

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

March 26, 2021

Dear Breton,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to voice your concern and the concern of other students regarding the recent e-mail from the student organization, Students for 2A, promoting their upcoming event related to firearms and 3-D printing. We understand and appreciate the concern you express about the timing and content of the e-mail, particularly in light of the recent tragic gun violence we have experienced in our country.

### **REDUCING THE RISK OF VIOLENCE ON OUR CAMPUS**

University leaders condemn violent acts of all kinds and recognize that hateful and violent conduct is often directed at marginalized communities. We are committed to reducing the risk to campus from all types of violent conduct.

In this regard, Iowa State University [policy](#) does not allow weapons on campus and the university actively works to ensure that students, faculty, and staff comply with this policy. Students, faculty, and staff are held accountable for any violations of the university's weapons policy. Additionally, the university uses a multi-disciplinary behavioral intervention approach to identifying, assessing, and responding to the risk of violence on campus. For example, the Student Assistance Follow-up and Evaluation Team (SAFE-T) is an interdisciplinary team of trained professionals who meet regularly to monitor behavior, assess threat, and develop appropriate intervention plans. The ISU Public Safety Department also works with individuals in assessing individual risk and developing individual safety plans. These are just two examples of the multipronged, broad-based campus approach to reducing the risk of violent acts from occurring on campus. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, the safety and security of campus and the campus community is of critical importance and is worked on daily by various teams of faculty, staff, and students.

### **RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF POLICY VIOLATIONS**

With regard to the Students for 2A student organization, the event and the message promoting the event do not violate any university policy. Iowa State University, as a public institution, has a total and complete obligation to abide by the First Amendment. Upholding the First Amendment also means the university cannot deprive students or student organizations of their rights or punish them for exercising those rights. The university cannot create or enforce rules differently because of the viewpoint, belief, or expression of a student or student organization.

We understand that not everyone will support or agree with the topic of discussion at the Students for 2A event. It is also understandable, particularly in light of recent events, that members of our community feel threatened by the discussion and the e-mail promoting the event. The right to hold and express views that others do not agree with and to assemble with other like-minded individuals, however, are central protections of the First Amendment. The university cannot establish its own thresholds for limiting speech that are broader than the limited exceptions currently allowed in federal law and will not punish students or student organizations for exercising their First Amendment rights.

## **SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

Creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus is a fundamental goal of Iowa State University. This effort is one of the highest priorities identified in the [university's strategic plan](#) and is of critical importance. While progress has been made, we know there is much more work to do and that the pace of change is not fast enough. We believe each step we take adds to the momentum to create meaningful, lasting change.

In response to issues identified by students, faculty, and staff, we have implemented a number of initiatives, including cultural competency training that was attended by 40 members of the university leadership team; required annual training for all faculty to help them create more inclusive classrooms; diversity, equity and inclusion training for all faculty and staff search committees and promotion and tenure committees; a training program for all employees to learn how to identify, manage and overcome bias; and expanded annual bias training for all ISU Police officers and Department of Public Safety staff.

We continue to build on the work of our long-standing programs that advance diversity and racial equity on campus. This includes the excellent work of our Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, which administers programs that directly support recruitment and retention of multicultural students. We continue to expand our Learning Communities that serve multicultural students and students of color. We also have an incredibly devoted cohort of Directors of Multicultural Student Success in every academic college, who serve, advocate and support our multicultural students.

We will continue to take tangible steps to improve the climate on our campus, and continually reinforce our [Principles of Community](#). We are reminded every day of why this work is so important.

## **RESOURCES FOR THOSE IN IMMEDIATE NEED**

As President Wintersteen noted in her recent [message](#) to campus, we care very deeply about how violence targeting Asians and Asian Americans impacts our campus community. We know that many on our campus are suffering due to discrimination, xenophobia, racism, and bigotry. If you or someone you know is in need of additional support, please access the following resources:

### **For Students**

- [Student Counseling Services](#), 515-294-5056
- [Student Assistance](#), 515-294-1020
- [Thielen Student Health Center](#), 515-294-5801
- [Crisis Text Line](#), text “ISU” to 741741 (available 24/7)
- [Campus Climate Reporting System](#)
- [Additional resources](#)

### **For Employees**

- [ISU WellBeing](#)
- [Employee and Family Resources](#), 1-800-327-4692
- [Campus Climate Reporting System](#)

Thank you again for your care and concern and for using your voice on these important issues.

Wendy Wintersteen  
President

Jonathan Wickert  
Senior Vice President and Provost

Toyia Younger  
Senior Vice President for Student Affairs

Sharron M. Evans  
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Reginald Chhen Stewart  
Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Michael E. Norton  
University Counsel

Kristen P. Constant  
Vice President and Chief Information Officer