

DEI ANNUAL REPORT

This past year has tested our country with challenges both unexpected and long overdue. There were lives lost, livelihoods paused, heartache, and hope. Iowa Law has worked hard to bring light to these challenges and pursue change in our community, and beyond. There is much more work to be done but it's important to celebrate all we have accomplished as we continue to push forward in our pursuit of justice.

Neda Barrett

Senior HR Director and Director of DEI & Global Engagement

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2020-2021 Annual DEI Report

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Listening and Learning

This past year was one of listening and learning. We worked hard to make data driven and community informed decisions to create lasting and meaningful impact. Tactics included everything from listening sessions to multiple surveys to hear from students, faculty, and staff.

Listening sessions were conducted with each student organization at Iowa Law to understand their perception on inclusivity by asking, "What does it mean to be inclusive at the College of Law?". The report produced by these listening sessions will help us gauge concerns of our students and help frame questions for our Spring 2022 Climate Survey. This Iowa Law internal survey aims to be an annual practice to help inform our efforts with data.

71%

completion rate in
UI Climate Survey

At the university-wide level, a Climate Survey was distributed this fall to help understand how employees viewed their safety and their perceptions about diversity and inclusion on campus. We saw an impressive survey completion rate of 71% among regular full/part time employees with at least a 50% FTE appointment in the College of Law, compared to the university average of 38%. We were proud to have the input and insight from so many and happy to learn that achieving diversity, equity, inclusion was personally important to 96% of respondents.

Next steps from this survey will be working to identify themes, create the annual internal Iowa Law survey, and create working groups with specific action plans.

Faculty Impact

Associate Dean for International and Comparative Law Programs and the Bessie Dutton Murray Professor, [Adrien Wing](#), has made an incredible impact over the past year. Not only in her scholarship and teaching, but through her leadership with the Iowa Law Anti-Racism Committee (ILARAC), the [University of Iowa Center for Human Rights \(UICHR\)](#), and in implementing DEI initiatives.

As the director of UICHR, Dean Wing was instrumental in developing [extensive programming](#) to address today's most pressing issues through the human rights lens. The virtual events included the [Human Rights & COVID-19](#) series and the [Racial Equity & Human Rights](#) series along with countless guest speakers. Wing recruited thought leaders,

experts, and top scholars from across the country to talk on a myriad of issues facing our nation. These events garnered more than 5,000 attendees in the course of just a few months.

5,000+

attended virtual
programming hosted by UI
Center for Human Rights

Another highlight this past year was the reinstatement of the [Faculty Fellowship program](#). Phoebe Jean Pierre was our inaugural fellow. While finishing her JD/PhD at Northwestern, she joined our community in the fall of 2020 under the uncertain circumstances of a continuing pandemic, yet perfectly positioned to advance her research which focuses on health communications and health disparities in vulnerable and minority communities.

“Starting as the new Iowa Faculty Fellow during the pandemic presented various challenges, but I could not have asked for a better team of faculty to support me through my early career as an academic. Here at Iowa, I have found inspiring mentors who have taught me invaluable skills to enable me in my pursuit of legal scholarship and teaching. This has been an incredible opportunity and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Iowa College of Law. I look forward to this upcoming year,” Phoebe shared.

Our next Faculty Fellow, [Christopher Mathis](#), will join us in the fall of 2021. Mathis is currently completing a PhD at the University of Virginia and previously earned his JD from the University of South Carolina in 2017. His research interests are at the intersection of race, politics, law, and higher education. He is also a fellow at [the American Bar Foundation / Access Lex Institute Doctoral Fellowship Program in Legal & Higher Education](#).

In addition to the Faculty Fellowship, the University’s Path to Distinction program, led at Iowa Law by professors [Jason Rantanen](#) and [César Rosado Marzán](#) and Senior Human Resources Director and Director of DEI and Global Engagement, [Neda Barrett](#), provided training on best practices for faculty recruitment and retention. This program is designed to improve faculty hiring as the UI works to become even more of a destination university in the coming years.

Iowa Law Anti-Racism Action Committee

In reaction to the killing of George Floyd in May of 2020, Iowa Law engaged in self-reflection leading to action in forming the Iowa Law Anti-Racism Action Committee (ILARAC). The committee’s purpose was to create an action plan for the College of Law. The group worked tirelessly over the summer to put together actionable recommendations.

This dedicated group, spanning faculty, students and staff, made numerous recommendations that they shared with the faculty, DEI Committee, and law school administration. Proposed initiatives included among other things developing a DEI climate survey, diversifying the student, staff, and faculty body, incorporating DEI discussions in orientation, recognizing cultural, ethnic, and religious holidays when scheduling events, and building community. Action occurred on each initiative with continuous updates on the recommendations to the DEI committee and law school administration. More progress on initiatives are listed below.

Professor Rosado Marzán, who officially started at Iowa Law in the fall of 2020, quickly engaged with the challenging and important work of the ILARAC in the summer before his faculty appointment began.

Rosado Marzán shared, "I'm a bit embarrassed to say that before coming to Iowa Law I had not heard the terms "diversity, equity, and inclusion" as a programmatic thing. I guess I was stuck on just plain "diversity" and perhaps "multiculturalism." Boy, did I have to learn fast!"

There was a lot to learn. The process started with urgency but uncertainty, as ILARAC and different groups had to figure out how to accomplish tasks in the difficult virtual environment forced by COVID-19. Other DEI matters, some thorny and difficult, also arose. If anything, they helped people get acquainted with Iowa Law's DEI climate and better understand how and where they could make the biggest impact.

The group's hard work this year yielded several positive results.

Initiatives:

- New [DEI annual giving account](#) to support DEI initiatives
- [Alumni DEI Council](#)
- Created faculty [DEI committee](#) to improve specific areas such as faculty training, mentorship, curriculum and more.
- Recruited [most diverse class](#) in Iowa Law history
- Faculty Recruitment and Retention
 - Commitment to DEI in all job advertisements, students included in faculty hiring process, exit interviews created with climate questions.
 - Path to Distinction partners were identified and worked to conduct trainings at Iowa Law on search committee strategies to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion into recruitment processes.
- Faculty Workshop on difficult conversations with Professor Sherry Watt from the Being Institute on "Being Skills"
- Hired [Neda Barrett to serve as Director of DEI and Global Engagement](#)
- Enhanced Communication on DEI with [website updates](#)
- Enhanced academic success program
- Preferred name and pronouns added to Law Directory
- Land Acknowledgment added to Iowa Law home page

Student Engagement

Student involvement has been vital to ensuring our DEI initiatives are carried out and supported throughout the student body. [Meddie Demmings](#) and [Gada Al Herz](#) served as the DEI Student co-chairs. They attended the DEI Alumni Steering Committee meetings and contributed greatly to the final charter for the committee, providing crucial student voices to this process. They also recruited two students who will serve as student representatives on the DEI Alumni Committee, Sidney Holler and Austin Kelly.

This year the DEI Committee also appointed 3L Brooke Noack to serve as the Media Chair. Brooke was pivotal in ensuring that the inaugural monthly DEI email was created and distributed throughout the College of Law. This messaging has substantially improved our way of communicating regarding DEI events and opportunities to all faculty, staff, and students.

We also relied heavily on student involvement in the work of the DEI subcommittees and encouraged student organization leaders to participate in the listening sessions. Our work and outreach to student organizations will continue in the fall and we hope to be a sounding board to them as issues or concerns may arise.

Alumni Leadership

The DEI Alumni Council has been in the works before COVID-19 hit and Iowa Law is proud to announce that the Council's work is underway. It hosted its first meeting in May and has now met three times. The Council has a mandate to be "student-centric." It is made up of dedicated alumni who will help Iowa recruit and retain a more diverse student body, mentor those students, and hold the institution accountable on DEI initiatives and goals set.

"Iowa Law brought in its [most diverse class in history](#) last fall and that was the prompt for the DEI Alumni Council. The Council will make us a stronger law school by helping us to serve all of our students better. I view the Council as a source of wisdom, guidance and support for our students, faculty and staff." Dean Kevin Washburn shared.

24.6%

students of color
in entering class,
highest in history

Alumni Awards and Achievements

Mark Y. Liu ('05) was named among the [2021 Minority Leaders of Influence by the Los Angeles Business Journal](#). As President of the Asian Business League of Southern California, Liu continues to focus on engaging, assisting, and counseling minority-owned businesses, both regionally and nationwide.

Berneta Haynes ('13), senior director of policy and access at Georgia Watch, was recognized as [Families USA's Health Care Value Advocate of the Year](#). She earned the award because of her exemplary work focusing on health care access and equity to help close opportunity gaps and promote economic mobility.

Farah Muscadin ('02), director of the Office of Police Oversight for the City of Austin, was named the [DEI Leader of the Year](#) for the 2021 Champions of Change Awards.

Aisha Shelton Adam ('02), founder and managing partner of Adam Law, was named to Profiles in Diversity Journal's [2020 Women Worth Watching](#).

Crystal Pound ('16) & Alex Lodge ('16) earned nonprofit status for their organization, [Justice 101](#), based on a course they taught at Iowa Law called Street Law. The nonprofit educates students and young people of color about Fourth Amendment rights.

Eric McBurney ('11), a Taiwanese-born lawyer in the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, takes on the task of defending a man arrested on charges of assaulting two Asian residents including a 75-year-old woman. His work is featured in the [New York Times](#).

And the list continues to grow.

What's Next?

While we have had a successful year and made great strides, this important work continues. We are energized by what we have accomplished and look forward to all the projects that await us this fall. We have so much more to learn from each other as we continue to respectfully raise each other's voices and work on new collaborations.

We will continue our work on last summer's ILARAC recommendations and dive into the action steps in our DEI strategic plan. We all have a role in creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment at the College of Law and we are excited for our college to continue its growth in these areas. These efforts will make our law school stronger and help our graduates succeed in an increasingly complex and diverse world.