

Spring 2024 Our News

Focusing the creative expertise of the University of Iowa on individual Iowa communities to produce significant impacts.



IISC is the University of Iowa's premier program for providing experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students from colleges across our campus. This year, we are partnering with Dubuque and Bondurant to bring hundreds of UI students to address issues in these two unique Iowa communities.



Supporting Dubuque's Marshallese Community by Improving School Attendance
Law students work with Dubuque Community Foundation to improve school attendance

Among the challenges faced by Dubuque's small but growing population of immigrants from the Marshall Islands is school attendance.



Bondurant's Future Looks Green
UI Students Create Parks and Rec Plan for Bondurant

Among the nearly two dozen projects UI students completed this year in collaboration with the City of Bondurant, one of the most exciting is an updated Parks, Trails, and Greenways Master Plan. The original plan was created in 2013 when the

Since the pandemic, truancy has become an increasingly serious and visible problem nationwide, and Dubuque is not alone: more than 30% of its K-12 students experience chronic absenteeism. For Pacific Islander students the rate is closer to 78%.

As part of IISC's 2023-24 partnership with the City of Dubuque, three UI students from the **Community Empowerment Law Project** (CELP) spent spring semester collecting and synthesizing information and creating a formal structure for action. Mason Koelm, Parker Ballard, and Fotini Marut accelerated a project started by the **Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque** (CFGD). Along the way, they gained an appreciation for future work they might undertake in Iowa. "[Because of this project] I feel like I don't have to go to Chicago or a city," said Parker Ballard (JD, 24) "There's a community right here that is doing work I'm interested in."

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community's population was approximately 4,000 residents, as compared to today's estimated--and still quickly growing--population of 10,000. The students looked at the effects of parks on health and wellness, the importance of small neighborhood parks, and how to make parks inviting to all.

A key learning takeaway from the team was the significance of greenways. Melanie Comer (URP, 24), says, "Greenways are areas of green space that act as natural pathways for transportation not just for humans but also for bio-diversity. Greenways can be used not just for transportation, but also as areas for environmental preservation and protection of natural resources."

City Administrator Marketa Oliver thanked the students for presenting work on par with other plans the quickly growing city has recently received from professional firms; she promised that their work would be quickly put into effect.

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IISC Students Share Yearlong Work in Dubuque

10 teams present projects on May 2

Join us this Thursday, May 2, as students from across the UI travel to Dubuque to present their work. This culmination of the yearlong partnership



C.J. Petersen Named 2024 Truman Scholar

Identifies IISC as key attraction to UI graduate program

"I'm just your average gay, deaf, small-town Iowan," is how C.J. Petersen once described himself on social media. A first-

between IISC and the City of Dubuque features presentations of research and plans on a wide range of topics, including language justice, affordable housing, green alleyways, and more.

Following the concurrent sessions (3:00 to 3:45 and 4:00 to 4:45 pm), a celebratory gathering happens at Wayfarer Coffee and EJ's Wine Shop. We'll hear from city and campus leaders, and recognize the relationships that have been built during our year of collaboration. Whether you live in the greater Dubuque area or want to join us from another part of the state, we'd love for you to attend and learn about the work of UI students on behalf of Iowa's oldest city.

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generation Hawkeye and community college transfer, Petersen is an online student earning a bachelor's degree in political science while working full-time as communication director for the state auditor—all from the small farm in rural Audubon County where he lives with his husband, Luke.

Petersen recently became one of 60 college juniors to win a **Truman Scholarship** this year. He becomes one of 15 UI students to have earned the award, which is widely regarded as the premier graduate scholarship for aspiring public service leaders in the U.S., since the program began in 1977.

Petersen hopes to earn a master's degree in urban and regional planning and says IISC is a major attractor to the UI's program. Jennifer New, IISC's public engagement specialist, served on an interview-preparation committee to ready Petersen for the rigorous Truman process.

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