



Jan. 21

Where's Bob?

Where did ISU photographer Bob Elbert find these snow-capped blue beacons?

Jan. 21

Senate preparing for budget cuts

Executive vice president and provost Elizabeth Hoffman fielded questions about budget concerns, and senators eyed proposed policy revisions on the termination of faculty positions during the Jan. 19 Faculty Senate meeting.

Jan. 21

Details announced on merit staff's mandatory unpaid days

The state and labor union have approved an implementation plan for mandatory unpaid days for regent university employees covered by the state's contract with AFSCME.

Jan. 21

They'll be back

Remember when a patch of shade was what you craved to escape the heat, and the sun was so bright it hurt your eyes? Take heart; those days will return ... probably just not this month.

Jan. 21

Tax credit could yield unhappy surprise

A tax credit implemented by Congress last spring put more money in ISU employees' pockets in 2009, but you could face a year-end tax liability. Find out why.

Jan. 21

How engaged are our students?

Iowa State's relative strength is in students' learning community, internship, research and community service participation, according to a 2009 national survey of student engagement.

Jan. 21

Spectators welcome at Dance Marathon

Iowa State students and other dancers will attempt to raise \$200,000 in 15 hours Jan. 23 during the annual Dance Marathon. Faculty and staff are welcome to stop by and get in on the fun.

Jan. 21

Round 2 of RIO applications

Eighteen employees have requested participation in the Retirement Incentive Option 2 program thus far.



Warmer days ahead



Dance Marathon

Announcements

- Proposals sought for University Honors Program fall seminars
- Search open for next professor in charge of ISU Carver Academy
- Funeral mass for former Ag dean Lee Kolmer is Jan. 22
- Donate new or used clothing to Haiti earthquake victims through Jan. 22
- \$500 reward for information about vandalism to campus art sculpture
- Women in Motion dance workshop
- Egg experts featured on the History Channel's "Modern Marvels" Jan. 21
- Feed your brain nutritiously
- "Swim and Gym" for elementary children begins Feb. 2

Receptions & open houses

Receptions

- Final Friday exhibit, Jan. 22
- "Shift, Transition, Reflection & Moment" exhibit, Jan. 27

Retirements

- Marcia Clendenen, Jan. 21
- Myrt Hanson, Jan. 22
- Alice Fellingham and Pat Helms, Jan. 25
- Betty Davis, Jan. 27
- Carol Lindgren, Jan. 27
- Sue Griffin, Gayle Huey and Carolyn Klaus, Jan. 28
- John Kingland, Jan. 28
- Gary Russell, Jan. 28
- Bill Britton, Dick Egger, Karen Lind and Beverly Nutt, Jan. 29
- Jeff Berger, Jan. 29
- Larry Dau, Jan. 29
- Mary Ingersoll, Jan. 29 (no event)
- Carolyn Mabee, Jan. 29
- Dave Volkers, Jan. 29
- Chloris Williams, Jan. 29

Arts & events

Craig Brackins

Home again

Leave the cardinal gear in the closet, it's "Gold Rules" when the Cyclone men

Human resource services staff expect that number to go up when benefits changes take over in February.

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face No. 3 Kansas Jan. 23 in Hilton.

Around campus

Finding animal feed uses for ethanol co-product

ISU researchers hope to safely increase the use of an ethanol byproduct as feed for cattle, poultry.

Teams to develop better biofuels

Two ISU research teams will receive \$8 million to research and develop advanced biofuels. Their efforts are part of a \$78 million program in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Iowa Staters part of team that sequences soybean genome

Two collaborating faculty members in agronomy are part of the national team that has sequenced the soybean genome.

Inside tools

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Jan. 21, 2010



Where's Bob?

University photographer Bob Elbert spotted these blue (and overwhelmed) planters on the east side of Meats Laboratory, near the entrance to the linear accelerator facility. Behind the planters rises part of the 1991 sculpture, "Interior Garden" by Mira Engler and Gina Crandell.

Jan. 21, 2010

Senate preparing for faculty cuts

by Erin Rosacker

With talk of budget cuts that could lead to program and department eliminations, the Faculty Senate is examining policy revisions dealing with the termination of faculty positions. Senators got their first look at the proposed changes during their Jan. 19 meeting. They also held a budget discussion that was delayed for a month when the December meeting was canceled due to a storm.

"There is no chance that the budget cut will be less than the 10 percent that we have already taken," said executive vice president and provost Elizabeth Hoffman. "We won't know for several weeks if that is the extent of the budget cuts."

"We really have to make some significant changes to narrow the focus of what we do if we are going to be able to sustain our excellence as a land-grant university going forward," she said. "I recognize that if we are going to reduce the activities that we do, it may require that we eliminate some majors and programs, and maybe even some departments."

Hoffman said ISU administrators are offering colleges advice, but "it's all being decided at the college level. We are leaving it to the deans to come up with proposals."

Hoffman also fielded questions about the budget concerns. Here are the highlights of her responses:

- More furloughs and temporary layoffs would "whittle away the pay of those who remain for the long run"
- The latest media attention "may cause legislators to think twice before cutting us more"
- Elimination of a college is unlikely because ISU only has seven and "no college is lacking for students or research"
- "You cannot have a first-rate university without arts and humanities"
- Decision makers are looking at undergraduate enrollment, research dollars and quality when evaluating programs and departments
- TIAA-CREF contributions will be reinstated as part of the salary policy currently being developed for FY11
- Additional retirement incentives could be offered to faculty in eliminated programs or departments
- Deans have some salary savings from unfilled positions, and fewer faculty hires are expected

Faculty cuts

The Faculty Handbook offers just one sentence about the termination of tenured faculty due to "extraordinary financial crisis." That sentence was removed (leaving the remaining language dealing with nonrenewal of term appointments essentially untouched), and new language is being proposed for:

- Terminating tenured faculty when academic programs are eliminated
- Terminating tenured faculty due to financial exigency
- Terminating faculty without tenure due to elimination of academic programs and financial exigency

Learn more about the proposed policy that deals with terminating faculty positions:

- [Current policy](#)
- [Proposed changes \(PDF\)](#)

Max Porter, chair of the senate's governance council, said the procedures still are being ironed out, and that senate leaders are working with administrators on a memorandum of understanding dealing with those issues. Among them is a mutually agreeable definition of "financial exigency." Porter said senators could see a draft of the memorandum before next month's meeting.

"There are a lot of details to be worked out in this document," Porter said. "The idea is to try to get something in the handbook in a timely fashion -- in this calendar year -- so when the provost's office has to react to the budget concerns, at least we'll have some guidelines of what to do. If we don't pass anything, it leaves us more open to questions."

Steve Porter, a member of the senate subcommittee working on the handbook revisions, said the proposed policy is similar to the University of Iowa's policy.

"If we do have some program and department eliminations, we do it in a way that everyone agrees is a responsible path," Hoffman said. "I don't go into this lightly. It is important to know that we have a policy that respects the rights of faculty."

New president-elect

Steve Freeman ran unopposed to earn the president-elect position for 2010-11. Freeman, a professor in agricultural and biosystems engineering, also serves as associate director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.

Other business

In business held over from the November meeting, senators approved:

- Name changes for undergraduate and graduate majors in apparel, merchandising, design and production to apparel, merchandising and design
- Name changes for undergraduate (hotel, restaurant and institution management) and graduate (foodservice and lodging management) majors to hospitality management
- Merging two undergraduate majors (logistics and supply chain management; and operations and supply chain management) into a single supply chain management major

A slate of new academic items, eligible for a vote at next month's meeting, was introduced. The proposals include:

- A minor in critical studies in design
- A master's degree in information assurance
- A master's degree in civil engineering
- A master's degree in materials science and engineering
- A bachelor's degree in meeting and event planning
- Eliminating the master's degree in business

A *Faculty Handbook* revision dealing with the senate's open meetings policy also will be voted on next month. The changes simplify the language, removing outdated requirements.

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*The mandatory unpaid days/furlough plan is one university-wide strategy approved Oct. 29 by the state Board of Regents to help meet a \$24.5 million state funding reversion. Other strategies include the **partial closing** of the university Dec. 24-Jan. 3 and a **temporary reduction in the university's contribution** to employees' TIAA-CREF retirement accounts. The board approved a **second retirement incentive option** program, for which most of the savings will be seen in FY11. Lastly, the board approved a \$100-per-student spring semester surcharge at its Dec. 10 meeting.*

Details announced for merit employees' mandatory unpaid days

by Anne Krapfl

As approved by members of the Iowa AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) Council 61, AFSCME-covered merit employees will be required to take five unpaid days (not more than 40 hours) by the end of the fiscal year. An implementation plan for the mandatory unpaid days for employees at Iowa's regent schools received final state and union approval Jan. 12. However, employees could use their mandatory unpaid days as early as Dec. 1, 2009.

The unpaid days are part of a proposal, announced Nov. 9 by Gov. Chet Culver and AFSCME state leaders, designed to avoid layoffs among state employees whose positions are covered by the AFSCME contract. Culver announced Oct. 8 he would cut state spending by 10 percent in response to declining revenues. Sixty-six percent of AFSCME members participated in a vote on the proposal Nov. 19-25. Of those who voted, 59 percent approved the measure, 41 percent voted no.

How it works

Here are a few highlights of the implementation plan for regent employees whose positions are covered by the AFSCME contract. More information is available in an [online FAQ \(pdf\)](#).

- Employees can take the mandatory unpaid days in hourly increments, one workday at a time or all five days consecutively.
- Funding sources or salary levels of employees doesn't modify the five-day requirement.
- AFSCME contract-covered employees' paychecks will be reduced for the pay period(s) the mandatory unpaid days are used.
- Mandatory unpaid days should be scheduled and approved just like vacation days. Employees should request approval from supervisors.
- Mandatory unpaid days will be treated as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime in a workweek.
- Mandatory unpaid days won't change benefits coverage, leave accrual rates or contribution rates. Employees will have to cover premium payments if their adjusted pay isn't enough to make full payment in any given month.
- For IPERS participants, if the mandatory unpaid days reduce their final average salary, they may be eligible to make contributions to their IPERS accounts. The form to elect this option should be submitted to ISU by July 1.
- Mandatory unpaid days may be used before or after a holiday. The AFSCME contract provision that requires merit employees to work the day before or after a university holiday to be paid for the holiday will be waived. Holidays may not be used as mandatory unpaid days.
- Mandatory unpaid days will be prorated for permanent part-time employees. For example, an employee who works 20 hours per week would be required to take 2.5 unpaid days. For nine- 10- and 11-month employees, the mandatory unpaid days will be prorated based on their number of

scheduled work hours in 2010.

The unpaid days requirement also will apply, on a prorated basis, to merit employees who retire or are newly hired between Dec. 1, 2009, and June 30. In both instances, the rule is one mandatory unpaid day for each month employed during that seven-month period, up to a total of five days.

Departments are encouraged to be flexible in granting mandatory unpaid days when employees request them, and supervisors should make sure each employee is scheduling his or her days off.

An additional agreement between Culver and AFSCME leaders, to suspend the state's contribution to employees' deferred compensation (401(k) match, not IPERS) through June 30, does not apply to employees at the regent schools.

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Jan. 21, 2010



They'll be back

Remember when a patch of shade was what you craved to escape the heat, and the sun was so bright it hurt your eyes? Take heart; those days will return ... probably just not this month. *Archive photo by Bob Elbert.*

Jan. 21, 2010

Taxpayers beware

by Paula Van Brocklin

You may want to examine your 2009 W-2 form closely to see how the Making Work Pay tax credit, passed by Congress last spring, will impact your federal tax liability this year.

This legislation required the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to implement new tax tables that provided a \$400 per individual or \$800 per married couple tax credit for 2009. This resulted in a reduction in federal tax withholding of about \$45 per month for individuals claiming single, and \$67 per month for those claiming married. For ISU employees, the reduced withholding started with the March 2009 paychecks.

Too much of a good thing?

Though it's nice to receive a little extra money in your paycheck each month, employees with more than one job or married couples with both spouses working could have a federal tax liability at year-end. Individuals who file single and have only one job should notice little or no additional federal tax liability.

If you are in one of the above situations and didn't make the necessary adjustments on your W-4 for 2009, you may be on the hook for a greater federal tax liability this year. The tax credit is still in effect for 2010, so now's the time to adjust your federal withholding amount, if necessary. To make changes, complete a new [W-4 form](#). You also may want to consult your tax adviser.

More information about the Making Work Pay tax credit is on the [payroll web site](#).

Jan. 21, 2010

Strengths of an ISU education: learning communities, internships, service

by Anne Krapfl

In a 2009 national survey of university students' assessment of their own educational experiences, Iowa State students reported higher participation in learning communities, internships, community service, study abroad, team assignments completed outside of class time and research projects with faculty than did students nationally. Conversely, Iowa State students reported fewer incidents of "serious conversations with students of another race or ethnicity," writing papers and studying a foreign language than the national averages in those categories.

2009 marked Iowa State's eighth participation in the 10-year-old National Survey of Student Engagement. ISU didn't participate in 2000 or 2004. The survey features approximately 85 questions and is administered to freshman and senior undergraduates. At Iowa State, 520 freshmen (21 percent of the class) and 608 seniors (24 percent) responded to an invitation last February to participate in the 2009 survey. It is sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and administered by the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University. The results are intended to help universities increase student engagement and improve learning.

The questions are assigned to one of five clusters as a way to measure effective undergraduate practices. The five are:

- Academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experiences
- Supportive campus environment

Incremental improvement

According to survey analysts, Iowa State has recorded upward trends among both freshmen and seniors in all five clusters over the course of its participation in the NSSE.

NSSE benchmark trends

Area	Lowest response*	Highest response*
Academic challenge		
Seniors	50.5 (2001)	54.8 (2009)
Freshmen	48.0 (2005)	51.5 (2009)
Active and collaborative learning		
Seniors	45.4 (2003)	50.6 (2009)
Freshmen	35.8 (2001)	42.2 (2009)

Student-faculty interaction		
Seniors	38.6 (2003)	43.5 (2009)
Freshmen	32.0 (2003)	37.4 (2009)
Enriching educational experiences**		
Seniors	38.6 (2006)	42.7 (2009)
Freshmen	27.8 (2007)	30.4 (2009)
Supportive campus environment		
Seniors	52.1 (2001)	57.4 (2009)
Freshmen	57.6 (2005)	63.3 (2009)
*Weighted average of the student scores		
** Due to change in response options, data from 2004 and earlier not comparable		

Associate provost for academic programs David Holger said Iowa State leaders decided to begin to participate every other year in the NSSE. He cited the cost (approximately \$10,000) and small changes in data over one year as reasons for the change.

A [dozen slides summarizing Holger's presentation](#) Jan. 10 are online at the President's Council web site.

Jan. 21, 2010



Having fun with featured families at the 2007 Dance Marathon. *Submitted photo.*

Dance Marathon hopes to raise \$200,000 in 15 hours this weekend

by Anne Krapfl

Iowa State student and non-student "spirit" dancers will stay on their feet for 15 hours Jan. 23 (9 a.m.-midnight) in the Memorial Union Great Hall in support of **Dance Marathon**. More than 900 preregistered to participate. Dance Marathon is a nationwide student philanthropy that raises money for Children's Miracle Network to help children and their families cope with life-threatening illnesses and diseases.

To participate, dancers need to raise at least \$200 and spirit dancers at least \$75. They'll spend the day with Dance Marathon families -- playing games, dancing and watching performances by student organizations. Businesses donate food to keep the dancers energized.

You're invited

The Iowa State event begins with an award-winning "run-in," in which dancers circle the room. Dancers learn a morale dance -- a medley of songs with choreographed dance moves that they'll perform at the top of every hour as motivation.

Non-dancers are welcome to watch anytime during the marathon. At 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., faculty and staff are especially invited to visit. They'll have the chance to meet a family who benefits from Dance Marathon and take a tour of the activities (and participate if they choose). Admission is free.

Dance Marathon made its debut at Iowa State 13 years ago and has become the largest student-run philanthropy effort on campus. Last year, nearly 500 dancers raised more than \$171,000 for the University of Iowa Children's Hospital through Children's Miracle Network. The goal this year is to surpass \$200,000.

Jan. 21, 2010

Round two of RIO applications

by Erin Rosacker

As the application deadline nears its midway point, 18 employees have requested participation in the **Retirement Incentive Option 2 program (RIO2)**. Human resource services will accept applications until March 31.

The health and dental benefits for retirees is determined by what coverage is in effect when an application is submitted. ISU Plan coverage changes made during last fall's open change period begin Feb. 1.

"We expect to see more once the benefits go into effect," said Mike Otis, HRS associate director.

Eligibility requirements

Like the original program, RIO2 offers continued health and dental coverage. ISU will pay the combined employee and employer costs for five years, then normal retiree rates will be applied. Medicare coverage rates take over at age 65.

This second round of retirement incentives is available for ISU employees age 57 or older with at least 10 years of service. Employees on federal retirement programs must be 50 years old and have 20 years of service. ISU has 1,420 employees eligible for the new program, which requires them to retire by July 30.

Four of the 18 RIO2 applications have been denied. ISU approved 210 retirement applications from the first RIO plan. Those employees -- 99 professional and scientific staff, 95 merit staff and 16 faculty -- must retire by the end of this month.

Find out more

The HRS web site offers **more information** on the RIO2 program, including a **Q&A (PDF)**, **checklist and application form (PDF)**.

Jan. 21, 2010



Home again

The Cyclone men's basketball squad, led by junior forward Craig Brackins, welcomes the No. 3 Kansas Jayhawks to Hilton Jan. 23. Tip-off is scheduled for 1 p.m. The athletics department has designated Saturday as "Gold Rules" day; fans are encouraged to wear gold apparel. *Photo by Steve Pope.*