OUR MISSION

IMPACT IOWA is composed of fourteen undergraduate students dedicated to creating a new kind of student government. Through our wide array of perspectives and experiences we will reshape how students make their voices heard.

We are driven by the fact that so many students face daily struggles that are entirely preventable. It is our responsibility to make sure student government mitigates obstacles to student success and create new opportunities for growth.

IMPACT IOWA is ready to uplift, transform, and re-energize our campus. Through working with administration, student organizations, and community stakeholders we will create a University that works for all students.
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS:

Increase transparency in student-faculty relationships
• Often times there is a lack of clarity on procedures and guidelines regarding grading policy, absences, and textbook use. We would like to work with our administration to encourage faculty and staff to be more transparent about their grading system and absences policies as well as clarify when a textbook or other learning material is required versus when such materials are suggested.

Improve absence policy accessibility
• Currently, absence policies are often ambiguous and inaccessible. It is unclear what documentation is required to ensure an excused absence and there are few guidelines for students. We will promote the simplification of absence policies, as well as advocate for health-related excused absences (physical and mental health) to have as few barriers as possible. We will also work with administration to clarify bereavement leave policy and promote the existence of such policy to students.

Increase quality and improve accessibility to academic resources
• It is vital that high quality academic resources be accessible to all students. We will continue to host book drives every semester, as well as work with faculty, staff, and other university institutions to provide accessible learning materials. We will also continue to work to improve the quality and amount of academic resources on campus including tutoring, help labs, and supplemental instruction by advocating for reallocation of funding to these programs and promoting these programs to students. We will also begin conversations about how mental health resources can be integrated into academic support. Finally, we would like to evaluate how academic resources change based on college or program of study and address any resource inequities that may occur.

Extend the Honors Program
• The Honors program can be incredibly beneficial to students, but it can be challenging to learn how to become involved or how to fulfill the honors requirements. We would like to encourage and assist the Honors Program in expanding outreach to students once they are on campus and focused on reaching out to all students. We must increase information about how to fulfill honors requirements by simplifying the honors contracting class process and turning Hawkeye Service Breaks into an opportunity to earn experiential learning credit.

Improve the academic experience for international students
• We will reach out to student groups dedicated to assisting international students and making sure international students have the resources they need to be successful on the Iowa campus.
Increase resources for transfer students
• Based on recent University of Iowa data, transfer students often have disproportionately lower academic outcomes than non-transfer students. Due to this finding, it is vital that the University of Iowa allow first year resources to also apply to transfer students, bettering transfer student orientation, improve academic advising of transfer students, and increase clarity about credit transfer from other institutions.

Continue advocating for a sustainability general education credit
• Sustainability is a pressing concern for our generation, and it is incredibly important that we are educated about the climate crisis and our role in mitigating such a crisis. In order to do this, we believe that it is imperative to have a sustainability general education credit and will continue to work with administration and faculty to ensure the implementation of such a general education requirement.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS:

Foster better relationships with student organizations
• USG has oftentimes been disconnected from the students we represent and serve. By increasing communication with student organizations, we can foster better relationships. There are a lot of student organizations who do work similar to that of Student Government, from orgs focused on sustainability to civic engagement to diversity and inclusion. At times the work that these orgs and student government does can be too disconnected or dramatically overlap. To remedy this, we will bolster the liaison program which connects every student organization to a member of USG. We would like to build upon this program in order to promote and support all orgs on campus and make more students feel like they have individuals in USG that they can reach out to.

Bolster USG’s involvement on campus and in the community
• At times USG is not very visible to students or to the larger community. We will continue to expand our current programs, “Complain for a Cookie” and “Breakfast with USG”, and create new events such as a field day and activities in dorms. We would also like to increase our community presence by doing service projects on campus and in the community, such as collecting donations for food pantries.

Increase USG’s accessibility and transparency
• In order to increase accessibility, we will expand the use of accessible language in legislation and advertisement, livestream senate meetings, and promote Hawk Ideas (the online way to give suggestions to USG). We will also demystify the work of USG by making and promoting guides of what USG does and how to apply or run for USG.
JUSTICE & EQUITY:

Improve relationships with multicultural centers
- The University of Iowa’s cultural centers are a vital component to campus as well as to the Iowa City community. As a second home to many students, they deserve to be prioritized. Impact Iowa will actively work to expand accessibility and collaboration with the multicultural centers by increasing outreach on the east side of campus, advocate for a center for students with disabilities, and forge a stronger relationship between the cultural centers and UI Counseling Services.

Increase diverse representation within USG
- When communities that have been historically excluded from the conversation are continually left out, we fail to empower students. We can cultivate a more dynamic atmosphere in USG if we maximize diversity within the organization. Through exploring unique recruitment initiatives, expanding social justice education and opportunities in USG, and bolstering our constituency senator coalition, we will maximize representation in USG.

Extend outreach on allyship
- The University of Iowa has the potential to be a more inclusive community with proper education initiatives. Navigation is ever-evolving, but we can accomplish a more inclusive campus by expanding education outreach at USG events, working with student organizations to critically think about what it means to be an ally, and hold faculty and staff accountable, especially in course atmospheres.

Demand the expansion of gender neutral bathrooms
- Far too many university facilities do not have gender neutral restrooms for students who require them. This sends a message to these students that they are not seen and thus not valued. We will prioritize this initiative by holding monthly meetings with administration to enact a short-term and long-term solution so these facilities can be campus-wide in a matter of years, not decades.

Advocate for the accessibility of mental health resources for marginalized communities
- Vulnerable communities deserve to have a focused approach with UI Counseling Services to meet their unique needs. Having counselors with diverse backgrounds as well as holding UI Counseling Services sessions in cultural centers are two ways we will aim to make mental health resources more available to marginalized communities.

Increase the breadth of resources for international students
- With a proactive and inclusive approach to international student populations, we can send a strong message that we value their presence and contributions to the University of Iowa. Many resources and opportunities lack accessibility to international students. We can become a more welcoming university by building stronger orientation services for international students and encouraging campus partners to include international students’ needs in their student wellness dialogue.
Proactively and consistently fund multicultural organizations
• Impact Iowa recognizes the need not only to fund student organizations in a proactive manner, but to do so consistently and appropriately. We hope to support a record number of multicultural student organizations and student organization cultural events by committing ourselves to full transparency with cultural organizations in the various ways they can apply for funding.

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS:
Remove barriers to civic engagement
• Civic engagement is incredibly important but unfortunately students face a lot of barriers. Excused absences for voting is one way we can make it easier for students to vote.

Expand student’s civic engagement knowledge
• There is a lack of knowledge about civic engagement among all citizens, college students being no exception. We will work with Hawk the Vote to promote knowledge of what is on the ballot by creating a voter guide for every election, as well as institutionalizing ICON reminders for how to vote and promoting in person, early, and mail in voting. We will also work to promote this year’s census education.

Advocate for students through our State Legislative Agenda
• As a public institution, so much of our funding and policy decisions is made by the Iowa State Legislator. Due to this it is necessary that students are given a voice in the laws proposed and passed by the state legislator. We will continue to advocate for Medical Amnesty, increased funding or apparitions, and a Move-In Checklist, as well as begin exploring other legislation including mental health days as excused absences. We also will increase collaboration in advocacy work with the other public universities in Iowa.

Continue work with Iowa City
• Iowa City is a unique part of the University of Iowa experience and we want to continue to have a great relationship with the city. We will work with the city liaisons to have unified goals on local policy, as well as advocate for accessible student housing, parking, and transportation in Iowa City.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS:
Better USG’s transition systems
• One of the best ways to achieve tangible change for students is by bringing new voices to the table. USG has the crucial duty to work with student leaders to bring students into USG - especially those students who may not think of themselves as leaders. By increasing outreach of candidate application processes, setting up a FAQ board for USG applicants and new senators/executives, and building a stronger yearly retreat for members, we can ensure a cohesive transition period between administrations.
Implement more intersectional collaboration between committees
• Due to the often complex and overlapping nature of our initiatives, dynamic collaboration from multiple committees to reach success is required. It is our hope that through education at the yearly retreat as well as conversations with committee chairs, initiatives for the year will be analyzed as they intertwine with other areas of interest.

Connect USG members to more campus partners
• We can maximize the efficiency of USG if we connect members to relevant student organizations, student leaders, committees, and campus partners working towards similar ends. Additionally, we will find resources and opportunities for USG members to take their hard work to various campus, county, state, and federal environments.

HEALTH & SAFETY:
Increase and improve mental health resources
• The current system used to access mental health resources on campus is oftentimes inaccessible and confusing. We would like to streamline the process of accessing counseling services by allowing students to sign up online and choose counselors based on profiles. We will also advocate for a university-based suicide prevention crisis line that students may feel more comfortable reaching out to in a moment of crisis.

Better campus safety
• In order for students to perform well academically they must be physically safe on campus. We will work to increase the amount of lights on campus, as currently there are many areas with little to no lighting making walking on campus at night unsafe. We will work with the clothing closet to include winter gear, as well as create a better ice removal system and streamline weather cancelation polices.

Expand sexual assault prevention programs and survivors’ resources
• We will promote sexual assault prevention tools including the use of the Rave Guardian app, expanding the Nite Ride program, and increasing consent education. We also believe it is important to have programs that focuses on supporting survivors, including promoting mental health resources for survivors and bettering response mechanisms to sexual assault on campus.

Create an action plan for emergencies
• As we have learned this past semester, unforeseen emergencies can and do happen. Given that COVID-19 is an ongoing situation we want to encourage the University of Iowa to be in consistent communication with students about the situation and moving forward we would like to formalize emergency response plan development. These plans would include housing, academics, and mental health. We would also like to promote the emergency relief fund, as well as continue to promote information about additional resources available on campus.
STUDENT LIFE:

Build a working relationship with Housing & Dining

- Housing & Dining is a profound resource for students on ever-important topics. Fittingly, they are one of our most significant campus partners. We will forge a harmonious coalition by advocating for students’ needs such as flex meal usage on the weekends, the possibility of dining hall to-go containers, increased options for dietary restrictions in campus stores, and scannable barcodes with nutrition information in the dining halls.

Implement more sustainable practices with Housing & Dining

- There are several ways that Housing & Dining can contribute to lessening our campus’ toll on the environment. We will work towards environmentally friendly wrappers and biodegradable to-go boxes in the dining halls, encourage student involvement with waste audits, and increase transparency with where our food goes.

Better campus relations with Fraternity-Sorority Life

- Greek life has the capabilities to reach students in a positive and uplifting way. Impact Iowa hopes to cultivate a more enriching relationship with Fraternity and Sorority Life on the University of Iowa’s campus through outreach events to FSL, encouraging cooperation between FSL councils, and working with campus partners to expand safety measures for Greek life activities.

Expand public art on campus

- A campus like the University of Iowa would stand to benefit from increased public art on its campus. Using existing campus partners and working with important resources like the multicultural centers and the Women’s Resource Action Center, we can make Iowa City come alive. With the capacity for student involvement in upcoming public art initiatives, students will be at the forefront of making the University of Iowa one of the most beautiful campuses in the nation.

Continue to expand transportation accessibility

- Bus transportation serves as a resource for students in a variety of settings whether it be going to class or going to watch an athletic event. However, while students’ needs are ever-changing, their resources must adapt as well. We can maximize Cambus by factoring in transportation for final schedules, looking into more beneficial routes, advocating for a clearer Mayflower shuttle route, and working with students to make the Hawklot and parking in Iowa City as transparent as possible.
SUSTAINABILITY:

Improve education on recycling and composting practices
- At the University of Iowa, literacy surrounding recycling, landfill, and compost practices is a necessary component to solving the climate crisis. By educating students at orientation and OnIowa! Services about these practices, advocating for residence hall floor-level composting, and educating USG members, we can build a more aware community to address our current situation.

Expand land acknowledgements on University of Iowa property
- Recognizing that the land the University of Iowa was founded on is truly not our land is the first step in physically making the University of Iowa acknowledge this land to belonged to Native American tribes and communities. Through constructing a land acknowledgement with the “Prairie Project”, advocating for more land acknowledgements in the Iowa City community, and activating the conversation of constructing land acknowledgment for existing property, Impact Iowa hopes to lead on this initiative in tandem with other campus partners.

Improve sustainability within overlooked communities
- Education and outreach to communities typically not thought of having a major role in sustainability is not only beneficial, but vital to creating a more sustainable campus. Working with the Food Pantry at Iowa, student athletes, Greek life, and off-campus students can bring about a more holistic conversation of recycling, composting, and more general sustainability practices tailored to each community.

Expand outreach on little-known facts of sustainability
- There is so much to learn about environmentally-conscious practices, so why not share it? Impact Iowa is dedicated to igniting this conversation by increasing transparency with the University of Iowa emissions policy, defining and stressing the importance of divestment, advocating for more fair trade options in dining settings, and connecting students to the multitude of ways they can get involved in sustainability.

Establish native planting practices
- Iowa is home to beautiful natural land features and flora. We should celebrate Iowa’s unique beauty by committing to planting native plants that will enrich the University of Iowa and educate students on their history. Completing the “Prairie Project” and expanding more natural planting projects on campus are necessary to this initiative as well.

Advocate for more sustainability efforts within Housing & Dining
- We must crucially evaluate all University institutions practices in regards to sustainability. University Housing & Dining and USG has the platform to lead other colleges in erasing our carbon footprint and advocating for cleaner solutions by only getting flex meal options in environmentally-friendly/biodegradable coverings, assessing our plastic usage, and advocating for more fresh produce and local food options in the dining halls.