

YOUR

IOWA STATE

STORIES OF TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

FALL 2014

Illustrated postcards: Nate Byro and Kayla Volkmer

Iowa State: A National Classroom

For Nate Byro, last fall was a semester crammed with adventure – including a close call with a herd of buffalo. But for the junior majoring in landscape architecture, the most memorable time was an hour of uninterrupted silence.

It happened beside Jenny Lake in Grand Teton National Park, one of several stops during the Traveling Savanna Studio, the hallmark of Iowa State University's Landscape Architecture program. Byro and his classmates were instructed to silently observe the landscape before sketching the scene.

"I can still see every detail of the place in my mind," said Byro, a recipient of the 2013 Traveling Savanna Studio Award. "I noticed a pattern in the driftwood in front of me: Its curves complemented those in the mountains, and they were repeated in the outlines of the valleys and trees."

This heightened observation – the separation of parts from the whole and recognition of patterns – is the foundation from which landscape architects develop their design skills. And it is a talent best developed through hands-on learning. "We

are teaching them to be observant, and think about why things are the way they are," said Michael Martin, associate professor of landscape architecture. "The intention is that they learn as designers how to respond to place – in terms of planning design, or urban pattern, or constructive landscapes – when you see it manifested differently in various parts of the country."

During two, three-week trips each fall semester, students travel across the country at a whirlwind pace – studying and sketching natural and built landscapes, identifying plant species, meeting design professionals, and more.

Last year's studio included 16 destinations extending from Gallatin Gateway, Montana (near Yellowstone), to Jekyll Island, Georgia. "The idea is to show students the contrasts in nature, culture and form throughout the U.S.," said Martin.

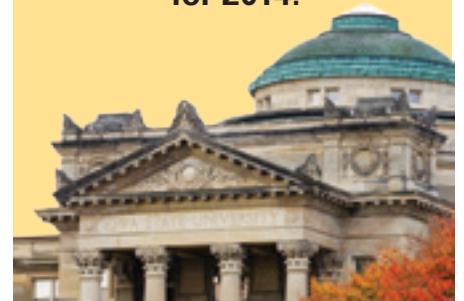
According to Kayla Volkmer, another 2013 Traveling Savanna Studio Award recipient, the strategy worked. "I'll never forget the transition from Minneapolis to

the Badlands. Within a day, we went from being in a busy city in 90-degree weather to climbing hills and pitching tents in the windy, desolate Badlands with coyotes howling in the background. To realize that both places are equally beautiful was amazing."

The Secret's Out!
Livability.com recently
ranked Ames as the

#1 Best
College
Town

for 2014.



ONLINE AT www.youriowastate.com



A YEAR OF SUCCESS!

The doors to the **Jeff and Deb Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center** officially opened for the spring 2014 semester, and have yet to see a lull in activity.

Created as a space for students to sharpen their skills in working with, caring for and learning about animals, the center is a versatile, multipurpose resource available for year-round use by campus organizations and the region. A wide variety of events have taken place within the Jeff and Deb Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center, including beef sales, equine events, a dog agility camp, and the State 4-H and FFA Livestock Judging Contest.

The center is a great asset for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in providing rich opportunities for both current and future students. Iowa State's Block & Bridle Club held their annual Spring Market Hog Show in the new arena, and 4-H Roundup took place in the facility over the summer months.

At the end of August, a dedication ceremony was held to celebrate a successful opening year.

Heritage Extended

For all who have set foot on central campus at Iowa State, the iconic image of historic buildings and the campanile surrounded by an expansive lawn is one fondly remembered. While buildings tend to get the most attention in regard to repair and upkeep, a group of students and faculty on campus work to make sure another aspect stays true to its Iowa State roots: the campus trees.

Two years ago, when a black maple near Catt Hall was cut down, three saplings grown from seeds collected from other campus trees filled that hole. Rhonda Martin, landscape architect at Iowa State, wondered why seeds and grafts weren't being collected regularly.

"It's easy to find replacements for red maples," she said, "but it's very hard to find black maples – they're just not as

prolific – and it's especially hard to find black maples grown in Iowa."

A year later, a disintegrating catalpa near Pearson Hall faced the same fate. William Graves, a longtime member of the Outdoor Teaching Committee and tree horticulture professor, enlisted students to collect seeds from the catalpa before it was removed. The seeds, cultivated in Iowa State nurseries, have generated hundreds of plants.

As campus trees begin to age, Graves and Martin are leading the charge to collect more seeds and grafts from existing plants to keep Iowa State's landscape legacy alive. "It's sad when we have to take one down," said Graves, "but it's less painful when seedlings or young progeny can go back on campus."



Photo: Erich Ernst



YOUR IOWA STATE TRIVIA

We have a winner from last issue's trivia question!

Congratulations to Sarah Hogan from Delmar, Iowa, for correctly guessing Panthers as Christian Petersen's sculpture at Iowa State that is "both the oldest and the newest." Panthers is believed to be Petersen's first major sculptural work and is his most recent work installed on campus.

Contributed photo



SAFETY FIRST

Ever thought a trash bin could be utilized as a safety feature? **Will Prindle**, assistant professor of industrial design, originally had the idea for an explosion-resistant trash receptacle 10 years ago that is currently in the development process. “They could be used in shopping malls, light rail stations and at public events,” he said. If successful, the project could offer

commercial potential for the state of Iowa and endless possibilities for his design students to create other explosive-proof products, such as doors, barricades and walls.

“This project has a lot of validity still, especially after the Boston Marathon,” said Prindle. In future years, it’s quite possible that Iowa State’s newest innovation will be found in public spaces across the nation.

Contributed photo



Math 101: Revisited

Research performed through Iowa State’s Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Mathematics Education has discovered that a student’s first collegiate math course is the single greatest academic obstacle to college graduation. Because of this, **Clifford Bergman**, the Barbara J. Janson Professor in Mathematics, seeks to change the reputation of math teachers at a university level.

Based on his own sometimes painful experiences as a young instructor, Bergman realizes there is no substitute for watching yourself in front of a class. “It is one thing to be told to face students and make eye contact,” he said. “It’s quite another to watch a video recording of yourself lecturing directly to the wall.”

Graduate students were filmed while

working with a class of undergraduates, then guided in self-analyzing their recordings. Additionally, Bergman has teamed up with the English department to detect key phrases and techniques related to successful teaching. With this knowledge, teachers could improve their teaching habits without even watching a recording. Bergman plans to share these effective techniques as part of a National Science Foundation-funded Center for the Integration of Teaching, Research and Learning project, potentially impacting math classes across the United States.

Perhaps in coming years, more of these young instructors will be equipped with even better teaching skills, and will turn away from the board to show students their best side.

On the Rise

It’s been another record year for enrollment at Iowa State, with **34,732 students** this fall. We’ve come a long way since our first official graduating class in 1872, which consisted of **24** men and **two** women.

1872 Graduating Class



2014 Enrollment

34,732
STUDENTS

Welcome to **YOUR IOWA STATE**,
the newsletter that keeps you connected
with **Iowa State University**. Look inside to
find out what's happening on campus as
well as to relive some of your own Iowa
State memories.

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A LIVING LANDMARK

Iowa State's rich history isn't solely rooted in innovation, but also in the land it stands on. Around 1909, about 50 sycamore trees were planted to create Sycamore Row, which starts near the Landscape Architecture Building and ends at Squaw Creek. Close to Sycamore Row, these hearty trees have also lined Lincoln Way since its dirt-road days.

Arthur T. Erwin, Iowa State horticulture professor from 1901-15, planted the trees to create tranquility for faculty, staff and students as they trekked to campus. More than 100 years later, the trees serve the same purpose, preserving the Iowa State atmosphere we all know and love.