IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Web Style and Story Guide

Last Updated: 9/8/22

Table of Contents

Introduction

Our story is not entirely ours to tell. It lives in the hearts and minds of Iowans, and in the world at large. **Our challenge is to tell it anyway.**

We must tell the story of Iowa State in a way that resonates with everybody, whether their conceptions have been informed through generations of experience or if they are seeing the words "Iowa State University" for the first time.

This guide was developed to provide focus, context, and a voice for the Iowa State story as told through its website, launched in 2022. It seeks to clarify an accurate, consistent sense of who we are, with specific guidelines for how we communicate. We encourage you to refer back to this document when developing web content.

Within this document, you'll find guidance for crafting the Iowa State story, including best practices for content that will serve the unified feel of the new website while also delivering on key aspects of performance such as search engine visibility and user engagement. Use this document to produce, edit, update, and publish content across the Iowa State University web ecosystem.

Audiences

While the Iowa State website (**iastate.edu**) serves an entire universe of information to a wide array of audiences, its primary (nearly singular) purpose is as a tool for student recruitment. Even content that's clearly intended for other audiences, such as media requests or faculty position listings, should be viewed through the lens of student recruitment. Doing so will help maintain a consistent tone and sense of purpose across all web properties.

Who are our audiences, what do they need, and what do they respond to?

Audience 1:
Prospective Students (Undergraduate)

- **Need** to *feel* what it's like to attend Iowa State

- **Respond** well to Iowa State's humanistic approach to science, arts, and technology education, as well as learning communities and faculty/peer support

- **Should** feel included and welcomed by the user experience of exploring the Iowa State website in a manner similar to their inclusion in the University itself

Audience 2:
Families of Prospective Students (Undergraduate)

- **Need** to find relevant information as easily as possible

- **Respond** well to plain language, clear instruction, and scannable layouts

- **Should** feel immediately confident in their ability to navigate the website successfully

Additional Audiences:
Prospective Graduate and Professional Students, Current Students, Faculty, Staff, Employee Recruiting, Alumni, Media, Vendors

- **Need** a clear path to the specific information they seek

- **Respond** well to a sense of community and involvement

- **Should** feel urged to participate in the Iowa State community

The Iowa State Story

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Platform

The Platform is a distillation of Iowa State's key messaging – from a brief description to a more detailed, evidence-based explanation of value. It's meant to be simple, memorable, and moving. We use a clear hierarchy to organize the messaging into three levels: Promise, Support, and Proof Points for key audiences. How far you go down the flow chart depends on the audience you're addressing, the channel you're using, and what you hope to achieve.

Promise

Provides an easily referenced and precise summary of Iowa State's desired audiences, the world we operate in, and the specific value we can provide that competitors can't. Its function is to guide and focus executions of the Iowa State story, but is not necessarily intended for consumption by external audiences.
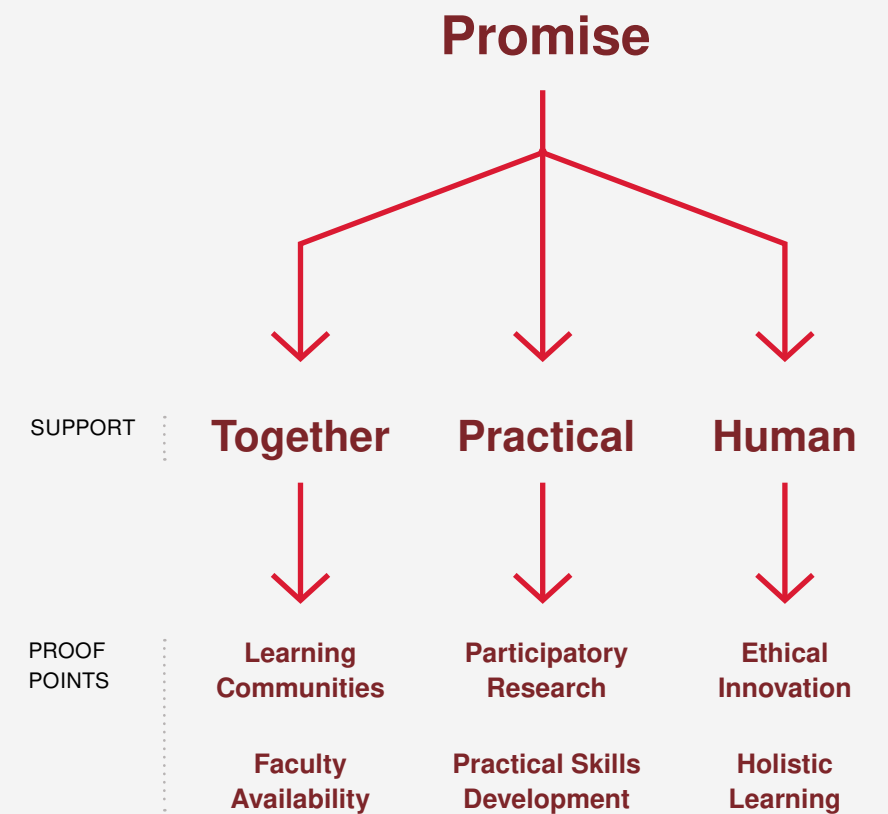
Support

Explains how Iowa State delivers on its promise. These may be used in whole, in part, or in summary throughout messaging.

Proof Points

Provide context for Support based on the messaging content and target audience. Since the details are specific and nuanced, they're best chosen by the author. It's important to remember that these details must align with the statements at the Support level.

PLATFORM HIERARCHY

Promise

SUPPORT

Together **Practical** **Human**

PROOF POINTS

Learning Communities Participatory Research Ethical Innovation

Faculty Availability Practical Skills Development Holistic Learning

Promise

A promise statement is as unique as Iowa State itself. But it generally answers the following:

CLIENT/PRODUCT:
Who are we?

AUDIENCE:
Who are we talking to?

COMPETITIVE SET/CATEGORY:
Who do we compare to?

REASON TO BELIEVE:
What can we offer that's unique?

Iowa State University is the heartland land–grant university that supports student discovery of practical knowledge and technical skills for the betterment of the world, while always focusing on the human impact of its work.

Support

Together

Iowa State is a community that welcomes, includes, and supports students in their development because we believe in working together.

Audience 1 (Prospective Undergrad) Proof

Learning Communities. Finding your friends is just as important as finding your passion. Iowa State Learning Communities are supportive peer groups based around shared interests and are open to every student. They help ensure that you will never feel lost or alone on the way to where you're going.

Audience 2 (Prospective Undergrad Families) Proof

Faculty Availability. Professional and academic guidance must extend beyond the classroom. Iowa State faculty and staff are dedicated mentors, teachers, and collaborators who are willing to go the extra mile to spark the curiosity of engaged students. They help ensure that new knowledge and skills are always accessible.

Additional Audiences

Community for learning, working, and living.

Support

Practical

Iowa State is a research hub that guides learning toward practical innovation because we believe the purpose of science and technology is to improve quality of life.

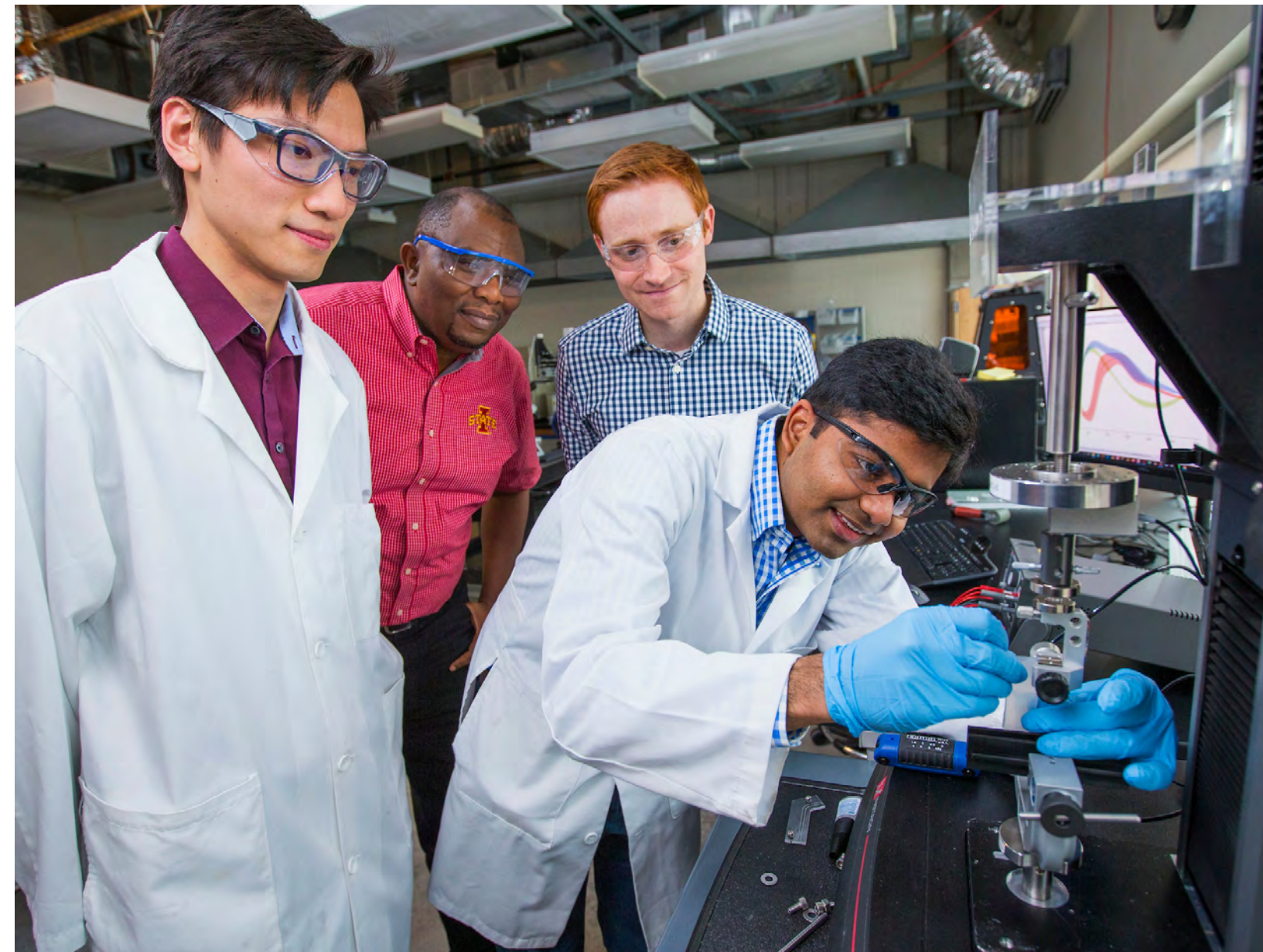### Audience 1 (Prospective Undergrad) Proof

Participatory Research. When you're motivated to make a difference in the world, you need to learn how to make it happen. Research and service opportunities at Iowa State are open to undergraduate participation. Start right away, and graduate with practical experience.

Audience 2 (Prospective Undergrad Families) Proof

Practical Skills Development. Career success goes beyond the first job after graduation. Iowa State emphasizes practical learning experiences that develop the professional skills that can only be gained by doing. Through opportunities in research, service, and experiential learning, Iowa State students hit the ground running in their field of choice.

Additional Audiences

Making discoveries together.

Support (cont'd)

Human

Iowa State is an institution that shares discoveries and solutions for the sake of making positive contributions to humanity.

Audience 1 (Prospective Undergrad) Proof

Ethical Innovation. Innovation should not exist simply for the sake of innovation. Classes, research, and the community of Iowa State are all focused on ensuring that our students understand the human impact of both the work they do and *how* they do it. Build a better world by learning what "better" means to people.

Audience 2 (Prospective Undergrad Families) Proof

Holistic Learning. True learning means more than what you know. Iowa State places as much emphasis on building relationships and community as it does on gaining new knowledge and skills. Our students graduate "Loyal and True" to each other, to the integrity of their work, and to the world at large.

Additional Audiences

Home to human breakthroughs.

Telling Our Story

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Narrative

Now that we know who we are, what we promise, and how we prove it to the people who use our website, let's set our compass to how that story should *feel* as we tell it.

Heart

This one word encapsulates what Iowa State is and how Iowa State works.

"Heart" evokes drive, innovation, and tenacity. It emphasizes inclusivity, community, and caring. It echoes Iowa State's "heartland" location and central value to our state, country, and world.

When deciding how to show and tell the story of Iowa State, always choose the option that resonates most with the concept of "heart."

Narrative

Implementation

Do:

✅ **Conceptualize "heart" as the jumping-off point** for frequent explanations of why Iowa State favors a certain approach:

> *i.e., consider "because our world..." as a messaging construction.*

✅ **Substitute "human" as a stand-in for "heart" in overt messaging**, especially when discussing Iowa State's approach to STEM education and innovation.

✅ **Consider "heart" as a proof point in crafting a friendly, clear user experience** – we care for those who use our website by using plain language to make navigation easier.

✅ **Make use of existing messaging that resonates with the "heart" narrative**:

> *e.g., "Loyal Sons, Forever True."*

✅ **Choose depictions of Iowa State that emphasize the following aspects of "heart"**:

> *Human activity and connections*

> *Deeper meanings of beauty and truth wherever possible*

> *Focus on the task at hand*

> *Dispersion and intake of vital information*

Narrative

Implementation

Don't:

❌ **Overtly use the word "heart" as a tagline or headline, especially when devoid of other context:**

> *e.g., "The University with Heart," etc.*

❌ **Use "family" to promote the close-knit nature of the Iowa State community, as this could be seen as exclusionary**. Note that students, faculty, and staff can freely use this word when attributed, just not the Iowa State voice.

❌ **Choose flowery, effusive, or overly poetic language as a means to convey the "heart" narrative** – think of "heart" as a powerfully efficient muscle that delivers oxygen to every extremity.

❌ **Employ "heart" as an expression of proximity that could be misinterpreted as an implication of inappropriate physical contact**:

> *e.g., "faculty works closely with students…"*

❌ **Oversimplify the use of "heart":**

> *Heart puns and wordplay*

> *Hand hearts*

> *Use of heart symbols and icons in maps, etc.*

> *Overuse of heart emojis*

Storytelling Tips

How you say it is as important as what you say. Before you begin writing in the Iowa State voice, ask yourself, "What writing style best proves our story?" The following tips will help you stay on track:

Speak plainly, don't use jargon

Academic and technical writing tends to rely on jargon and acronyms in order to establish credibility. Since the Iowa State "heart" narrative focuses on support for the development of students, we establish credibility on our website by communicating clearly in plain, understandable language.

Vary sentence and paragraph length

When writing long-form content, run-on sentences are hard to avoid. Make sure to split up statements that convey two ideas. Variation in sentence length increases readability. Feel free to split out key statements into single-line paragraphs for ease of scannability.

Use reasonable conjunctions

When they're useful for saving time, conjunctions convey a sense of care and familiarity to the reader. When overdone or too folksy, there'll be confusion.

Name usefully

Prize visibility and clarity over accuracy in naming conventions, and explain any necessary nuances with helpful explanatory copy. (See more info on this subject in the "**SEO Best Practices**" section of this guide).

Communicate *why*

Iowa State is a unique place with a uniquely Iowan approach to education. There's a reason why we do everything we do, and it always ties back to our core values. Our ability to highlight this, often and thoughtfully, is what makes the "heart" narrative resonate.

Smile with your writing

Avoid negatives while speaking matter-of-factly. When absolutely necessary, use "avoid" or "without" instead of "unless" or "don't."

Our Voice

Plain, but not simple.

Positive, but not effusive.

Practical, but not blunt.

Familiar, but not folksy.

Humble, but not modest.

Quick Style Guide

Oxford (serial) comma?
Yes, always.

Ampersands?
No, never.

Punctuation in headlines?
Only when a question mark is needed.

Dash usage?
En-dash separated by spaces (–),
not a full em-dash (—).

HTML: `–`

Exclamation points?
Only for social media or athletics.

Writing for the Web

General Best Practices

- Devote 50% of your creative energy to your headlines (they may be the first and only things people read anyway). Put 25% of your energy into the first sentence of each paragraph and photo captions. The remaining 25% is for everything else.

- Use clear, descriptive page titles. (See more specific guidance on titles in "**SEO Best Practices**" section)

- Use as few words as possible to get the point across.

- Avoid large blocks of text, and break content into smaller paragraphs. Communicating readability is as important as writing readable copy.

- Use sub-headlines throughout the text to make it easier for readers to skim.

- Use bulleted or numbered lists rather than in-sentence lists wherever feasible.

- Use photos, charts, and videos to communicate as well as offer your readers a visual breather.

- Use descriptive hyperlink anchor text ("Learn more about our **application process**" instead of "Visit our application process page at **https://www.admissions.iastate.edu/apply**")
  - TIP: to improve the user experience for screen readers, arrange hyperlink anchor text to appear at the end of sentences and paragraphs so that the link destination information does not interrupt the flow of the sentence or thought.

- Avoid "click here" as a call to action for hyperlinks. Simply make the word, phrase, or sentence that refers to the content being linked the actual link.

- Proofread! Then reread your work out loud before you post to the web. It will help you catch mistakes you didn't notice the first time.

- Think like a journalist. Include the most important information at the beginning, then layer on additional details throughout the piece. It allows the reader to get what they need immediately. And it makes it easier for you to cut text if necessary.

- Use "us" or "we" only when it includes anyone who might read whatever you're writing. Otherwise, avoid first person plural.

- When appropriate, write in the second person. It makes it easier to connect with the reader. When using second person, always clarify who "you" means (e.g., "If you're applying as a transfer student...").

- Always spell out the full title first before introducing any acronym, and in any case where acronym use is unavoidable, always show the acronym in parenthesis after the first full-title usage.

Writing for the Web

SEO Best Practices

As a guiding principle of SEO, always consider your reader and their expectations for the content you're publishing.

Metadata

Familiarize yourself with the current conventions of metadata. Basic best practices are outlined here, but specifics will change over time as search engine algorithms evolve. For updated guidance, visit the **Moz SEO Learning Center**.

URLs (under 90 characters if possible): use succinct and descriptive titles for subdirectories and pages.

Title Tags (always 60 characters or less):

- Lead with the most search-relevant information as a prefix, e.g., "Dean of Students" rather than "Office of the Dean of Students."

- Use a hyphen "–" rather than a pipe "|" as the main separator of Title Tag sections.

- Include a branded suffix that confirms that this is the official Iowa State website for all pages.

Metadata Descriptions (always 155 characters or less):

- If no Metadata Description is provided for a page, Google will automatically display a chunk of on-page content. It's better to provide one.

- Use relevant keywords in Metadata Description text. Search terms used to find the page will be highlighted in bold on the search engine results page.

- Include active call-to-action verbs in the Metadata Description copy.

H1 Headlines (always 60 characters or less):

- Only use one H1 Headline per page.

- In the H1 Header text, accurately summarize all information users can expect to find on the remainder of the page.

- Start H1s with the most likely search term used to find the information on the page.

H2 Headlines (always 70 characters or less):

- While there is no limit to the number of H2 headers on a page, use them only to summarize information in a distinct subsection of page content, e.g., "Internship Opportunities" as a subsection of the "Career Services" page.

Alt Image Tags (always add Alt Image Tag text for every image):

- Summarize the visual information depicted in the image in plain language. Avoid "photo of…" but include other key context such as "infographic" or "bar graph."

- Consider including keywords that could lead searchers to find the image in an image search.

Writing for the Web

SEO Best Practices

As a guiding principle of SEO, always consider your reader and their expectations for the content you're publishing.

Keywords

Search engines have developed a very sophisticated understanding of language and user intent, but keywords are still important.

Test search volume and difficulty of ranking when composing headlines and page titles.

- This can be done quickly using a free tool such as the **Keyword Surfer Chrome Extension**.

- Choose more popular phrasings where feasible.

- Begin headlines and page titles with the most relevant keywords, e.g., "Dean of Students" rather than "Office of the Dean of Students."

Avoid overt keyword stuffing and unnecessary repetition in on-page copy, but include applicable descriptive modifiers such as "online master's program" at least once.

Consider using "long-tail" keyword inquiries with multiple words in plain English (e.g., "How do I get an official transcript from Iowa State?") as section headings.

Evaluate keyword performance on a regular basis to inform editorial strategy.

- To find keyword performance data by page, use **Google Search Console**.

- Monitor top performing non-branded keywords and focus on related content during editorial planning.

- Pay special attention to "striking distance" keywords that currently rank pages near an elevated tier of visibility on search engine results pages, such as:

  - Keyword inquiries that rank an Iowa State page in position 2.

  - Keyword inquiries that rank an Iowa State page in position 4–6.

  - Keyword inquiries that rank an Iowa State page in position 11–13.

- Review search engine page results for these "striking distance" keywords to see what information or content is present on competitor pages but missing from the Iowa State page.

- Plan to edit on-page content to optimize for "striking distance" keywords, add information or content, and monitor results.

Showing
Our Story

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Typography

Merriweather

Italic   Regular   **Bold**

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#$%^&*()_+=?

Download Merriweather →

SYSTEM FONT ALTERNATIVE
Georgia

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Nimbus Sans L

Italic   Regular   **Bold**

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!@#$%^&*()_+=?

Download Nimbus Sans →

SYSTEM FONT ALTERNATIVE
Arial

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Type Hierarchy

Merriweather Regular
70pts / 93pts leading

Heading 1

Merriweather Bold
30pts / 42pts leading

Heading 2

Nimbus Sans L Bold
21pts / 35pts leading

Heading 3

Merriweather Bold
53pts / 66pts leading →

Nimbus Sans L Bold
16pts / 26pts leading →

1 in 4

Out of State or International Students

Nimbus Sans L Bold
18pt

Heading 4

Nimbus Sans L Bold
16pt

Heading 5

Nimbus Sans L Regular
16pt

Body copy lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Merriweather Bold
40pts / 58pts leading →

Nimbus Sans L Bold
16pts / 26pts leading →

> " Quote lorem ipsum dolor sit.
>
> **Eliza, '23 on her experience at ISU** "

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Type Hierarchy Examples

H5: Nimbus Sans L Bold
16pts

H1: Merriweather Regular
70pts

Body: Nimbus Sans L Regular
16pts

H4/CTA: Nimbus Sans L Bold
18pts

H2: Merriweather Bold
30pts / 42pts leading

Statistic: Merriweather Bold
53pts / 66pts leading

Body Bold: Nimbus Sans L Bold
16pts / 26pts leading

Pull Quote: Merriweather Bold
40pts / 58pts leading

Web Color Palette

Iowa State University's web color palette reflects the clarity and depth of our values, and is deeply rooted in the university's land-grant mission. Consistent and appropriate use of these colors will create a strong visual presence for the university.

Primary Color Palette

CARDINAL

PANTONE: 186 C
CMYK: 2 100 85 6
HEX: #C8102E
RGB: 200 16 46

BURGUNDY

PANTONE: 1815 C
CMYK: 31 92 80 37
HEX #7C2529
RGB: 124 37 41

DARK GRAY

PANTONE: 2336 C
CMYK: 66 59 57 39
HEX: #4A4A4A
RGB: 74 74 74

Secondary Color Palette

LIGHT GRAY

HEX: #F5F5F5
RGB: 245 245 245

GOLD

PANTONE: 142 C
CMYK: 0 24 78 0
HEX: #F1BE48
RGB: 241 190 72

Tertiary Color Palette

MEDIUM GRAY

HEX: #EBEBEB
RGB: 235, 235, 235

MIDNIGHT

PANTONE: 548 C
CMYK: 100 21 28 76
HEX: #003D4C
RGB: 0 61 76

Recommended Pairings

In order to make web content as inclusive as possible, it is important to adhere to the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**. The chart to the right shows color combinations that are considered accessible for web use.

To confirm accessibility of color combinations, use the **WebAIM Contrast Checker tool**.

CARDINAL   DARK GRAY   LIGHT GRAY   BURGUNDY

CARDINAL   DARK GRAY   GOLD   BURGUNDY   LIGHT GRAY
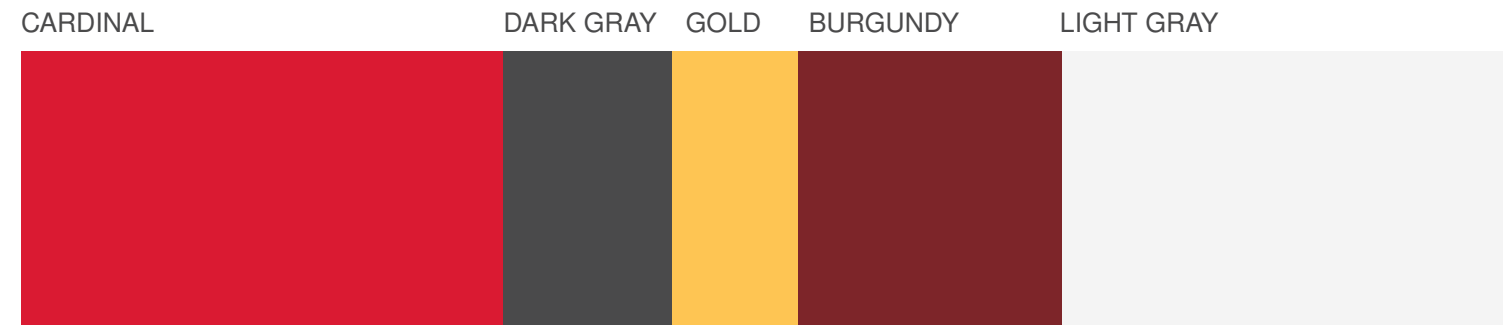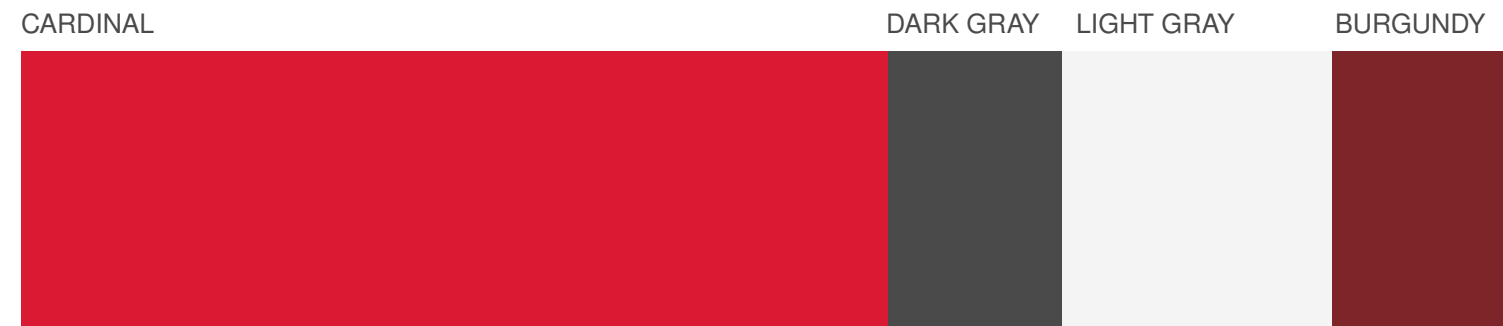
Accessible text and background color combinations include:

Text Text Text Text Text

Photography: Tone and Intention

Photography is a powerful and emotionally engaging storytelling tool. Photos should extend the Iowa State voice and visually express our personality. Photos should be warm, authentic, bright, and energetic to emphasize humanity, inclusivity, community, and caring. When choosing web photography, select from three categories – micro-lens, macro-lens, and architectural – whichever best serves the messaging context.

General guidance on photography that will help us maintain our identity:

- Compositions that allow audiences to self-insert into the scene depicted
- Participatory, experiencing first-hand
- Action-oriented
- Dynamic
- Not staged

Micro-Lens Photography

Photos in this category emphasize the "heart" narrative by depicting micro views of campus and campus life.

Photo content should:

- **Always** feature people with an emphasis on inclusivity

- **Often** showcase interactions between people or feature one person focused on a task

- **Sometimes** have subjects look directly at camera when smiling in a natural manner

- **Never** exclusively feature backs facing the camera

Macro-Lens Photography

Photos in this category emphasize the "heart" narrative by depicting groups of people engaging in activities within the broader frame of a physical space.

Photo content should:

- **Always** feature both people and their environment

- **Often** use artful framing to suggest movement and flow

- **Sometimes** focus more on an activity than the faces of the people doing it

- **Never** frame an activity as happening behind a barrier of some kind
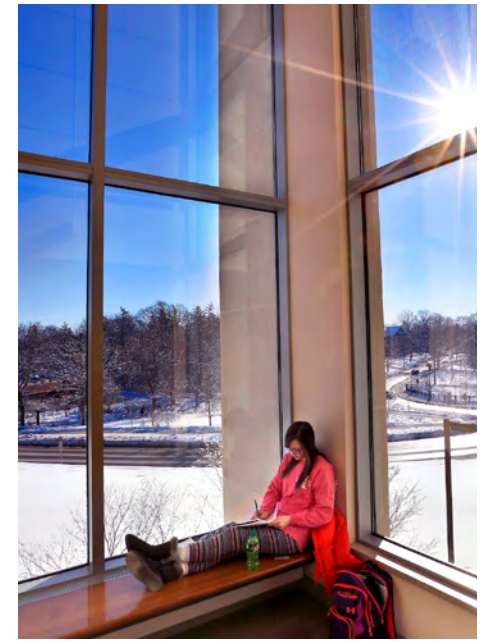
Architectural Photography

Photos in this category emphasize the "heart" narrative by depicting images of the campus and artwork in a way that allows audiences to see themselves in the context of Iowa State.

Photo content should:

- **Always** emphasize the human perspective of compositions, either by depicting people or shooting at eye level

- **Often** include both natural and architectural elements

- **Sometimes** use drone, rooftop, or other scaled perspectives, but only when the composition also includes people

- **Never** use photography methods and equipment to intentionally distort images

Photography Recommendations

Photo choice helps define your site

Users will notice images usually before they read anything on the site. Choosing the right photography can be difficult, even when you have a great library of images to choose from.

Tips for Choosing and Using Photos

Quality is key

A blurry image just doesn't look professional. Follow image recommendations for size and aspect ratio in this style guide and in the website CMS — and reach out if you need help.

Choose relevant images

Images are usually the first thing users notice. Does it make sense with the text around it? How do featured images look in a search result? Do you need a caption to help explain it?

Use stock wisely

Users can spot "stocky" images from a mile away. If you need to use stock, take extra care to choose unique subjects and settings.

Check usage rights

Make sure you have the right permissions to use an image — don't just download from a Google image search or off someone's site.

Optimize photo colors

You don't need to be a designer to tweak an image that's a little washed out or has some weird colors. Use a free tool like **Pixlr** to make minor adjustments.

Avoid image collages

Combining multiple images into a grid can look really busy, especially if that image is shown small. Stick to using one image.

Empty space ≠ filler image

Images should always be supporting your content, and not used for decoration. If you want to fill space with an image, describe it with a meaningful caption or blurb around it.

Web Theme Guidelines

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

IN THIS SECTION

Information Architecture

Organizing and Labeling Content

How pages are organized and labeled on a website – referred to as the information architecture – is critical for a site's success. When done well, visitors won't even notice. But when done poorly, a site becomes confusing, frustrating, or difficult to use.

The labels we choose in an information architecture allow visitors to find information and complete tasks. These labels reinforce where visitors came from and where they can go to learn more. These labels communicate the personality of an organization and how it is seen to the world. While a page titled "Academic Programs," "Majors and Minors," or "Things to Study" could have the same content, each label communicates something different.

Before You Start

Consider your users and their goals

When planning a new site, the first step is to understand the needs and challenges of your target audience. This can be accomplished many ways, including interviews, focus groups, and surveys. If this upfront research isn't possible, at the minimum, use your team's experience and expertise to make an informed guess as to the primary reasons why one might come to your website. This exercise will help to inform many of future decisions including:

- What content needs to be accessed the easiest?

- What words resonate most?

- What is the audience(s)' understanding of your organization and the services you provide?

Audit existing content

In order to best design the navigation for your site, you need to have a complete understanding of existing content. While more time-consuming, clicking all links on site and creating a complete list by hand is the most accurate. If this is not feasible, it may be possible to get a list of all pages on your existing site from SiteImprove (inquire about Iowa State's enterprise license through the digital accessibility office).

Compiling a list of existing content will give you a sense of how many pages need to be organized and where in the site you have the most content. This exercise will also show pages that can be retired or consolidated.

Plan for new content and organizational priorities

In some cases, simply reorganizing and relabeling content that already exists is not enough. Recent organizational priorities and initiatives may not be represented on the site. The site may need additional pages to address the goals of our target audiences. A site's structure will evolve over time, but a site redesign is the best opportunity to accommodate any dramatic changes to content.

Organizing Content

Organize content by topic

Organize your content by topic as much as possible. The other natural way to organize content is by audience, but this often goes against how users will think and browse your site. It is more likely a visitor will arrive thinking "How do I pay my tuition bill?" than "I am a current student." In this case, "Costs and Billing" is a better label than "Info for Current Students."

Create distinct categories

Users will have difficulties finding the content they need if there is significant overlap between categories. If, for instance, a website has both an "Academics" and "Undergraduate Students" section, a prospective student looking to learn what they can study would be unsure which would have that information. It is not enough to simply include the same links in each section. This actually may make things worse, as it would not be clear to visitors how those links are different.

Organizing Content

Use between three to seven categories for the main navigation

The main navigation contains links in the website's header that are **most important to your target audiences**. As a general rule, try to use between three and seven categories.This is so that the navigation does not get overwhelming. Not only will the main navigation be less visually appealing, but too many links may inhibit users from finding what they need. This guideline is simply a ballpark – fewer than seven categories still may not fit if the labels used are too lengthy.

About Us ⌄   Initiatives ⌄   Academic Programs ⌄   Faculty Success ⌄   General Policies and Guidelines ⌄   Index

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY   News   Faculty Handbook   Sign Ons   🔍

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost   About Us ⌄   Initiatives ⌄   Academic Programs ⌄   Faculty Success ⌄   General Policies and Guidelines ⌄   Index

Home > General Policies and Guidelines

General Policies and Guidelines

Faculty Handbook

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Provost's Office Communications

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Conflicts of Interest and Commitment

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Organizing Content

Use calls to action or lower priority items for the utility navigation

The utility navigation contains the links in the website's header that are important to the target audience, but less important than those in the main navigation. Alternatively, the links that you choose for the utility navigation might have a different feeling or purpose than the main navigation. Utility navigation links are not always necessary – do not include these links if you are finding it difficult to find appropriate content.

Use the utility navigation for **only one** of the following these scenarios:

- **Calls to action.** This is the best use of the utility navigation. Examples include contact, visit, apply, donate, and request information.

- **Lower priority links.** Use for pages you'd like to link to but want to be understated compared to the main navigation. Examples include news, events, and directory.

- **Audience links.** While audience links aren't recommended for the main navigation, use the utility navigation to provide quick access to pages for secondary or tertiary audiences. Examples include Parents, Faculty and Staff, and Alumni.

News   Faculty Handbook   Sign Ons

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

News   Faculty Handbook   Sign Ons

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost

About Us   Initiatives   Academic Programs   Faculty Success   General Policies and Guidelines   Index

Home > General Policies and Guidelines

General Policies and Guidelines

Faculty Handbook

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Provost's Office Communications

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Conflicts of Interest and Commitment

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Labeling Content

Speak your target audience's language

A website's navigation should be free from jargon and insider terminology. **Avoid the common pitfall of grouping content according to organizational structure or content ownership**. This is known as the "curse of knowledge," or the assumption that those you are communicating with have the same understanding and background as you do.

The labels chosen for links and page titles should be self-explanatory to those with little familiarity with your organization. This does not mean your audience is uninformed or unfamiliar with the subject matter. The term "graduate medical education" is understood by those graduating medical school, but a lay audience may only know this as a "medical residency." Use terminology appropriate for those browsing the site.

Avoid insider terminology or branded terms

In the cases where a page is about a topic with a branded name, avoid using the branded name as the page title. Instead, use on-page copy to introduce the proper names of programs, initiatives, and other content that is Iowa State specific. Users are much more likely to click on a link when they know what they will find.

For instance, a university may have a freshman rotational experiential learning program called the "Discovery Program." Without previously knowing what the Discovery Program is, users would be less inclined to visit this page. Either use plain language to describe the page ("Freshman Rotational Program") or use additional clarifying words in addition to the branded term ("Discovery Rotational Program").

As a reminder, "insider terminology" includes acronyms that have not been properly introduced with a full title usage.

Labeling Content

Use consistent labeling

Consistent, parallel language is an effective tool in ensuring users can find information on your site. Proper labeling is akin to good writing — a clear format and cadence encourages comprehension and understanding.

For example, instead of an Academics section with mixed terminology, such as:

> *"Majors and Minors," "Graduate Degrees," and "Ph.D. Programs"*

Use a consistent terminology set, such as:

> *"Bachelor's Degrees," "Master's Degrees" and "Doctoral Degrees" or*

> *"Undergraduate Programs" and "Graduate Programs."*

Repeating verb conjugation and syntax is also helpful.

For example, rather than a utility navigation with:

> *"Apply," "Contact Us," and "Giving,"*

Use:

> *"Apply," "Contact," and "Donate."*

Other Best Practices

- Avoid including the same idea or topic on more than one page.

- Avoid creating very short evergreen child pages of less than 500 words (including all on page menu, link, and footer copy). Where possible, consolidate shorter child page content onto the directory page using a visually distinct module. Create child pages only when the length of a directory or landing page becomes overwhelming.

- Use the header navigation and on-page subnavigation to link only to pages on your website.

- If an external link to a different website or a cross-link to another Iowa State subdomain (differentsite.iastate.edu) is necessary, include it in body text with a brief explanation to prepare the user, and set the link to open in a new browser tab.

- Do not use the header or on-page subnavigation to link to files, including PDFs, Word documents, Excel spreadsheets. Instead link to these in the body of the page.

Organization and Labeling Checklist

✅ **Does the menu account for all existing content?**
If not, what must be added or relabeled so that all pages can be found?

✅ **Does your menu account for known future content?**
If not, what must be added or relabeled so that all pages can be found?

✅ **Can all content be found in only one section?**
If not, how might the pages be relabeled or regrouped so that each section is distinct?

✅ **Does the main navigation have between three and seven links?**
If not, can any sections be combined?

✅ **Does the main navigation have the content most important to your target audiences?**
If not, which sections are less important than the others and can be omitted?

✅ **Does the utility navigation have only call-to-action links?**
If not, are the links lower priority than those in the main navigation?

✅ **Do all links and page titles use words that the target audience understands?**
If not, how can they be rephrased?

✅ **Are all links and page titles free from jargon and branded terms?**
If not, how can they be rephrased?

✅ **Is content grouped in a way that someone doesn't have to be familiar with your organization?**
If not, how might the pages be relabeled and regrouped so this isn't the case?

✅ **Are all labels consistent and follow the same format?**
If not, how can they be reworded so that they follow a similar structure?

✅ **Can all content and ideas be found on only a single page?**
If not, what can be combined or reorganized?

✅ **Are all pages of an appropriate length?**
If not, what can be consolidated with its parent page? What can be moved to a child page?

✅ **Do all menus only include links to pages on your site?**
If not, how can you link to external websites or files within the body of the page?

Digital Accessibility

The Iowa State website needs to prioritize accessibility from the start. Content creators have a responsibility to ensure everyone is able to easily navigate and access information. Remember, accessibility builds a better experience for everyone.

What is Accessibility?

Accessibility is intentionally designing an experience to work for a wide range of people, whatever their hardware, software, language, location, or ability might be. Digital accessibility specifically is enabling as many people as possible, including folks with disabilities, to have barrier-free access to digital products.

Questions?

For more information on digital web accessibility, contact the Digital Accessibility Team at **digitalaccess@iastate.edu**.

Tips for creating accessible content

Use descriptive link text

Let users know what they're selecting and where they're navigating to when accessing links. Avoid phrases such as "learn more" or "click here." This applies to all links, including links within your text and buttons.

Learn More >

Learn More About Financial Aid >
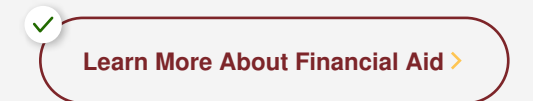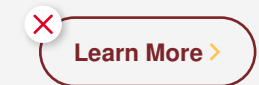
Keep the heading structure organized

When page content is organized in a clear visual hierarchy, users can scan a page and get the gist from your headings. A designated heading structure helps to organize your page and establish hierarchy. Not only does it tell a screen reader how a page is laid out, it also keeps your code and page design clean and understandable. See **details on heading structure** from WebAIM.

H1: My Favorite Recipes
H2: Quick and Easy
  H3: Spaghetti
  H3: Hamburgers
  H3: Tacos
    H4: Beef Tacos
    H4: Chicken Tacos

Headings include a page title, and different levels of h1, h2, h3 and so on.

Provide meaningful alternative text with images

If users can't always see your images or they choose not to display them, alternative text provides them with the context they need. Alternative text best practices depend on page content and image function. For images that do not provide important contextual information, no alternative text is needed. Mark these as decorative. Read the **comprehensive guide to using alternative text** on WebAIM to learn more.

Images in HTML

The head and torso of a dinosaur skeleton; it has a large head with long sharp teeth
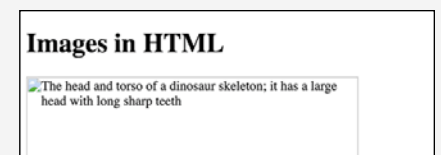
A textual preview of the alternative text appears when images don't load visually.

Don't use images with embedded text

Avoid using images of text. Images should add to the content but should never be the content.

Embedded text on an image lorem ipsum dolor.
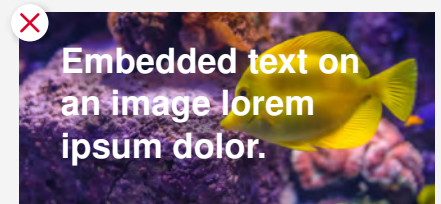
Embedded image text such as this rasterized heading overlay can't be read by screen readers.

Principles of Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility is a demonstration of the Iowa State website's "Heart" narrative, and a crucial proof point for the core value of inclusivity.

Before creating content, familiarize yourself with core principles and practices of the digital accessibility as outlined by the **A11Y Project**.

Basic principles:

1. Use sufficient color contrast (see **page 25** of this document)

2. Don't use color as the only way to convey meaning

3. Use appropriate font sizes (Is the text big enough to be readable with an accessible font?)

4. Focus on readability and comprehensibility (is content written at a 9th grade level?)

5. Include captioning for video content

Guiding principle

While the discipline of digital accessibility does include specific best practices that require an awareness of technical aspects, the guiding principle behind all of them is to keep content as consistent and simple as possible.

Remember: digitally accessible content is *thoughtful* content.

Image Terminology

How It Looks

This matters most when important parts of the image are getting cut off when they are used as background images.

Aspect ratio

The relationship between the width and height. Elements can require certain aspect ratios for the best fit.

Examples

16:9 (Exact Aspect Ratio)
This is a commonly used ratio for horizontal images, especially for large backgrounds.
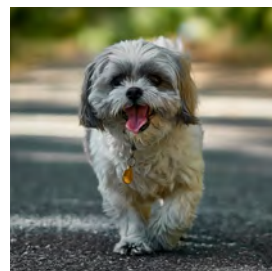
Square (Exact)
Some images need to be exact squares, such as images that become circular.

Horizontal (General)
Sometimes just a general width-to-height ratio is enough to choose the right image.

Focal point

The main point of interest in an image.

Examples
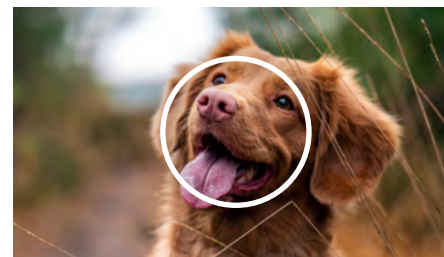
Image with a centered focal point.
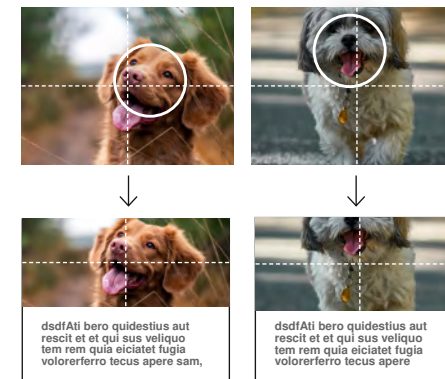
Images placed in an element needing a centered focal point.

Image Sizing

This matters most when images are looking blurry or pixelated and/or the images are loading too slowly.

Dimensions

An image's *dimensions* describe its width and height in pixels (e.g. 600px × 400px) when viewed at 100%. Proper dimensions can help improve image quality by avoiding stretching or pixelated/blurry images.
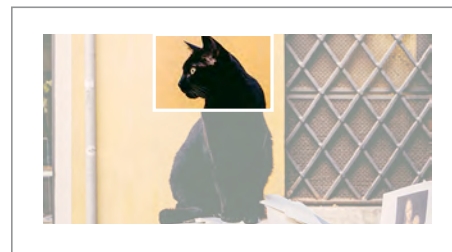
Example of a small image used in a large element

The image is stretched out, and looks blurry.

File size

The *file size* of an image is the amount of memory it occupies on a server, expressed in bytes (e.g. 300 KB). Large file sizes can slow down web pages, resulting in poor performance. The file size limit on the Iowa State site is 1.5 MB. Avoid files over 1 MB whenever possible.
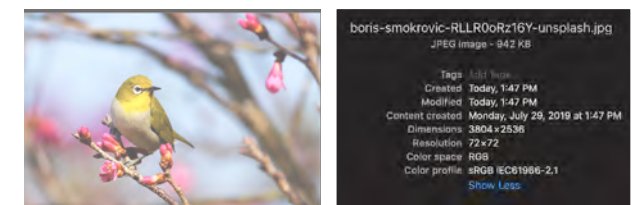
Image info in Finder on a Mac computer.
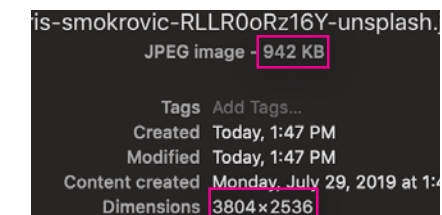
The file size is **almost 1 MB** – this should be optimized if possible.

Image Optimization

It's worth repeating: Images that are too large can slow down sites. While it is important to use high-quality images, they also need to maintain reasonable load speeds. Here are some tips and tools to help optimize images:

Use JPGs

You can adjust the "image quality" setting within a JPG file using image-editing software such as Photoshop or **Pixlr**. This is not true for a PNG image file. Unless an image requires the transparent background feature of a PNG image, save and upload your images as a JPG.

Adjust image dimensions and file size

Pay close attention to the image dimension and file size specifications outlined in the following "Quick Recommendations" pages. Once you are clear on the recommended specs for your image upload, complete the following steps for all JPG images:

1. Re-size the image to the recommended dimensions (always crop, never stretch)

2. Re-save the image file as a JPG with an "image quality" of 50% using Pixlr or another image-editing software

3. Compress the image file size using the **TinyPNG** tool

This will ensure that every image appears in high resolution on retina devices without a burdensome file size.

Tools to help

For compressing image file size:

- **TinyPNG** (online, free): compresses images

To re-size and adjust quality:

- **Pixlr** (online, free)
- Photoshop
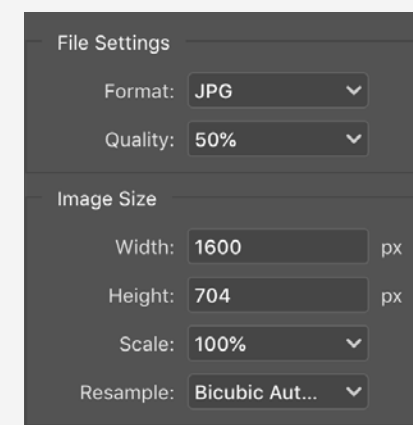
Photoshop "Export" options for image size and quality. Note the "50%" quality level.
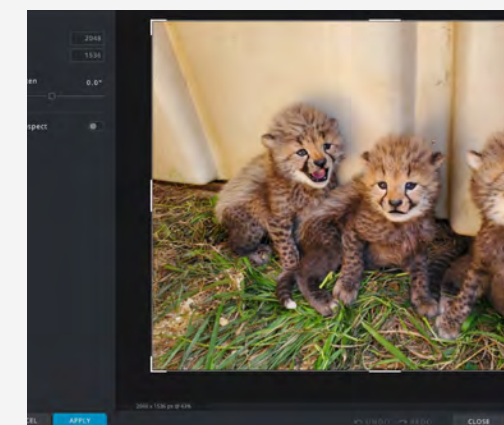
Pixlr - an online tool to create, re-size and optimize images

Tinypng - an online tool to compress images

Image Specifications: Kitchen Sink

Important Notes:

Adjust quality of all images to 50%. Image dimension specifications are **intentionally larger** than what users will see on-screen after you upload. This accounts for retina devices that need larger images.

Watch the file size. The file size limit on the website is **1.5 MB**. Avoid files over 1 MB when possible.

Preview before publishing. Some elements and widgets involve an overlapping inset that may partially cover your image. You may want to go back and adjust the positioning of the image's focal point within the frame.

Element/Widget	Aspect Ratio	Focal Point	Dimensions (px)	Notes
Blockquote	Square	Centered	515 x 515	Headshot or portrait images only
Call to Action: Large	Horizontal	Any	2160 x 807	Use "Macro-lens, Micro-lens, or Architectural" photography here. Image will always stay the same aspect ratio at all screen sizes.
Card Set	Square	Centered	688 x 688	Use "Micro-level" or "Macro-level" photography
Card Set – Linked Image	Square	Centered	688 x 688	Use "Micro-level" or "Macro-level" photography
Card Set – Profiles w/Modals	Square	Centered	688 x 688	Use "Micro-level" or "Macro-level" photography
Carousel	3:2	Any	1244 x 830	
External News Story	3:2	Any	608 x 404	Don't use a busy image here, use "Macro-lens" or "Micro-lens" photography
Feature Set	Horizontal	Any	1076 x 620	Use "Macro-lens" or "Micro-lens" photography here. Image will always stay the same aspect ratio at all screen sizes.
Feature with Large Image	16:9	Center-Right	1713 x 963	Image will always stay the same aspect ratio at all screen sizes
Feature with Large Image and Intro	16:9	Center-Right	1713 x 963	Image will always stay the same aspect ratio at all screen sizes

Image Specifications: Kitchen Sink

Important Notes:

Adjust quality of all images to 50%. Image dimension specifications are **intentionally larger** than what users will see on-screen after you upload. This accounts for retina devices that need larger images.

Watch the file size. The file size limit on the website is **1.5 MB**. Avoid files over 1 MB when possible.

Preview before publishing. Some elements and widgets involve an overlapping inset that may partially cover your image. You may want to go back and adjust the positioning of the image's focal point within the frame.

Element/Widget	Aspect Ratio	Focal Point	Dimensions (px)	Notes
Feature with Small Image	3:2	Any	1244 x 830	
Full Width Image	Horizontal	Any	2160 x 807	
Hero	Horizontal	Centered	1412 x 528	Use impactful "Macro-lens" or "Micro-lens" photography here. Image will always stay the same aspect ratio at all screen sizes.
Hero - Top Level Landing Page	Horizontal	Centered	1412 x 528	Same component as Hero (for all Kitchen Sink pages)
Image Grid with Text	4:3	Any	1254 x 836	All images in the grid use the same aspect ratio. Top image appears larger on desktop and become equal in size on mobile.
Inline Images – L and R Aligned	Square	Any	648 wide max	Use similar height images when paired in the same body copy block
Inline Images – Center Aligned	Horizontal	Any	1472 x 844	
Multi Column Content	Horizontal	Any	1244 x 830	
Video Embed	16:9	Any	1472 x 844	Use the thumbnail from YouTube or a different featured image

WEB THEME GUIDELINES

Image Specifications: Ecosystem

Important Notes:

Adjust quality of all images to 50%. Image dimension specifications are **intentionally larger** than what users will see on-screen after you upload. This accounts for retina devices that need larger images.

Watch the file size. The file size limit on the website is **1.5 MB**. Avoid files over 1 MB when possible.

Preview before publishing. Some elements and widgets involve an overlapping inset that may partially cover your image. You may want to go back and adjust the positioning of the image's focal point within the frame.

Element/Widget	Aspect Ratio	Focal Point	Dimensions (px)	Notes
Home Hero – Atmospheric Image	Horizontal	Centered	2002 x 1065	Image scales down proportionally for mobile.
Home Hero – Background Video	Horizontal	Centered	2002 x 1065	Video automatically scales down for mobile and will become a 375 x 480px ratio crop at it's smallest size.
Home Hero – Featured Image	Horizontal	Centered	2002 x 1065	Image automatically scales down for mobile and will become a 375 x 480px ratio crop at it's smallest size. The same image is used for both, so the main focal point must be in the center.
Home Hero – Supporting Image	Square	Centered	800 x 800	Image scales down proportionally for mobile.
Personal Profile Info Card	Square	Centered	450 x 450 (minimum)	The Card Set image size (688 x 688px) can be used here – image displays at 450 x 450px on desktop and scales down proportionally for mobile.

WEB THEME GUIDELINES

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

1 Kitchen Sink Header

Use primary links to link to L1 pages, and drop-downs to show L1 and child pages.

Use the utility nav to link to important secondary pages and login portals.

Includes an optional button in the utility nav.

"Sign Ons" should always be included in the utility nav.

2 Breadcrumbs

This acts as a secondary navigation that shows a user's location on the website—displays links to all of the levels that come before the current page.

3 Subnavigation (optional)

This allows access to the parent page, any sibling pages and if applicable, child pages.

- **Do** use for level two pages.

- **Don't** use for top level or pages without sibling or child pages.

4 Hero and Hero – Top Level Landing Page (optional)

The featured image that introduces a page.

- **Do** use an image that has a clear focal point.

- **Don't** use an overly busy or an extremely zoomed out image.

5 Rich Text/WYSIWYG

This contains header styles (H2–H5), body copy, and bullet styles (standard and numbered).

- **Do** use headers in proper order based on hierarchy (H2, H3, H4, etc.), bullets to help support points within a block of copy.

- **Don't** use headers in an improper order (H2 directly under an H4), overuse bullets or use them in place of large amounts of copy.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink
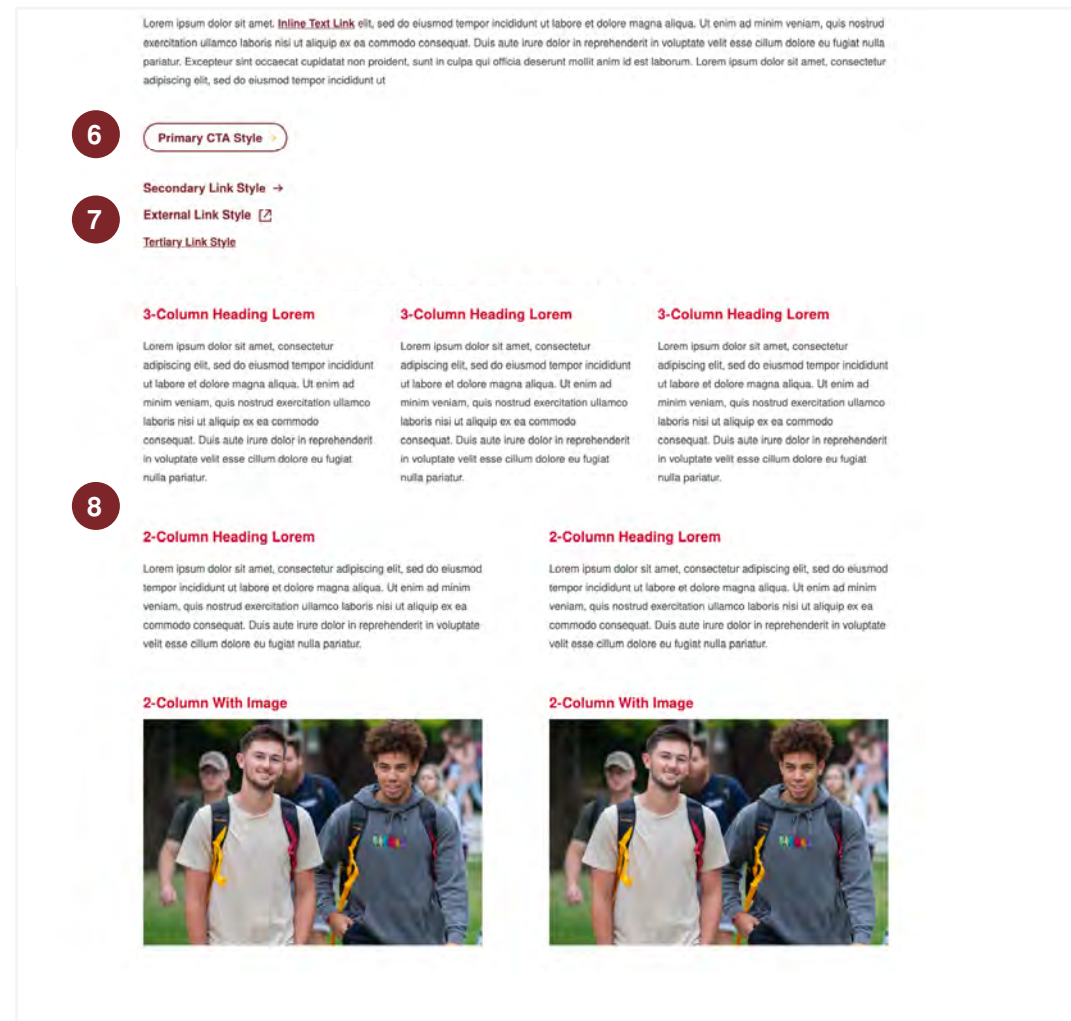
6 Button Set

Buttons draw the user's attention to trigger actions and links.

- **Do** use one to three buttons at a time. This will avoid overwhelming a user with buttons, and will help to narrow down choices.

- **Keep button label reasonable.** Try to keep button labels to one to three words. Overly long buttons can look awkward. If a button has long text, try pairing the button with a heading to break it up.

- **Use meaningful language that tells users what to expect.** Make sure the user knows where they will go when they click a button. Avoid generic language such as "More," "Click Here," or "Submit."

- **Don't** overuse buttons. Prioritize the actions you want your users to take. Avoid using a row of over three buttons, as well as "sprinkling" too many buttons throughout a page.

7 Link Set

Link Sets are used to draw the user's attention to trigger actions and links but with less emphasis as with a Button Set. Similar guidance should be used with Link Sets as with Button Sets.

8 Multi Column Content

Allows for a title, optional description, option image, and optional tertiary link. This content can appear in a two- or three-column layout.

- **Do** use columns to organize content for quicker scanning.

- **Don't** overuse columns or risk the page layout becoming too repetitive.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

9 **Inline Images (Left and Right Aligned) with optional captions**

- **Do** use to support talking points in a large block of copy.

- **Don't** use for short paragraphs.

10 **Center Aligned Image (with optional caption)**

- **Do** use to support talking points in a large block of copy or when a larger image makes sense.

- **Don't** overuse and stack too many on a page.

11 **Full Width Image (with optional caption)**

- **Do** use to break up the flow of a page or provide a visual rest.

- **Don't** overuse and stack too many on a page.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

12 Table

- **Headings are required.** Keep these as short as possible. With more columns, these headers get difficult to read on smaller devices.

- **Consider** breaking data into multiple tables rather than segmenting across many columns.

- **Avoid** using a table with too many rows.

13 Carousel

Showcases multiple images within one area of the page (e.g., as an image gallery). Each image includes an optional title, body copy, and image caption.

- **Do** use at least three slides, otherwise using the large image module or images in columns may be a better solution.

- **Don't** use an image that has important features toward the edges or covered by elements over the image. For example, if you are featuring a person, make the face is towards the top third and easily visible.

14 Accordion

Accordions organize and simplify a large amount of related content. When selected, the content is viewed without having to navigate away from the page. Only text can be used in accordions.

- **Do** use at least two accordions, but at least three is ideal.

- **Do** choose headings that are all related to a similar topic.

- **Keep content length reasonable.** Since accordions hide information, users may skip over info if it is buried in one that is overly long.

- **Don't** use very long headings. Instead, try to move text down into the body.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

15 Statistic

Contains an optional H2 title, multiple large statistics (including non-numerical characters), and supporting copy for each statistic. The entire block can be left or right aligned with text and full-width when not paired next to text. It is highly recommended to always pair a statistic with text.

- **Do** use clear and brief copy to provide additional content to the number.

- **Don't** overuse supporting copy. Save this for the body copy surrounding the statistic.

16 Feature with Small Image

Contains an image, H2, body copy, and CTA button or link. Used to feature a piece of content throughout the site with an accompanying large image and button.

- **Do** use before or after a series of smaller features with H3 (listed below) or to create variety in a page layout.

- **Don't** overuse so as they retain their special feel.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

17
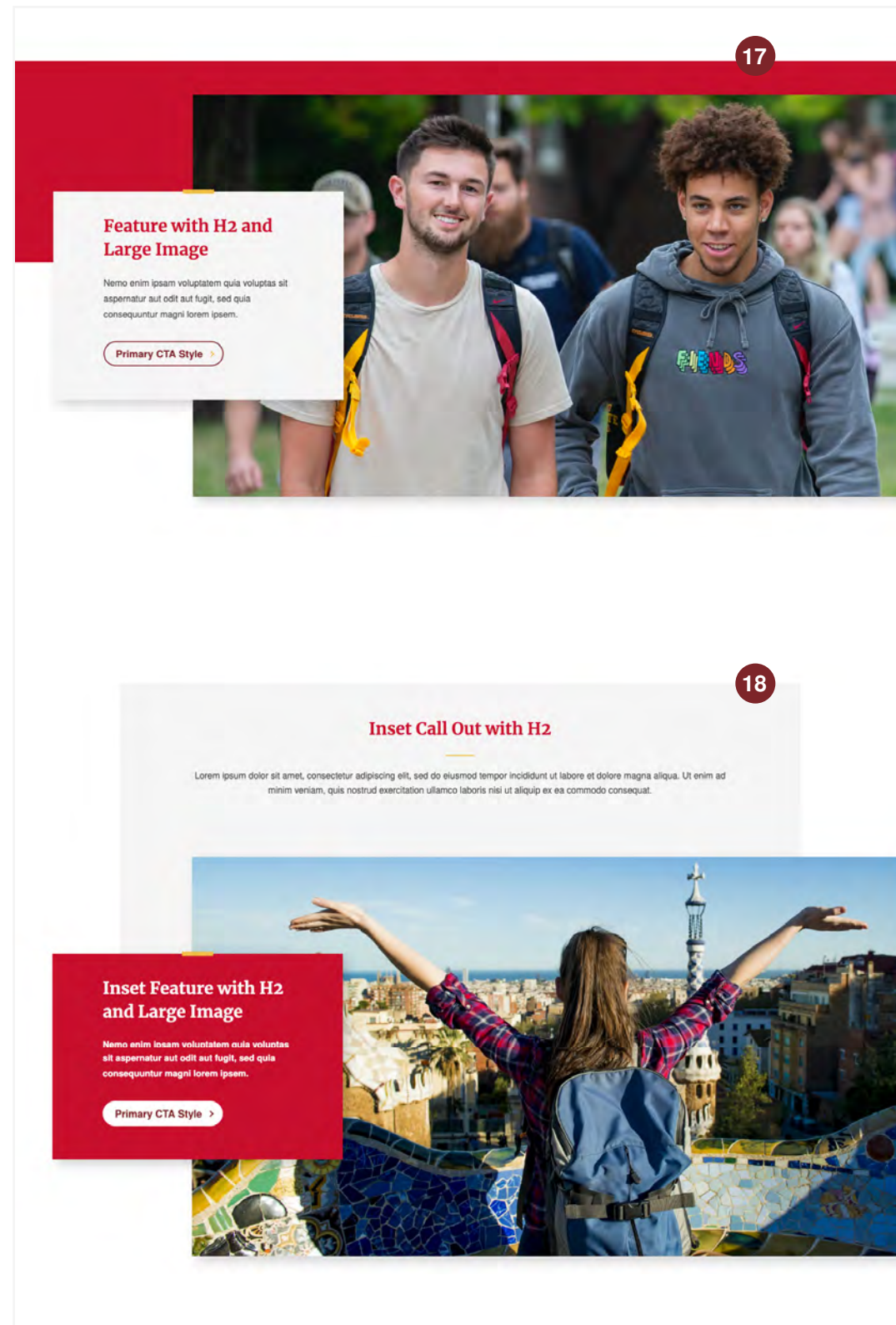
Feature with Large Image

Contains a large image, H2, supporting copy, and a CTA button.

- **Use** to break up a page flow, create visual rest, and call out an important feature in instances where the featured content clearly supports the same on-page narrative as the prior module or page section. See module #18 "Feature with Large Image and Intro" for an alternative in instances where this is not the case.

- **Use** this feature when you want to use a large image and no introductory copy.

- **Keep** in mind that the text block will cover a portion of the image (left-center).

- **Keep** supporting copy brief.

- **Don't** use these consecutively, back-to-back on a page.

18

Feature with Large Image and Intro

Contains a large image, H2, supporting copy, and a Call to Action button.

- **Use** to break up a page flow, create visual rest, and call out an important feature in instances where the featured content introduces a new on-page narrative from the prior module or page section. See module #17 "Feature with Large Image" for an alternative in instances where this is not the case.

- **Use** this feature when you want to use a large image and introductory copy.

- **Keep** in mind that the text block will cover a portion of the image (left-center).

- **Keep** supporting copy brief.

- **Don't** use these consecutively, back-to-back on a page.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

19 Feature Set (image optional)

Used to highlight a series or multiple features. Contains an optional smaller image, H3, body copy, and no call to action button.

- **Use** in a single instance if not showing an image, not back-to-back.

- **Use** consecutively if showing an image, one to three in a row – two is ideal.

- **Don't** use inbetween features with H3's and an image (listed below).

- **Don't** use more than three in a row.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

Image Grid with H2 Title and CTA

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Primary CTA Styles ›

Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur

Video caption lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Optional Subheading Lorem Ipsum Dolor

Link Label Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit →

Link Label Lorem Ipsum Dolor →

Link Label Lorem →

Link Name Lorem Ipsum →

Link Label Lorem Dolor →

Link Label Lorem Ipsum Dolor →

20 Image Grid with Text

Use when you need a large call-out, H2, CTA button, and more than 1 photo.

- **Do** use sparingly.
- **Don't** use this widget too many times on a single page to retain its uniqueness.

21 Video Embed (with optional caption)

This uses a YouTube embed with a custom play button.

- **Do** use the thumbnail from YouTube or a different featured image.
- **Don't** embed text on the image.

22 Link Block

This widget is used to feature a number of related links (including external links).

- **Do** use this at the end of pages to feature related content. Ideally this block has between three and nine links.
- If more than nine links are needed, use more than one of these widgets and group using headings. Alternatively, the two- and three-column layouts are good alternatives to showcase text links.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

23 External News Story

Use this widget to link to Iowa State news, features, and stories.

24 Blockquote (image optional)

A block quote is a specially styled section of text, offset or called out on its own, to support the other content on the page. This supports an optional image and optional fields for author and role.

- **Do** include block quotes midway through a long article. This adds visual interest and helps to break long copy into smaller sections.

- **Don't** use an overly long quote. Often block quotes use font sizes/weights that can be overwhelming if used for copy that is very long.

- **Don't** place a blockquote as the last element on page.

- **Don't** include quotation marks within the text of the featured quote, as these are present as a design element.
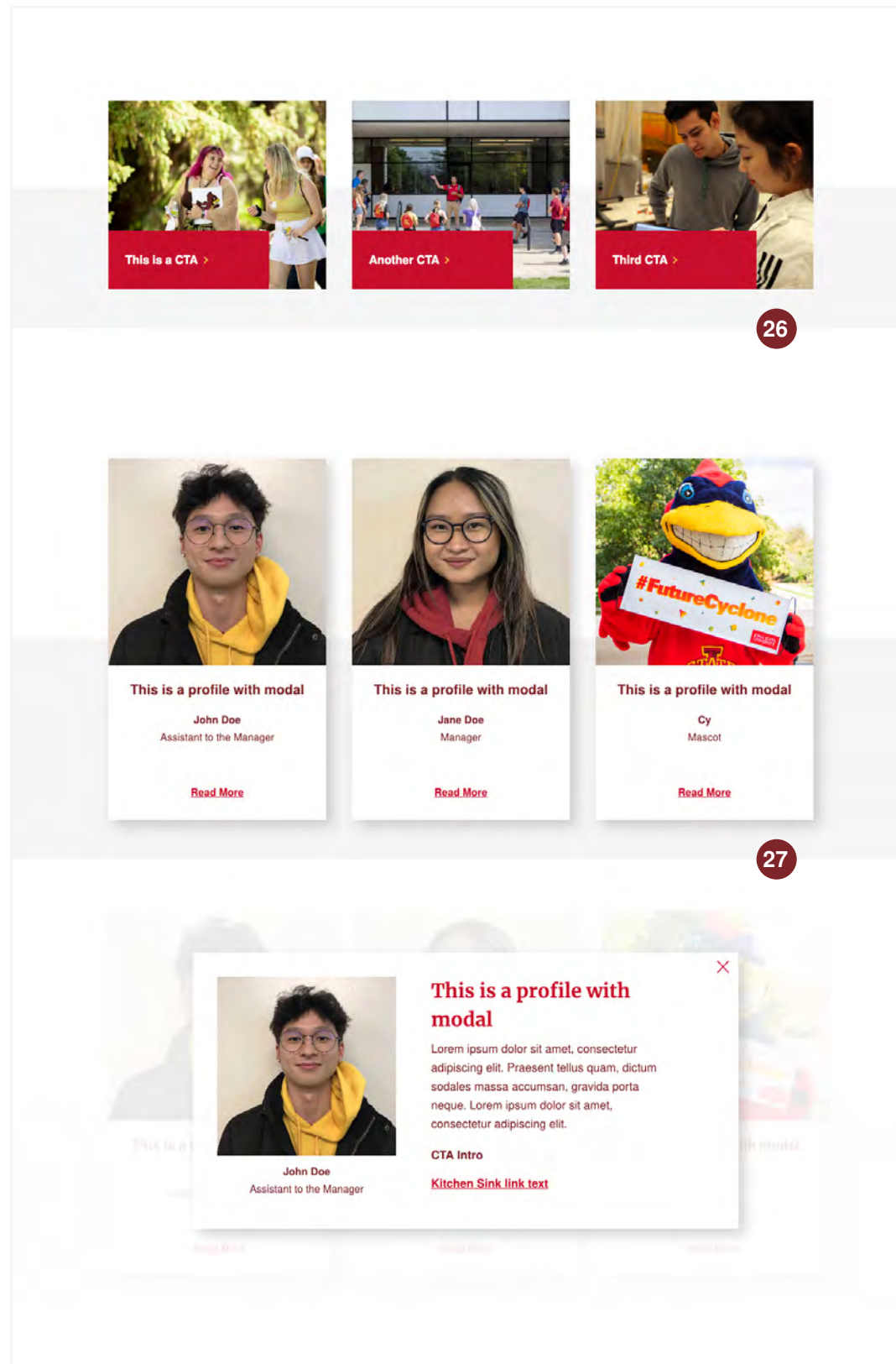
Template Themes: Kitchen Sink
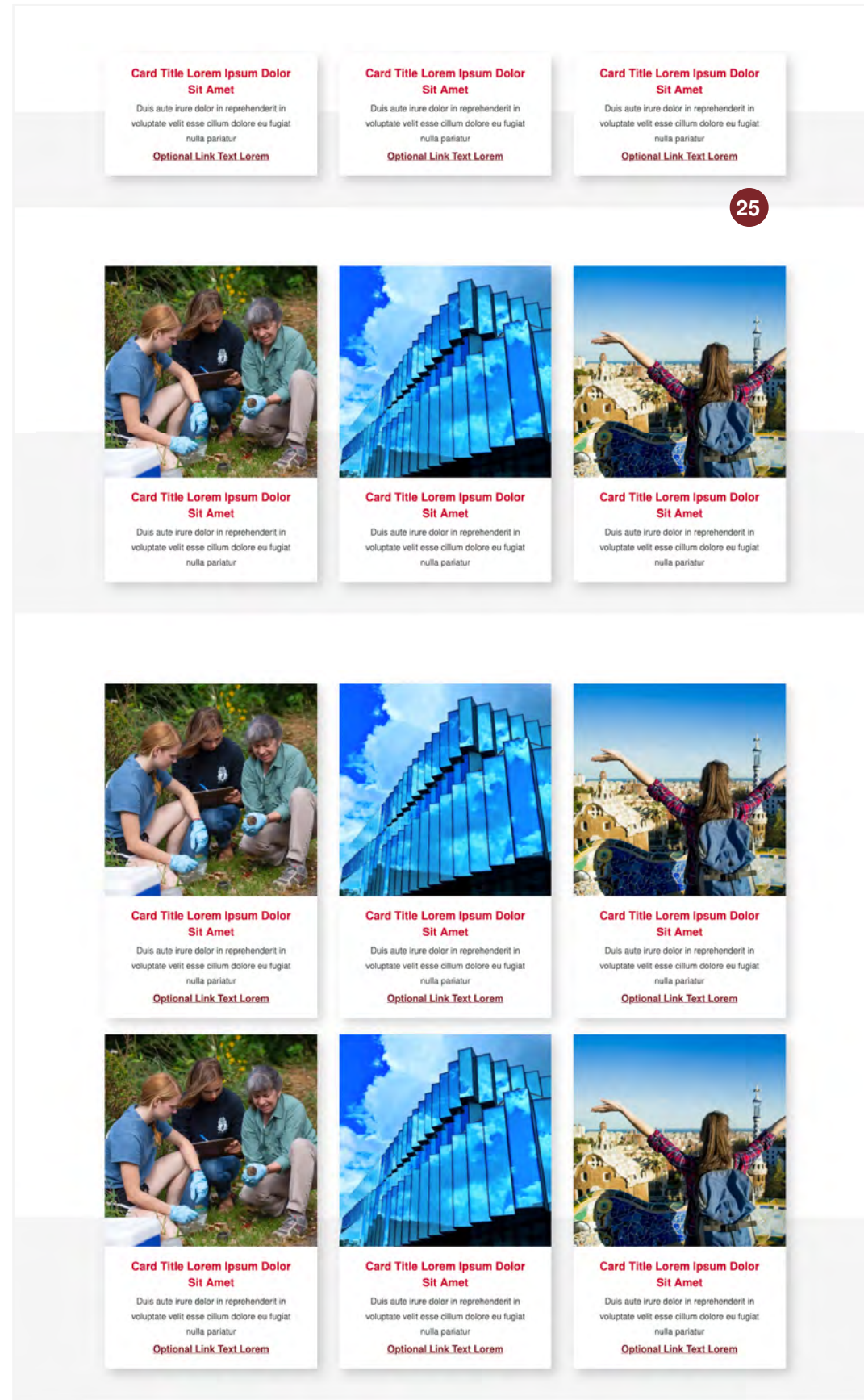
25 Card Set

Cards briefly describe and link to a piece of content. Supporting copy, image and link text are optional.

- **Do** use three to six cards at a time. Keep to the character limit specified for headings and text.

- **Don't** use fewer than two or more than six cards at a time.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink

26 **Card Set - Linked Image**

These are special cards that should be used when only an image and short CTA titles are needed.

- **Do** use three cards at a time.
- **Do** use short CTA titles (22 characters max).
- **Don't** use fewer than two or more than three cards at a time.
- **Don't** use this card set more than once on a single page.

27 **Card Set - Profiles w/ Modals**

These are special cards used to highlight a profile including an image, title, name and role. Clicking the card opens a modal that reveals additional supporting text and an optional CTA link.

Image and CTA link fields are optional but are highly recommended for these cards.

- **Do** use three cards at a time.
- **Do** use images and supporting text.
- **Don't** use fewer than two or more than three cards at a time.
- **Don't** use this card set if no image or supporting text is included. Otherwise use a regular Card Set instead.

Template Themes: Kitchen Sink
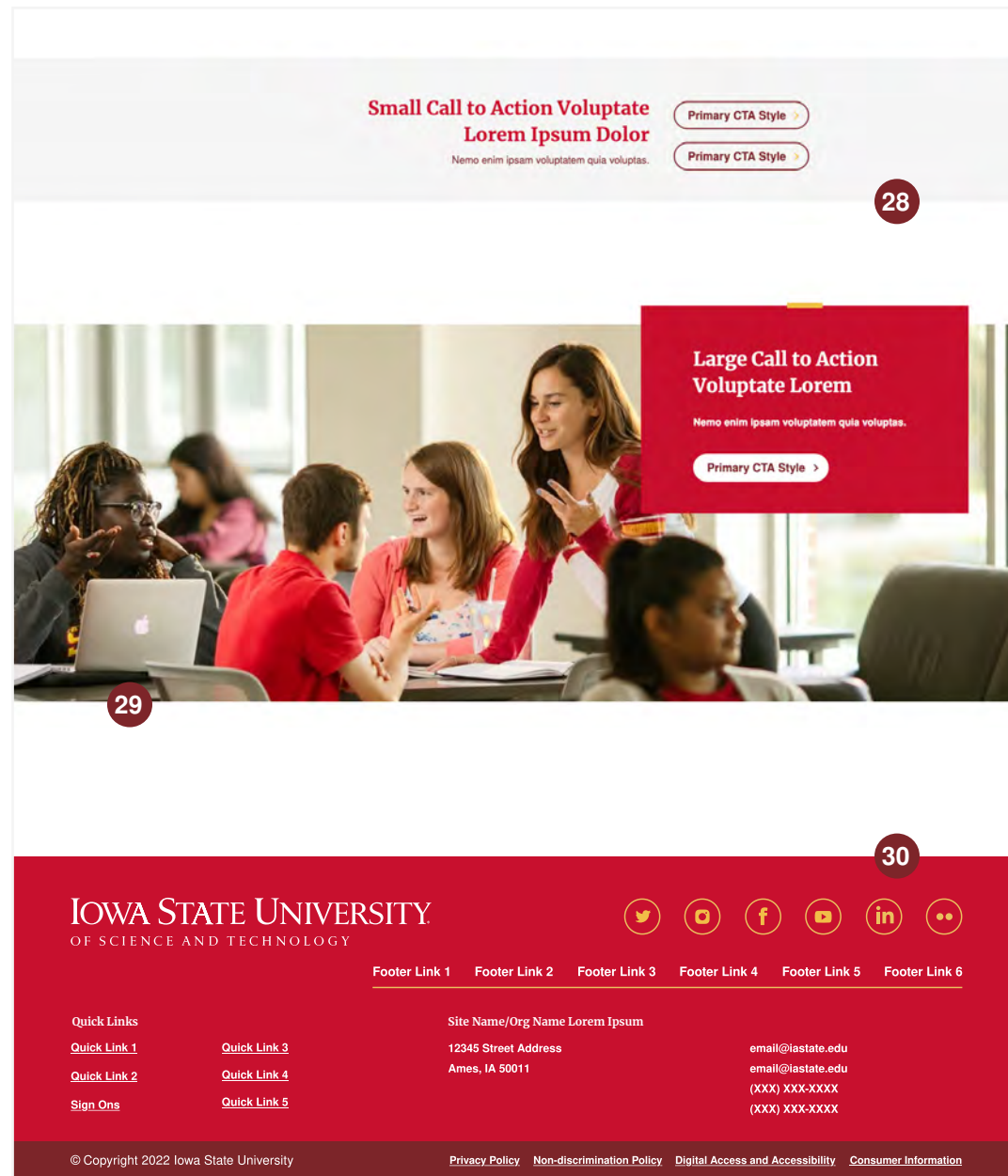
28 Call To Action: Small

Contain an H2, optional supporting copy, and Call to Action buttons. Be concise here.

- **Do** use at the end of a page.
- **Don't** overuse calls to action. These should be used sparingly – at most one per page.
- **Don't** use right after the page Hero Image.

29 Call To Action: Large

- **Use** in a similar manner as above but when an image is needed to support a CTA and only one CTA button is needed.

30 Site Footer

- **Use** primary footer links to direct users to take immediate action (e.g., Request Info, Apply, Visit, Give, Contact). Limit to no more than 6 links.
- **Use** quick links when you want to direct users to additional pages with less emphasis and that do not appear in the Kitchen Sink header. Limit to no more than 9 links.

Widget Heading Styles: Quick Reference

H1 Headings:

Hero

Home Hero – Atmospheric Image

Home Hero – Background Video

Home Hero – Featured Image

Home Hero – Supporting Image

Rich Text/WYSIWYG

H2 Headings:

Accordion
- Uses an H2 but is styled like an H3

Blockquote

Call to Action : Large

Call to Action: Small

Card Set
- Uses an H2 but is styled like an H3

Card Set - Profiles w/Modals
- Uses an H2 but is styled like an H3

External News Story
- H2 heading is optional and is styled like an H3

Feature with Large Image

Feature with Large Image and Intro

Feature with Small Image

Image Grid with Text

Link Block
- H2 heading is optional

Rich Text/WYSIWYG

Statistic
- H2 heading is optional

H3 Headings:

Carousel

External News Story
- H3 heading is styled like an H4

Featured Set

Multi Column Content

Rich Text/WYSIWYG

Statistic

Captions/Links/Other:

Breadcrumbs

Buttons

Card Set - Linked Image

Carousel

Form

Link Set

Subnav

Table
- Table headings are styled like an H3

Video Embed

Contact

Need more information? Have a request?

Website direction will be handled by Iowa State University's Strategic Relations and Communications team, with support from the idfive agency.

Erin Rosacker

Communications Specialist

Strategic Relations and Communications

edavison@iastate.edu

Additional Resources:

- **Iowa State University Brand Marketing**
- **Innovate at Iowa State**
- **Start Something**
- **theme.iastate.edu**
- New Admissions Campaign (link TBD)