our office from almost 18 years of working in the Iowa State University Police Department where he served as a supervisor for 15 years. Elliott is an Iowa State University Alumni with a BS in Sociology and a minor in Criminal Justice. He earned a MA in Criminal Justice from Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He brings valuable experience in working a multitude of cases and assignments that include mental health crisis response, threat assessments, engagement and inclusion, safety planning, interviewing, hate crimes, stalking, harassment, assault, domestic violence, sexual assault, robbery, burglary, theft, fraud, forgery, and vandalism cases. We are very excited for the opportunity to work with Mr. Florer as he continues to serve the Iowa State University community in his new role within the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Did You Know?
The origin of Asian/Pacific-American Heritage Month dates back to the 95th Congress (1977-1978)
Follow us on social media for more fun facts throughout the month of May!

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