

Interoffice Communication

Date: October 30, 2020
To: Iowa State University Faculty
From: Jonathan Wickert
Senior Vice President and Provost
Subject: Instruction During Election Week



I am writing in advance of the general election with reminders about faculty responsibilities and expectations for instruction regarding political discussions and activities, and to share resources for students, faculty, and staff.

COVID-19 has already compressed the academic calendar, so it is important for instruction to continue at regularly scheduled times. I ask that you not cancel class on election day nor on the days after the election, nor after results are finalized to the extent that certain outcomes may not be known for some time.

Post-election guidance for faculty

I also write to remind you of the importance of separating our personal speech and opinions from our professional obligations, as well as political advocacy. Guidance on these issues from the Office of University Counsel can be found on the Provost's Office [website](#), and was recently highlighted in an Inside Iowa State [article](#). Previous guidance from my office about [separating personal and institutional advocacy](#) is also available online. These resources are meant to help faculty navigate potential issues by ensuring they are taught or addressed in a consistent and viewpoint-neutral manner.

Faculty should also ensure that discussion or presentation of material, ideas, and topics in the classroom – physical or virtual – is germane to the scholarly subject matter of the course and presented by appropriate means (Faculty Handbook, 7.2.1.2). In cases where political discussion is relevant to the course, views should be shared without disparaging others or their ideas. Above all, I hope you will offer empathy to students and colleagues who may need additional support during these unique times.

Post-election resources and outreach opportunities

The university has scheduled opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to discuss the results of the election. Two examples include:

[Campus Conversation XII: The 2020 Presidential Election – Moving Forward Together](#)

Wednesday, November 4, noon – 1 p.m. (Webex, registration required)

Hosted by the Office of the Vice President For Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, this bi-partisan event features leaders from the Story County Democrats and Story County Republicans.

[So Now What Happens? Understanding the 2020 Election](#)

Tuesday, November 10, 7 p.m. (Webex)

This post-election panel discussion will include faculty members Karen Kedrowski, Zach Bonner, and Jim McCormick from our Department of Political Science, and the event will be moderated by Kelly Winfrey from the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication.

Earlier today, the Division of Student Affairs distributed a message to students, linked [here](#).

Thank you, once again, for serving the needs of our university during the pandemic.

I ask that department chairs share this information with graduate student teaching assistants and instructors.

JAW/jj

C: Wendy Wintersteen, President
Pam Cain, Senior Vice President for Operations and Finance
Toya Younger, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs
Provost's Council
Academic Department Chairs
Carol Faber, President, Faculty Senate
Sara Parris, President, Professional and Scientific Council