

IOWA

Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities Spring 2023

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



As the academic year comes to an end, we are excited to learn what the students who have worked with IISC will do next year. Many of the individuals who provided creative and professional work on behalf of our community partners this year have already secured jobs as planners, engineers, and community development professionals, or in advanced degree programs. **Congratulations to all IISC graduating students and thank you for your exceptional work!**

We especially want to recognize **Sepehr Yadollahi** (MS, Planning) who received Campus Compact's President's Student Leadership Award for exemplifying "the curiosity, commitment, and talent of an effective leader and public servant." Also, a big congratulations to our colleague **Nick Benson**, current executive director of the Office of Community Engagement and former director of IISC, for receiving the University of Iowa's Diversity Catalyst Award in recognition of his efforts to forge partnerships between the UI and communities across the state.



Solar Trees, Persian Blocks, and

Celebrate IISC's Yearlong Partnership with Clinton

May 4, 3:00 to 6:30 PM

Since last summer, more than one hundred UI students have worked with the City of Clinton to complete 20 projects. On May 4, we invite you to join us in downtown Clinton for presentations by students followed by a reception.

Of special interest to our partners in Clinton are two especially massive and important undertakings: a housing needs assessment and the masterplan for a former brown field that sits at the entry to the southeastern Iowa community. Both projects were completed by teams of graduate students in planning and sustainable development.

Join us to hear closing remarks from **Amanda Thein**, Dean of the UI Graduate College, and **Matt Brooke**, City Manager of Clinton. We'll also recognize an outstanding faculty member and student from this year's teams for their commitment to the IISC-Clinton partnership. We would love for you to see our work firsthand and meet our terrific community partners!

RSVP

Other Surprises

Liberty Square project comes to culmination

Entering the city of Clinton from the west on Highway 30, one drives through an industrial section that is home to such economic anchors as Archer Daniels Midland (ADM). At one point, the road splits and an island of land exists between the multi-directional road. It is easy to miss since currently it's undeveloped. The challenge put forth by the City to UI students was to consider a new life for this area.

After nearly two decades without any significant development, Clinton city officials want to evaluate previous land use plans and ordinances to encourage new uses and investment on the property. They asked IISC students to provide ideas for revitalizing the area known as Liberty Square.

In March, the students presented four concepts that included a design element known as a Persian square, fountains, and solar panel trees. "I've lived here all my life, and the great questions from the students made me take a second look at how I was perceiving things," **Karen Rowan**, Clinton's city planner, said of their ideas. At **the May 4 event**, the group will unveil their final plan.

READ ABOUT THEIR WORK



International Conference for
University, Local Government, and
Community Partners
Free & online this June!

Creative, Equitable Placemaking

Students in planning and public affairs and the arts team up

Walking through an alley between Linn and North Dubuque Streets, a group of University of Iowa students stop to gaze at a mural that wraps around the backside of a building. **Ella Hink**, a fourth-year environmental engineering student, comes forward to describe the piece. Hink and her classmates are on a walking tour of public art in downtown Iowa City that is part of a class focused on the role of creativity and the arts in placemaking.

It is likely one of the most cross-disciplinary classes on campus, in part because it's actually two courses that choose to meet at the same time and share space and assignments. **Travis Kraus** teaches "Community Development through Creative Placemaking" in the School of Planning and Public Affairs, while **Loyce Arthur** teaches "Action! Engage! Art! Creative Placemaking for the Public Good" in the Department of Theatre Arts. In past years, the classes focused on Black businesses, creating a story map. This year, they are partnering with the newly formed Wonderful Westside Neighborhood.

[READ MORE](#)

The University of Iowa is one of the founding members of EPIC-N. This growing international network is dedicated to helping bring academia and communities closer together to tackle local problems: "Solutions that might never be imagined through traditional structures, public goodwill toward the university, real-world learning for students, and meaningful change felt throughout the community."

Travis Kraus, IISC's director, is on EPIC-N's board. He encourages UI faculty and students, as well as community leaders to consider attending the **FREE online conference, June 12-14**: "I always look forward to the conference to learn from other program leaders, faculty, and community partners about how to best engage with our campus and community partners. For anyone involved with IISC, the EPIC-N conference provides valuable insight about the structures and practices to build successful collaborations."

In addition to presentations by practitioners and researchers, you can sign up to give a 10-minute "Flash Talk" or receive a Peer Mentoring session.

[LEARN MORE](#)

<https://iisc.uiowa.edu/>

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IISC | 782 Van Allen Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242

[Unsubscribe nicholas-benson@uiowa.edu](mailto:nicholas-benson@uiowa.edu)

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