Public relations campaign to encourage more Iowa State University women to run for Student Government Senate

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Public relations campaign to encourage more Iowa State University women to run for Student Government Senate

by

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A creative component submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies (International Development)

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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2017

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... iii

CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .............. 1
  Shortage of Women Senators ................................................................. 1
  Political Ambition Gap ........................................................................ 6
  Purpose of the Campaign ..................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 2  CLIENT ORGANIZATION ................................................. 11
  Iowa State University ........................................................................ 11
  ISU Student Government ................................................................... 12

CHAPTER 3  SITUATION ANALYSIS .................................................. 16
  Strengths .............................................................................................. 16
  Weaknesses ....................................................................................... 18
  Opportunities .................................................................................... 21
  Threats ............................................................................................... 22

CHAPTER 4  RESEARCH OF TARGET PUBLIC ..................................... 25
  Interview Procedure .......................................................................... 25
  Interview Results ............................................................................... 26

CHAPTER 5  CURRENT CAMPAIGN CRITIQUE ..................................... 34

CHAPTER 6  NEW MESSAGE STRATEGY ............................................. 37

CHAPTER 7  CAMPAIGN PLAN .............................................................. 40
  Overview ............................................................................................ 40
  Evaluation ......................................................................................... 48

REFERENCES ................................................................................................. 50
ABSTRACT

Women are underrepresented in Student Government at Iowa State University. Previous research has demonstrated that women who run for political office are just as likely as men to be elected. Using interviews with women students at Iowa State, the shortage of women in Student Government can be explained by a lack of political ambition, low visibility and awareness of Student Government and its accomplishments, confusion about the election process, and the time-consuming nature of Student Government. The findings suggest that women may be more likely to run for Student Government Senate if certain aspects of the senator role are emphasized: leadership development, impact on campus, and social opportunities. This paper provides additional insight into how to change attitudes and behavior of women students at Iowa State University, through a public relations campaign, so they will run for Student Government Senate.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Shortage of Women Senators

The purpose of this campaign is to encourage more women to run for Student Government Senate at Iowa State University (ISU). This campaign is necessary due to the underrepresentation of women students in Student Government at ISU. Women who run for political office are just as likely as men to get elected (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2014). However, women account for only 20.7 percent of the elected Student Government senators at ISU (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e) compared to the 43 percent of the student population that is women (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). Additionally, in the past ten years, Student Government has had only one woman president (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a).

Figures 1 and 2 show the gender composition of the Student Government Senate and Student Government (all branches) from 1997 to 2017 (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2015; Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). Over the past 20 years, the highest percentage of women senators was 37.5 percent in academic year 2005-2006, and the lowest was 18.92 percent in 2011-2012. The percentage of women in Student Government (all branches) for academic year 2016-2017 is at the lowest point within this 20-year range, at 20.34 percent, and the 20.7 percent of current women senators is the third lowest in the same 20-year period.
Figure 1
*Gender Composition of Iowa State University Student Government Senate (1997-2017)*

![Graph showing gender composition of Iowa State University Student Government Senate (1997-2017)]

Figure 2
*Gender Composition of Iowa State University Student Government (All Branches) (1997-2017)*

![Graph showing gender composition of Iowa State University Student Government (All Branches) (1997-2017)]
The percentage of women senators at Iowa State is even lower than at the two other public universities in Iowa, as seen in Table 1. As of fall 2016, University of Iowa had a total of 32,150 students, with 51.4 percent women (The University of Iowa Office of the Registrar, 2016), although it should be noted that 27 students did not report their gender. Their student senate contained 39.7 percent women senators (University of Iowa Student Government, 2016). As of fall 2016, University of Northern Iowa had a total of 11,905 students, with 59.2 percent women (University of Northern Iowa Institutional Research & Effectiveness, 2016). Their student senate is made up of 29.4 percent women senators (Northern Iowa Student Government, 2016). The disparity between men and women senators is greatest at Iowa State University. The disparity between the gender population and the senate representation is greatest at University of Northern Iowa (29.8), followed by Iowa State University (22.3).

Table 1
*Student Population and Student Senate Representation at Iowa Public Universities in Fall 2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Men Students</th>
<th>Women Students</th>
<th>Men Senators</th>
<th>Women Senators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State University</td>
<td>20,897 (57%)</td>
<td>15,763 (43%)</td>
<td>23 (79.3%)</td>
<td>6 (20.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>15,616 (48.6%)</td>
<td>16,507 (51.4%)</td>
<td>35 (60.3%)</td>
<td>23 (39.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Northern Iowa</td>
<td>4,862 (40.8%)</td>
<td>7,043 (59.2%)</td>
<td>12 (70.6%)</td>
<td>5 (29.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shortage of women student legislators is also indicative of national underrepresentation in the United States. In the U.S., women make up 50.8 percent of the population (United States Census Bureau, 2014) but only 19.4 percent of Congress (Center for American Women and Politics Rutgers, 2016). Internationally, the United States ranks 75th in the world for women’s political representation in the national legislature (Desilver, 2015). The lack
of women in political leadership in the U.S. is a problem for our society because women’s interests lack representation when women are not in political positions of power. Women’s personal and political rights are at stake. Advocating for half of the population (women) is critical, especially because women are a minoritized population and hold less political influence than men (Institute for Policy Research, 2016).

Women bring a different set of perspectives and talents to organizations and institutions than men. Women tend to be more collaborative, participative, and democratic, which leads to organizational effectiveness (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women politicians also tend to be more pragmatic than their men colleagues (Klein, 2015). Over the last seven years, women U.S. senators introduced more legislation than their men counterparts, were more bipartisan, and had more bills enacted by the senate (Klein, 2015). Erin Loos Cutraro, founder of She Should Run, explains, “Having more women in government injects new perspectives and ideas to solve the complicated issues we face as a nation. We can’t expect to make the best policy when we shut out half the population to policy making” (Cutraro, 2016). Having more women student government leaders also builds a pipeline for future local, state, and national government leaders (Fox & Lawless, 2014). Student government representation is important in order to have gender equity and potentially a more collaborative, effective legislative body. Student government should be representative of the student body so it is a more accurate representation of the student body’s interests.

While the focus of this public relations campaign is formal leadership, we must acknowledge the contributions of women informal leaders. This paper in no way serves to diminish the importance of women’s roles in informal leadership, historically or currently. We also must acknowledge the factors that relegated women to informal roles and shut them out of
formal leadership positions, specifically in politics, such as sexism, gender roles, gender bias, lack of mentors and inadequate networks (Beitsch, 2015; Lawless & Fox, 2012; Carroll & Fox, 2010). Women continue to break down these barriers; however, there is more work to be done to remove significant barriers which remain. The progress that has been made thus far has made a significant impact on the workplace. Women’s formal and informal leadership continue to be impactful. Teams with women informal leaders tend to have better performance ratings than similar teams with men informal leaders (Neubert, 1999). The emergence of women leaders creates an increased network and more opportunity for mentors, something that men have held a competitive advantage with since the beginning of time, and which perpetuated the dominance of male leadership (Lockwood, 2006).

Formal women leaders open the door for more formal and informal women leaders. When women are in formal leadership roles, there may be more informal leaders because of women’s collaborative nature and openness to multiple leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, informal leadership is hard to measure by nature. There are very few women formal leaders in Iowa State Student Government, with only 6 women senators out of 29 current total senators (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e) and 5 women executive branch members out of 21 total (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016b). In fact, the percentage of women in Student Government Senate has been declining since 2014 (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2015; Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). The perspective, representation, and talents of women are sorely missing from Student Government at Iowa State. Formal leadership and representation for women is particularly important in politics where legislation is crafted and new laws and policies are created. Consequently, this
paper will focus on formal leadership of Iowa State women students in the roles of elected members of Student Government Senate.

Political Ambition Gap

Candidates in the U.S. who run for office tend to be white, male, and well-educated (Motel, 2014) and work in law, business, education, and political activism (Manning, 2016; Lawless & Fox, 2013). Women make up almost half of the students in the law and business administration graduate programs today (Bidwell, 2014). Overall, in recent years, women have an educational advantage over men in the United States, earning 57.2 percent of bachelor’s degrees, 59.9 percent of master’s degrees, and 51.4 percent of PhDs in academic year 2012-2013 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). A gendered disparity in education may have past influence over who ran for political office in the U.S., but that trend will continue to change with more women earning higher education degrees (Lawless & Fox, 2013). However, there is a significant political ambition gap between men and women, both in local, state, and national elections as well as at universities.

At Iowa State the percentages of women in the fields of typical candidates vary, as 33.4 percent of business students are women, 90.2 percent of education students are women, and 40.8 percent of political science students are women (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). Iowa State does not have a law program, though there is a preparation for law program, which is very small, with 10 total students, including 5 women and 5 men (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). The 29 senators in the Iowa State University Student Government are in a variety of undergraduate academic programs; the most common majors among senators are engineering (10), political science (4), and agriculture (3) (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). Only one senator’s major is business, and one senator’s major is
agriculture and life sciences education, which is can be categorized as residing in both the agriculture and education fields (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). It should be noted that graduate students are eligible to run for Student Government positions, but there are none currently in the Student Government Senate (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). The number of senators for each academic college and residence are based on student population, so it may affect these statistics. For example, there are four senator positions for the College of Engineering, three for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, two for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and two for the College of Business, with one business senator position currently vacant (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e).

The academic programs of senators may be more representative of the university’s student population than mirroring the professions of U.S. politicians, as 27 percent of undergraduate students are in engineering, 15 percent are in agriculture, 14 percent are in business, and just 1 percent are in political science (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). At Iowa State, 84.1 percent of undergraduate students in engineering are men, 49.3 percent of undergraduate agriculture students are men, 66.6 percent of undergraduate business students are men, and 59.2 percent of undergraduate political science students are men (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). Men at Iowa State are probably more likely to run for Student Government positions than women because of their political ambition rather than their areas of study.

Jennifer Lawless (2014) found that 62 percent of men she surveyed had considered running for office, compared to only 45 percent of women. In terms of actually running, the disparity may be even greater. In a recent study, only about 25 percent of the respondents who reported that they ran for office were women (Motel, 2014). Additionally, when Political Parity
(2016) analyzed all Congressional races from 1980 to 2012, they found that women accounted for only 13 percent of all candidates during that time period. This amounts to 3,000 women out of more than 23,700 candidates running in Congressional primaries. Another sign of just how rare women candidates are – 70 percent of these Congressional elections studied included no women candidates, either in the primary or general election (Political Parity, 2016).

A record 40 women ran for the U.S. Senate in 2016, but only 15 of them won their primaries (Cohn, 2016a). After the 2016 elections, the number of women in Congress remains unchanged, at 104 (Cohn, 2016b). The number of women in the Senate increased from 20 to 21, but the number of women in the House of Representatives fell from 84 to 83 (Cohn, 2016b).

Among college students, Lawless and Fox (2013) found that men were twice as likely as women to have considered running for office someday. Lawless and Fox (2013) identified five factors that negatively affect political ambition in women college students: “young men are more likely than young women to be socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path; young women tend to be exposed to less political information and discussion than do young men; young men are more likely than young women to have played organized sports and care about winning; young women are less likely than young men to receive encouragement to run for office; and young women are less likely than young men to think they will be qualified to run for office, even once they are established in their careers” (Lawless and Fox, 2013, p. ii).

Further research supports these conclusions and offers additional reasons for women’s lack of political ambition. Women students have a lack of women political mentors and role models (Carroll & Fox, 2010), are likely recruited less often for student government than men (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2014), may be less likely to consider themselves as qualified to run for office (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Lawless & Fox, 2012), and may believe that
politics is a man’s world based on what they learned in school (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014; Lawless & Fox, 2013) or have seen in the media (Tolleson-Rinehart & Josephson, 2005; Carroll & Fox, 2010).

Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University adds, “Women are less likely to run unless they’re recruited, and they’re less likely to be recruited,” (Beitsch, 2015). In her study, Jennifer Lawless (2012) found that women are a third less likely than men to be recruited to run. However, encouragement to run has a significant impact; women are four times more likely to consider a run if the idea is suggested to them (Lawless, 2012). Additional statistics illustrate the hesitation of women to become candidates.

Lawless and Fox (2012) found that nearly nine out of ten potential women candidates believe that it is significantly harder for women than for men to win elections, despite findings from Carroll and Fox (2010) and Fox and Lawless (2014) that women who run for office are just as likely as men to get elected. Women’s perception of the uneven playing field make them hesitant to run for office (Lawless & Fox, 2012). Priti Rao, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Women’s Political Caucus adds that, “Women in particular tend to be less likely self-promoters. In order to get more women to agree to run for office she has to be asked seven times by seven different people” (Cox, 2011).

Even though when women run, they are just as likely as men to be elected (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2014), the challenges that they face and the perception of women in politics may deter women from running (Tolleson-Rinehart & Josephson, 2005). Women have a historical disadvantage in political representation, due to their relatively new presence in the political pipeline (Fox & Lawless, 2014), and there are many factors that limit political ambition
including lack of women mentors (Miller & Kraus, 2004) and the reality that women are less likely than men to be recruited to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2014).

Purpose of the Campaign

The purpose of this campaign is to encourage more women to run for Student Government Senate at Iowa State University. If more women run, more women are likely to be elected (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2014), increasing women representation on campus. The public relations campaign must address women’s lack of political ambition to overcome the current trends in women student government participation.
CHAPTER II
CLIENT ORGANIZATION

Iowa State University

Iowa State University of Science and Technology is a public, land-grant institution of higher education located in Ames, Iowa. Originally named the Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm, Iowa State was officially established in 1858. The first class (including 24 men and 2 women) graduated in 1872. Iowa State’s strong programs historically include agriculture, engineering, extension, home economics, and veterinary medicine (Zanish-Belcher, 2006). The mission of Iowa State is to create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place (Office of the President, 2017).

Today, there are eight academic colleges – agriculture and life sciences, business, design, engineering, human sciences, liberal arts and sciences, veterinary medicine, and the graduate college (Iowa State University, 2016). Iowa State had a record number of students enrolled in the fall semester of 2016, with a total of 36,660 students; of this total, 15,763 (43 percent) were women. Most students are undergraduate students (30,671) compared to graduate students and postdoctoral students (5,403), and professional students (586) (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016).

Iowa State is categorized as a four-year, large, primarily residential school with most students attending full time (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2014). Students are from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. They choose from over 100 majors and have opportunities to gain participate in over 800 student organizations (University Relations, 2016).
Women students are active in the student organizations on campus. In Greek organization sororities, for example, there were 5,058 undergraduate women members (The Office of Greek Affairs, 2016) out of Iowa State’s 13,087 total women undergraduate students (38.6 percent) in fall 2016 (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). Sorority membership is time consuming, which may not leave time for students to participate in Student Government, which is another time-consuming student organization.

The most visible formal leadership at Iowa State University includes President Steven Leath and 28 administrators who make up his cabinet. Of those 28 administrators, 14 are men and 14 are women. When examining the top level of his administration, his vice presidents consist of 5 men and 4 women. The deans represent more women leadership, with 5 women and 3 men leading the academic colleges (Iowa State University, 2016). However, there has never been a woman president of Iowa State (Office of the President, 2016).

ISU Student Government

The Student Government at Iowa State was founded in 1904 and originally named the Cardinal Guild (Iowa State University Government of the Student Body, 2012). Student Government is the student organization representing all students at Iowa State University through “funding, advocacy and empowerment,” per the Student Government’s Facebook page (2017). Student Government is funded by the mandatory student activity fee paid by all ISU students, totaling about $2.5 million per year (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016c). Student Government provides funding to over 140 student organizations, student groups, and community organizations (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016c). Several campus services are also supported by Student Government funding: “recreation services, the Iowa State Center, CyRide, student legal services, the Memorial Union, Iowa State Daily
newspaper subscriptions, sports club council, Department of Public Safety help van and escort service, university committees, and intercollegiate athletics” (Iowa State University Government of the Student Body, 2012, para. 3). Student Government is composed of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial (Iowa State University Government of the Student Body, 2012).

The executive branch includes the president, vice president, treasurer, director of ISU Ambassadors, director of information technology, director of student diversity, ex-officio Ames City Council student liaison, director of sustainability, director of academic affairs, and webmaster. Additional ad-hoc cabinet seats may be established by an executive order of the president. The president and vice president run for their positions as a joint ticket and are elected annually in a general race where all students are eligible to vote. All other executive branch members are appointed by the president. The duties of the executive branch include serving as liaisons between students and university administrators, handling diversity issues, communicating with students, creating projects, and lobbying the Iowa legislature (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a). The executive branch consists of 16 men and 5 women. Both the current president and vice president are men (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016b).

The legislative branch includes senators who represent either a college or residence area. These positions are all elected annually by students in their constituencies (Iowa State University Student Government, 2015a). Currently, there are 29 senators total, all undergraduate students, including 23 men and 6 women, with five vacant seats (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). Senators study in a variety of academic programs – accounting, engineering, agriculture, event management, journalism and mass communication, mathematics,
and political science. The most common majors among senators is engineering (10), agriculture (3), and mathematics (3). Only one senator’s major is political science, though some senators have minors in political science (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e).

Senators attend weekly meetings to consider and debate legislation. The Senate has five committees: rules, finance, public relations, student diversity, and university affairs (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a). The finance committee is one of the most powerful, as it approves how money from student fees is spent. The committee meets with over 140 student organizations each year to discuss budget requests and ultimately allocates over $1.6 million to student organizations annually. The finance committee also influences the Senate allocations, sourced by discretionary funds, which can range from $21,000 to $45,000 annually (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016c).

The judicial branch consists of a chief justice, 8 associate justices, and a clerk. The court rules on the constitutionality of executive and senate decisions as well as cases between students and student groups (Iowa State University Student Government, 2015a). There are 8 men and just 1 woman currently in the judicial branch, with one vacant associate justice position (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016d).

The total current membership of Student Government includes 47 men and 12 women. In every branch, men outnumber the women. In the past 10 years, there has only been one woman president of the Student Government (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a). Candidates for president and vice president in the 2016-2017 election were all men (Clemens, 2016). The upcoming 2017-2018 president and vice president candidates are all men, except for one woman vice presidential candidate (Gehr, 2017).
All students at Iowa State are eligible for election or appointment to Student Government, provided they have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 and meet the minimum GPA in the semester prior to the election or appointment, during the semester of election or appointment, and semesters during the term of office. Students also must be in good standing with Iowa State University and enrolled at least half time. The general election is held annually during the sixth, seventh, eighth and/or ninth week of the spring semester (Iowa State University Student Government, 2015a).
CHAPTER III

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Table 2 illustrates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current ISU Student Government situation, in regards to a public relations campaign to encourage more women to run for Student Government Senate.

Table 2

**SWOT Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Over 15,700 women students</td>
<td>● Women senators underrepresented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Past women Student Government presidents and vice presidents</td>
<td>● Majority male student population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Women in senior university positions</td>
<td>● No history of woman university president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics</td>
<td>● Time-consuming senate positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Confusing election process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Current international feminism movement</td>
<td>● The double bind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Elect Her presentations on campus</td>
<td>● The historical societal perception of leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Male privilege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Over 800 student organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengths

**Over 15,700 women students**
Iowa State has over 15,700 women students, as of fall 2016 (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016), a large pool from which to draw more women into the Student Government Senate. Iowa State is a large institution, so even a small percentage of the total women student body can make a representative difference in Student Government, which has 34 senator positions (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e).

**Past women student government presidents and vice presidents**

Historically, women have held the top leadership positions in Student Government, albeit less often than men. Student Government has had 13 women presidents since 1958, with 4 women presidents in the last 14 years. Women have ascended to the top position in Student Government, so the organization is not regarded as completely closed to women’s executive leadership. However, in the past 10 years, there has only been one woman president, so current students are likely not used to having a woman president as a common occurrence (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a).

**Women in senior university positions**

Women hold some of the high-level positions at Iowa State; 5 out of 8 college deans are women (Iowa State University, 2016). This may indicate that women formal leaders are valued. Also, the women deans are a visible example of women in formal leadership and could be used in a PR campaign to encourage women to run for Student Government Senate.

**Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics**
Iowa State has an active center on campus, the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, dedicated to educating voters and involving citizens, especially women, in the political process. The Catt Center provides leadership development, mentoring and educational opportunities to ISU students interested in politics, public service, and women’s issues through programs, conferences, workshops, and retreats. The Catt Center also brings “prominent women leaders, national and international scholars, and political activists and practitioners to campus for lectures, programs and seminars through the Mary Louise Smith Chair in Women and Politics and in collaboration with other programs with a focus on women’s leadership, women and politics, and women’s issues” (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2016a).

Another important aspect of the Center’s work is encouraging “women and men to pursue careers in politics, public administration and public service through Ready to Run Iowa campaign training program and by hosting the visits of local, state, national and international leaders who serve as mentors and role models” (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2016a). Recently, the Campaign College program, directed toward students, has been replaced by Elect Her, a national program that encourages and trains college women to run for student government and political office. Elect Her is a national program organized by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Running Start, a nonprofit that encourages women to get into politics. The Catt Center partnered with the Ames AAUW to sponsor the Elect Her workshop that took place on campus in January 2016, free of charge to students (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2016b).

Weaknesses

Women senators underrepresented
Only 6 out of 29 current senators (20.7 percent) are women (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e). The lack of women senators may discourage women from getting involved in Student Government, perhaps creating a feeling of being unqualified or unwelcome. The low percentage of women leaders may also contribute to few women being encouraged to run for office due to a smaller network of women senators and less women senator mentors.

**Majority male student population**

The majority (57.1 percent) of the student population is male, so men have an advantage over women in terms of number of votes (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). If men vote for their male friends and essentially, people who look like them (other men), with most the vote, they could keep women candidates from winning. Men have the majority advantage in general student elections (such as for president and vice president election) and for four out of eight colleges: business, engineering, liberal arts and sciences, and graduate colleges senate races. This translates to a male voting majority for 11 senator positions out of 16 total senator positions who represent colleges. Currently, there is one vacant senator position for the College of Veterinary Medicine, in which most students are women (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016e; Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016).

**No history of woman university president**

There has never been a woman president of the university (Office of the President, 2016), the highest position at the school. Visible role models are very important when encouraging women to run for office (Elder, 2004). If women do not see visible examples of women leaders in the highest office of the university, it sends an informal message to women that leaders are
men. Also, since the university has always been led by a male president, women student leadership may not be a university priority.

**Time-consuming senate positions**

Student Government Senate positions are time consuming and involve weekly meetings, at minimum. Student Government meetings, required for senators, are held weekly. Each senator is also required to serve on a senate or university committee, attend constituency council meetings, keep office hours in the Student Government office space each week, and attend the yearly Student Government retreat (Iowa State University Student Government, 2015a). Students who are active in other student organizations or with work or academic responsibilities, may not be able to devote enough time to Student Government.

**Confusing election process**

The Student Government election process may be confusing to many students. The process for becoming a senator is not listed on the Student Government website very clearly; it is only listed in their constitution document and election code, which are linked on their web page. Students who meet the minimum GPA requirement and enrollment status are eligible to run for a senate position either based on where they live or their academic college (Iowa State University Student Government, 2015a). Some residence locations and colleges have multiple senate positions, while others only have one (Iowa State University Student Government, 2016a). Election deadlines are determined by the election commissioner and posted on the Student Government website each year. Candidates are required to attend a candidate seminar and complete many items of paperwork to register for the election (Iowa State University Student
Government, 2015b). Students may be interested in running for Student Government, but the complicated nature of the process could discourage them from completing the process.

Opportunities

**Current international feminism movement**

The current international feminism movement of feminist activity and study is gaining increased attention and conversation. This movement is focused on intersectional oppression and social justice. The current “appreciation for the multidimensionality of human identity and the intersectional nature of women’s oppression” is more inclusive and racially diverse than past feminist movements (Goss, 2013).

The movement even includes Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who announced that he was “proud to be a feminist” (Wang, 2016) and that he will raise his sons as feminists (Parker, 2016). Trudeau appointed a gender-equal cabinet upon taking office in 2015, a historical first for Canada (Wang, 2016). This current feminism movement makes it more likely for current students – men and women – to appreciate and recognize the importance of women’s leadership and representation.

**Elect Her presentations on campus**

Organizations such as Elect Her are active and partner with Iowa State to bring their programs to this campus. Elect Her is a program from AAUW and Running Start that encourages and trains college women to run for student government and future political office (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2016b). Elect Her brings expertise and support to
the Catt Center at Iowa State that can make an impact on women running for Student
Government positions.

Threats

The double bind

The double bind is a double-standard that women in leadership experience. Women
leaders are expected to act like men, but be “feminine enough” to be likeable (Eagly & Carli,
2007). The double bind creates a situation where success and likeability are inversely related,
which is not the case for men (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women may be hesitant to run for Student
Government if they have experienced the double bind.

The historical societal perception of leadership

The historical perception of leadership may also impair women students from running for
office. Women’s rights advocate Tabby Biddle explains that “for most of history, there has been
an assumption that leadership belongs to men and that leaders are men” (Biddle, 2015).
Therefore, women are less likely to consider themselves as qualified to run for office, and
women are less likely than men to receive encouragement to run for office (Lawless & Fox,
2012; Beitsch, 2015). Women may be more likely to experience the imposter syndrome, a
feeling that you are a fraud – less qualified and less deserving of success than others, leading to
undervaluing your accomplishments (Richards, 2015).

In their study of eligible candidates who were high-level professionals working in law,
business, education, and political activism, Lawless and Fox (2012) found that men were almost
60 percent more likely than women to consider themselves “very qualified” to run for office. In
the same study, women were more than twice as likely as men to rate themselves “not at all qualified” (Lawless & Fox, 2012). This may be because women are socialized to be hesitant in promoting themselves, while society rewards men for ambition (Miller, 2016).

**Male privilege**

Privilege of men and the perceived backlash from men in a competitive environment may prevent women from running for Student Government Senate. Men may feel competitive towards women especially in leadership positions traditionally held by men, where men have more to lose from women’s advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2007). As author Laurie Penny states, “When you’ve been used to privilege, equality feels like prejudice” (Penny, 2015). This perceived threat can manifest in male resentment and sexual harassment (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women students may have experienced this harassment in the past or may fear experiencing this treatment that they have seen happen to others.

**Over 800 student organizations**

There are over 800 student organizations at Iowa State (University Relations, 2016). These organizations present formal leadership opportunities for students, creating competition with Student Government for talented students. Students may be involved in other organizations, such as sororities, and not have the time or availability to run for a Student Government position. At Iowa State, there were 5,058 undergraduate women members of sororities (The Office of Greek Affairs, 2016) out of Iowa State’s 13,087 total women undergraduate students (38.6 percent) in fall 2016. Sorority membership is time consuming, which may not leave time for
students to participate in Student Government, which is another time-consuming student organization. Student Government needs to appeal to women on a competitive basis with sororities and other student organizations. Sororities and many other student organizations also have a less complicated process for gaining leadership positions than in Student Government.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH OF TARGET PUBLIC

The main target public for this campaign is women students at Iowa State University. Women make up 43 percent of students at Iowa State University (totaling 15,763), as of fall semester 2016 (Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). The undergraduate students are mainly traditional college age (18-22), and most students are undergraduates pursuing a degree full-time (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2014; Iowa State University Office of the Registrar, 2016). Students are from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. They choose from over 100 majors and have opportunities to participate in over 800 student organizations (University Relations, 2016).

Interview Procedure

To learn more about the target public, I conducted fifteen one-on-one interviews of women students at Iowa State. Three groups were identified as potential interview respondents: current Student Government senators, political science majors, and sorority members. I emailed women Student Government senators and requested interviews. I contacted political science faculty members to share the interview opportunity with their students and sorority chapter presidents to share the opportunity with their members. After receiving emails from interested students, I scheduled one-on-one interviews.

Interviews were completed at local coffee shops near Iowa State University’s campus and at a sorority house near campus. The average interview lasted 7 minutes, with a minimum of 5 minutes and maximum of 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded via digital voice recorder.
for transcription purposes, and the audio recordings were destroyed once transcribed.

Transcriptions were sent to the interview respondents for their review.

Interview questions were designed to identify perceptions, attitudes, and motivations of Iowa State women students regarding Student Government. Key questions are listed below in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Would you briefly describe your year in school and your major?</td>
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<td>2. What kind of organization are you interested in being a part of?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What characteristics of that organization entice you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What are the challenging factors of that organization?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. When you hear “Student Government,” what comes to mind?</td>
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<td>6. What experience do you have in high school government?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Has anyone encouraged you to run for Student Government? Who?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. What appeals to you about running for Student Government?</td>
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<td>9. What discourages you from running for Student Government?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. What do you think qualifies someone to run for Student Government?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Do you think you’re qualified to be an elected member of Student Government? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Are there role models on campus that you admire? Who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Any final comments?</td>
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</table>

Interview Results

Demographics
Interview respondents were undergraduate women students in either their sophomore, junior, or senior year. The students represented 14 different majors: advertising, animal science, architecture, early childhood education, event management, finance, global resource systems, journalism, kinesiology and health, marketing, mathematics, political science, psychology, and supply chain management.

**Student organization interest**

Interview respondents were asked about their interests in student organizations. The most frequently mentioned answers included interest in organizations that relate to the students’ majors, offer opportunities for leadership experience, something that makes a difference across campus, and organizations where their friends are involved. Respondents also highlighted social aspects and perks such as free food and concert tickets as reasons to join an organization.

Regarding what type of organization she would consider joining, one student said:

> Definitely an organization that would directly benefit me in the long run, so something that I have interest in. So, right now I’m in clubs – supply chain club and marketing clubs. So, stuff that relate to my major. Stuff that will also benefit other people. Freshman year, I did student council for freshmen. So, stuff that benefits other people but that can also benefit myself.

The student elaborated on why she enjoyed Freshmen Council:

> The fact that, for student council for freshmen, I liked that it was adding input from the freshmen and giving it to the university. So, directly giving ideas and new concepts to the university was a good idea.

Another student, when responding about what organizations interest her, mentioned Freshmen Council and its relationship to Student Government:

> Something with the capabilities to become a more effective leader and a leader on campus. Something that could impact the school. When you’re a freshman there aren’t a lot of opportunities, but we have something called Freshmen Council, which is supposed to be kind of a subpart of Student Government because it’s supposed to help you get up
to Student Government, but I think they have to strengthen that tie between Student Government and Freshmen Council.

Students also emphasized social and support system aspects of organizations as advantages. One student, when describing what characteristics of an organization are enticing, said:

I would say team. In high school, I did a ton of sports and stuff, and I knew I would miss it, and I didn’t want to be alone. You know, you want to be part of something bigger. So, family, team, support system….the more involved I was, the better my grades almost got because I thought I needed to hold up my end, so I wanted that support system.

Another student also highlighted the importance of relating to team members:

Well, I like the sense of community and being able to count on anyone within the organization, the way I can relate to the people within the organizations outside of just being a student at Iowa State.

Students cited time commitment as a challenging factor when considering joining an organization. Among respondents, concerns about balancing responsibilities of school work, jobs, volunteering, and student organizations were factors in deciding which organization to join. Personal conflicts with members and unappreciated efforts were other considerations. Most students listed the time commitment as the most significant reason that they would not run for Student Government. Respondents suggested that students who were newer to Iowa State, such as freshmen and sophomores, would be more likely to join Student Government, before they became committed to other student organizations and would not have time for Student Government.

Student Government perception

Some respondents had positive perceptions of Student Government and knew that the organization involved student leaders who represent the interest of students. However, many
respondents either expressed an indifference toward Student Government or disappointment in Student Government due to a lack of progress on promises. When asked what comes to mind when she hears “Student Government,” one student said, “Kind of irrelevant. I don’t know anybody who is in Student Government, and I’ve never thought of joining it, even with my major [political science].” Many respondents expressed similar thoughts. Another student commented, “I honestly think of high school, I didn’t know that student government was a thing in college. So, I would think of high school student government, that I wasn’t a part of.” Student reactions overall highlighted an indifference toward Student Government and students unaware of Student Government’s presence or accomplishments.

**Student Government interest**

Respondents were asked about any encouragement they received to run for Student Government at Iowa State. The most frequently mentioned answer was that no one had encouraged them to run. One respondent even commented, “No, I honestly didn’t even know that we had one.” Low visibility of Student Government and lackluster recruitment of potential candidates may be a reason for the lack of women senators. Most interview respondents did not have prior student government experience. However, even students who had high school government experience did not necessarily want to join Student Government at Iowa State, perhaps because they were never encouraged to run.

Among the current Student Government senators interviewed, they each were influenced by friends or mentors who encouraged them to join Student Government. One senator said her Freshmen Council experience and a mentor in the organization led her to run for Student Government:
I was on Freshmen Council, and he was one of the executive members of Freshmen Council [and a member of Student Government]. And Student Government came to talk to us at one of our meetings. I was really interested, but the people who came to talk weren’t really interested in telling me about it, but [one of the executive members of Freshmen Council] approached me after the meeting and said, ‘Hey, come to one of our meetings. Sit in on it and see if you’re interested.’ So, I did, and I fell in love.

When asked what appeals to them about running for Student Government, respondents said making an impact, making their voice heard, and gaining leadership development opportunities. One student said,

I would have known about it earlier, I definitely, probably would have looked into it… I feel like that’s something I would have been able to look into further and see, because I like to be part of that stuff, to know what’s going on, so that would be kind of cool.

Factors that prevent students from running for Student Government cited by respondents include being too busy with other commitments, a negative reputation of Student Government where the university controls their choices, a lack of knowledge about what Student Government does and the election process itself, lack of interest in politics, and not knowing anyone in the organization. Time commitments were overwhelmingly the most stated factor that discourages students from running for Student Government.

**Qualifications for Student Government**

Among respondents, the most frequently mentioned qualifications for Student Government were having experience in another organization, having leadership skills or a desire to develop those skills, and passion about Iowa State or specific aspects of their college experience. Respondents noted that Student Government candidates should have good time management skills to handle the extensive time commitment and contribute fully to the organization. Other qualifications mentioned by respondents include having a good GPA and
leadership qualities such as being open to other’s ideas, listening to students, being responsible, and having organizational skills. Respondents generally were not aware of official qualifications for Student Government candidates because they were not familiar with Student Government or the election process. When asked what qualifies someone to run for Student Government, one respondent said:

Someone that can juggle a bunch and that sees the bigger picture. And is doing it more for other people than for themselves. And they’re doing it for more than the line on their resume but for how it can benefit people.

A senator agreed:

I think anyone is qualified to run. Anyone who has been involved in any other organizations, who is passionate about their major, passionate about their college, passionate about the student organizations that they’re already a part of. They’re qualified to do it.

Respondents generally considered themselves qualified to run for Student Government due to their experience and leadership roles at Iowa State or because they are capable of handling challenges. Some considered themselves unqualified because they do not have adequate time to devote to Student Government or were not passionate about the organization.

**Role models**

When asked about role models, many respondents mentioned faculty members, academic advisors, university staff, and friends as people they admire. The most frequently mentioned answer was friends and peers. Interview respondents were inspired by what peers accomplished and were influenced by their recommendations. One respondent said:

A girl, actually, from my high school...She’s a [sorority woman] here, but she ran for vice president or president last year for student council. Hearing all of her ideas, and she is so involved on campus, she kind of makes other people [get involved too]. She’s made me notice that you can be involved in so many different things. You just have to work out the time, and work out the time commitment.
Summary

Current Student Government women senators agreed that more women should be in the
Student Government Senate. One senator, who noted it is difficult to be one of few women in the
senate said:

It would be really fantastic to see more female representation in Student Government. We
make up about half the campus, but there are about six members right now sitting, which
is really depressing for me. It feels like we don’t have as much of a voice sometimes due
to that. But that’s just a general diversity issue, and I’d hope to see more women in
Student Government in the future.

Another senator, who agreed that more diversity is needed, said:

Student Government has really had a diversity problem, and it’s kind of getting worse,
not better. I’ve personally tried working on this, just encouraging my circle of friends to
get involved. I have been able to bring on a few new people, but it’s still a largely white
and male-dominated organization. I know the Catt Center has helped us out in the past
with doing panels. They did this campaign college where it’s encouraging women to run
for Student Government or other leadership roles, but there are a lot of barriers. The time
commitment is a big one, and just knowing how to get involved in the first place. The
confusion about what exactly we do in Student Government.

Senators acknowledged that the election process can be confusing to some students, and
there is a shortage of candidates. One senator noted, “The number of people who run [for
senator] is a very small number.” Sometimes candidates can win with only a few votes because
they are the only ones running. Another senator noted that there are often vacant senator
positions, and some candidates do not even go through the official campaign process but instead
become elected through write in votes; several senators in the March 2016 elections were elected
based on five write-in votes.

Senators noted that students on campus may assume that senators are only elected in the
spring during the official election; however, if there’s an open senate seat after these elections,
the specific council (based on the residence location or college the position represents) can elect
a senator to the open position. Senators suggested that the Student Government election
commission could be responsible for filling open positions after the election season – working
with the specific councils to elect or appoint a senator.

Per interview respondents, Student Government is not generally well known on campus. Some respondents didn’t know it existed, and others considered it irrelevant. Other students expressed disappointment in Student Government for not making significant accomplishments. Students generally reported not receiving encouragement to run for Student Government and confusion about the election process, which could explain Student Government’s lackluster numbers and lack of diversity.

However, women may be more likely to run for Student Government Senate if certain aspects of the senator role are emphasized: leadership development, impact on campus, and social opportunities. Students are influenced by their peers and may be persuaded to join if their peers are involved in that organization. A clear explanation of the election process could also alleviate confusion about how to join Student Government.
CHAPTER V
CURRENT CAMPAIGN CRITIQUE

Currently there is no organized program or effort from Student Government to encourage women to run for Senate. However, Iowa State University’s Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics recently partnered with AAUW’s Elect Her program to engage students. Students were invited to the Elect Her workshop, free of charge in January 2016 (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2016b). Previously, the Catt Center presented a Campaign College workshop for students. At both types of workshops, women were encouraged to run for student government office and future political office. The workshop held in 2016 was attended by 32 women students. Campaign College annually attracted about 20 students (K. Winfrey, personal communication, February 10, 2016). Every other year, the Catt Center offers Ready to Run Iowa workshops that prepare women to run for office; these workshops are open to the public and not aimed at students specifically (Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, 2017).

These programs are having an impact on students, but it is impacting a relatively low percentage of the women student body (0.2 percent of women students attended the Elect Her Workshop in January 2016). Also, students had to self-select to attend the Elect Her Workshop all day on a Saturday. A public relations campaign that reaches thousands of women students multiple times, in addition to the workshops, could increase effectiveness.

At the Elect Her workshop in January 2016, the Student Government Vice President at the time, Megan Sweere, said that she occasionally talks to student groups and encourages all students to run, but there is no plan or strategy to encourage women to run for Student Government (M. Sweere, personal communication, January 23, 2016). Interviews with women senators for this paper confirmed that there are currently no efforts to encourage women to run.
In fact, there is no committee or group of students in Student Government who is responsible for recruiting new members or filling vacant positions. There is an election commission who oversees the election process. A public relations committee also exists, though their focus is to improve the visibility of the work of Student Government and not to recruit new members. Visibility of Student Government’s projects and progress will be helpful in increasing students’ familiarity with the mission and goals of Student Government; however, targeted recruitment is crucial to reach gender parity in the Senate.

In January 2016, Student Government sent an email to all ISU students with election information to attract candidates for the spring 2017 election, as seen in Figure 3. The email contains no images and is not particularly eye-catching or exciting. Election information was also communicated via social media, as seen in Figure 4, but again without much excitement. More than one week after the social media post, there were no likes, comments, or shares on this post, indicating a lack of interest among students.
Figure 4  
Election Facebook Post

Student Government, Iowa State University
January 24 at 2:47pm

Interested in running for a Student Government Senate Seat or Executive Position? You MUST attend an official candidate information session. Sessions are being held over the next week in the Memorial Union. For exact dates, times and room numbers visit our website at https://www.stugov.iastate.edu/elections/ under the "Election Information" tab. Wishing good luck to all the applicants!
CHAPTER VI
NEW MESSAGE STRATEGY

To achieve a more balanced gender distribution in the Senate, Iowa State’s Student Government must embrace a comprehensive public relations campaign aimed at women students. The campaign is designed to change attitudes toward Student Government and behavior concerning running for office. There are many beliefs that oppose the goal of encouraging more women to run for Student Government; however, the campaign will weaken the belief strengths of these attitudes.

Women may believe that politics is a man’s world and women should not be senators (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014; Lawless & Fox, 2013; Tolleson-Rinehart & Josephson, 2005; Carroll & Fox, 2010), which could be a reason why interview respondents are not engaged with student government. The campaign will weaken the belief strength of this attitude through testimonials from women senators. Similarly, women may not feel that they are qualified for Student Government, but the campaign will explain the qualifications and encourage women to run. Another belief that opposes the goal may be that Student Government does not accomplish anything; therefore, the campaign will communicate the accomplishments of the organization. Women may also believe that Student Government is too time consuming, which will be countered by focusing on the positive aspects of Student Government, making the time concern belief less important than other beliefs. Messages will also include specific information about the actual time commitment to Student Government, which can be manageable. Another attitude may be that running for election is too complicated, but the campaign will communicate the election process clearly.
The campaign will also create a new belief strength and evaluation which supports the campaign goal: Student Government offers exceptional opportunities for leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction. In addition, the campaign needs to not only persuade women students to have favorable attitudes toward the goal, but it will be more effective if it creates circumstances that make it possible for students to engage in the desired behavior, running for office. Organizing candidate forums for women and communicating qualifications and the election process clearly will be a focus in the campaign.

Due to research, we know that encouragement to run has a significant impact on the number of women running for office (Lawless, 2012; Cox, 2011). Women are four times more likely to consider a run if the idea is suggested to them (Lawless, 2012). Additional research shows that women must be asked seven times by seven different people to get them to run for office (Cox, 2011). Therefore, the campaign must reach women in multiple ways at a variety of situations.

Campaign messages will be designed to influence beliefs identified through literature and research of the target public. As a behavioral influence campaign, this campaign will heavily use social media, email, posters, and other brief messages to reach the thousands of women students on campus. However, there are constraints on their potential impact. Even though the messages will be spread over campus, exposure is based on incidental encounter. If the information is not being actively sought, it may be processed with varying amounts of attention. Certain groups are likely to have more involvement: freshmen and sophomore students looking to become involved on campus, especially at Destination Iowa State and Clubfest; and friends of current women senators. These groups will be targeted specifically in the campaign.
Due to the general low reader or viewer involvement, it is vital that the audience has positive affective responses to the campaign, as these responses will become associated with positive responses to Student Government, which will influence behavior intent. Student Government must be associated with positive aspects that interest women students such as leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction. In addition to a media campaign, targeted recruitment events will be utilized to engage women personally.

The public relations campaign will focus on attracting freshmen and sophomore students who may have fewer time commitments than juniors and seniors. Student Government should attract students before they become committed to other student organizations and responsibilities. Engaging newer students and retaining them may also boost Student Government membership and build the pipeline for future executive and judicial branch positions.

Freshmen Council is one of the groups of newer students at Iowa State. Freshmen Council can be utilized as a “stepping stone” organization into Student Government. Because Freshmen Council is similar to Student Government, the Freshmen Council members may be interested in continuing in student government after their time in Freshmen Council is completed. There are currently 59 total members of Freshmen Council, with 37 men (63 percent) and 22 women (37 percent) (Iowa State Freshmen Council, 2017). Even though most Freshmen Council members are men, the number of women (22) is significant, considering there are 34 total senator positions in Student Government. Forming a relationship between Student Government and the women members of Freshmen Council will make them more likely to run for Student Government Senate.
Friends of current women senators will also be targeted because, per student interviews, women students are more likely to run for Student Government if they have friends who are already in that organization. Current women senators will encourage their friends to run through peer-to-peer recruitment. Additional students will be targeted for social events, including those who participated in high school student government and students who are recommended for Student Government by faculty and staff and the women’s center on campus. A variety of student groups will be targeted to engage a diverse group of students.
CHAPTER VII
CAMPAIGN PLAN

Overview

The goal of the campaign is to change attitudes and behavior of women students at Iowa State so they will run for Student Government Senate. The title of the campaign is Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed. The campaign has two objectives, one is attitudinal and the other is behavioral. They will be accomplished by utilizing four key messages and implementing six action strategies and corresponding tactics.

Objectives

1. Attitudinal: Increase positive attitudes of women students about Student Government at Iowa State by March 2018.


Key Messages

1. The time commitment of Student Government Senate is manageable.

The public relations campaign will explicitly communicate the time commitment of Student Government Senate, which includes one Senate meeting per week and office hours. Senators also meet with their constituents, which they can manage themselves. A concern of interview respondents was that Student Government is too time consuming. Students may have an inflated perception of the time commitment, so the public relations campaign will include messages about the realistic time commitments.
2. Student Government offers exceptional opportunities for leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction.

Based on interviews, these factors motivate women to become involved in student organizations. These aspects will be communicated through testimonials of women senators, news about accomplishments, and a sense of comradery. A focus on these aspects will attempt to de-politicize Student Government, instead focusing on the service aspects and campus pride motivators of the organization.

3. Women’s representation on Student Government is critical.

The public relations campaign will illustrate the shortage of women senators and how that affects decision making. When voting on funding for women-focused student organizations or programs, women’s voices are critical. This message will focus on the urgent need for more women in Student Government.

4. When women run, they win.

Women are just as likely as men to win elections (Carroll & Fox, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2014). However, women may be hesitant to run because they anticipate men being more likely to be elected or women may have a perception of an uneven playing field when running for office. This message will negate those perceptions and encourage women to put forth the effort to run a campaign, because they are just as likely as men to win.

**Action Strategy**

1. Recruit women members of Freshmen Council

   a. **Tactic:** Student Government liaison to Freshmen Council in April 2017

      A Student Government liaison to Freshmen Council will be determined by April 2017. The liaison to Freshmen Council will work with the Freshmen Council
executive committee for feedback regarding recruiting women members of Freshmen Council members. The liaison will also speak at Freshmen Council meetings to highlight the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

b. **Tactic:** Social event for women Freshmen Council members and Student Government senators in September 2017

At the event, senators will present information about the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign, including how and why to run for Student Government, and socialize with the Freshmen Council members. Women senators will present the information and share testimonials about why they enjoy being a senator. Student Government members will engage every potential candidate at the event. The Freshmen Council executive committee will also facilitate introductions and engage Freshmen Council members with Student Government senators. The event will focus on aspects of Student Government that are important to women: leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction.

c. **Tactic:** Flyers

Freshmen Council students will receive printed materials that include information about what positions are available, what senators do, how to run, election deadlines, and contact information. The flyers will also highlight the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign and messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction.

d. **Tactic:** Pens

Freshmen Council students will receive pens with the Student Government logo; Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website
address to students. The pens will be a visual reminder of Student Government and the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

e. **Tactic: Water bottles**

Freshmen Council students will receive water bottles with the Student Government logo; Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website address. Every day that students use their water bottles, they will be reminded of Student Government and the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

f. **Tactic: Candidate workshop for women Freshmen Council members in January 2017**

A woman senator will lead the workshop, explaining the campaign process, deadlines, and offer resources and ideas to potential candidates. Women will be allowed to register as official candidates at the workshop. The event will focus on aspects of Student Government that are important to women: leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction.

g. **Tactic: Post-event emails**

Post-event emails will be sent to women Freshmen Council members who attend the events, providing women with more campaign information and contact information.

2. **Recruit friends of current women senators through peer-to-peer recruitment as well as other students including those who participated in high school student government and students who are recommended for Student Government by faculty and staff and the women’s center on campus**
a. **Tactic: Social events**

Targeted students will be invited to a special event to learn about the election process and the role of a senator. Women will learn more about the opportunities in Student Government in a casual, friendly environment. The event will focus on aspects of Student Government that are important to women: leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction.

b. **Tactic: Post-event emails**

Post-event emails will be sent to women who attend the events, providing women with more campaign information and contact information.

3. Host booths at Destination Iowa State and ClubFest

a. **Tactic: Hosts**

Both women and men senators will host the booths to talk to students about the impact they can have as a senator, the leadership development aspects, and social interaction, which will especially entice women.

b. **Tactic: Visual Display**

The booth will display visual messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction, highlighting the campaign Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed. Displays will include pictures of both women and men senators.

c. **Tactic: Banner**

A banner will be displayed on the Student Government booth. It will be a bright and attractive banner with the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign
logo, as it will be the first thing that the potential candidates see and create a first impression.

d. **Tactic: Flyers**

Students will receive printed materials that include information about what positions are available, what senators do, how to run, election deadlines, and contact information. The flyers will also highlight the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign and messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction.

e. **Tactic: Email List**

Students who visit the booth will be asked to write down their email addresses. Students will receive a post-event email with more campaign information and contact information. Additional emails will be sent to students before the election deadlines with election information, inviting them to candidate workshops and encouraging them to register as an official candidate.

f. **Tactic: Pens**

Booth hosts will hand out pens with the Student Government logo; Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website address to students. The pens will be a visual reminder of their experience at the booth and the Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

g. **Tactic: Water bottles**

Booth hosts will hand out water bottles to students with the Student Government logo; Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website
address. Every day that students use their water bottles, they will be reminded of Student Government and the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

4. Update the Student Government website
   a. **Tactic: Senator photos**
      The photo display of senators will be updated so that every senator has a picture.
   b. **Tactic: Women Run, Lead, Succeed page**
      A page dedicated to the Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign will be added. This page will have information about how to run for Student Government and why to run for Student Government, highlighting aspects of Student Government that are important to women: leadership development, impact on campus, and social interaction.
   c. **Tactic: Event photos**
      Pictures of Student Government events and projects will be posted on the website to show the positive impact of Student Government and the comradery between Student Government members, highlighting women members.
   d. **Tactic: Events page**
      An events page will be added to the website, which will list all upcoming socials and candidate workshops.

5. Actively utilize social media
   a. **Tactic: Regular posts**
      Social media posts will be made at least once daily on Student Government Facebook and Twitter accounts and at least three times per week on the Instagram account. Posts will be scheduled in advance to keep up with this pace. Posts will
include photos of both women and men senators, executive branch members, and judicial branch members with their names and positions. Posts will also share information regarding upcoming socials and election forums where students can learn more about running for Student Government and the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign. Election deadlines and easy ways to register as a candidate will also be posted.

b. **Tactic: Recruitment video**

A Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed video will be created and posted on social media.

c. **Tactic: Shareable content**

Boomerang, videos, and other tools will be utilized to make video clips, infographics, GIFs, and more, designed to be shared by students across campus.

d. **Tactic: Testimonials**

Women senators will be featured in testimonials. They will share why they ran for Student Government and what they enjoy about the organization including their impact on campus, leadership development, social interaction, and more.

6. **Increase campus presence before election deadlines**

a. **Tactic: Booth on campus**

A Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed booth will be hosted by Student Government members each day for one week in January 2018 to increase campus awareness of the election and encourage women to register candidates. Shareable features such as a photo booth and social media hashtag will be incorporated into the booth.
b. **Tactic: Hosts**

Booth hosts will be both women and men senators will host the booths to talk to students about the impact they can have as a senator, the leadership development aspects, and social interaction, which will especially entice women.

c. **Tactic: Visual Display**

The booth will display visual messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction, highlighting the campaign Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed. Displays will include pictures of both women and men senators.

d. **Tactic: Banner**

A banner will be displayed on the booth. It will be a bright and attractive banner with the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign logo, as it will be the first thing that the potential candidates see and create a first impression.

e. **Tactic: Flyers**

Students who visit the booth will receive printed materials that include information about what positions are available, what senators do, how to run, election deadlines, and contact information. The flyers will also highlight the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign and messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction. Flyers will also be handed out by Student Government members in their classes and their residences.

f. **Tactic: Email List**

Students who visit the booth will be asked to write down their email addresses.
Students will receive a post-event email inviting them to candidate workshops and encouraging them to register as an official candidate.

g. **Tactic: Pens**

Booth hosts will hand out pens with the Student Government logo; Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website address to students. The pens will be a visual reminder of their experience at the booth and the Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

h. **Tactic: Water bottles**

Booth hosts will hand out water bottles to students with the Student Government logo; Women Run, Lead, Succeed logo; and Student Government website address. Every day that students use their water bottles, they will be reminded of Student Government and the Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign.

i. **Tactic: Signage on campus**

Cyclone Women Run, Lead, Succeed campaign information will be displayed on sandwich boards on campus and table tents at dining halls. Signage will include deadlines and contact information for the Cyclone Women, Run, Lead, Succeed campaign. Table tents will include information about what positions are available, what senators do, how to run, election deadlines, and contact information. The table tents will also highlight messages of campus impact, leadership development, and social interaction.
Evaluation

The public relations campaign will be evaluated based on accomplishing the two objectives. If the tactics are completed, then the objectives should be achieved. The positive attitude of women students about Student Government at Iowa State can be measured through engagement and how many women register as candidates. Engagement can be evaluated on multiple measures. The number of women who attend targeted recruitment events and who visit the campaign booths at Destination Iowa State and ClubFest will measure engagement. Social media aspects including new followers, likes, comments, and views will also measure the engagement and reach of the campaign.

The most significant measure for the public relations campaign will be the number of women who register as candidates for Student Government senate positions. If thirty women register as candidates for Student Government Senate, then the campaign will be a success. The messages of the campaign and specifically targeting groups who are likely to run for Student Government should attract women students at Iowa State to run for Student Government positions. The increased number of women candidates should ultimately improve the gender parity in the Student Government Senate.
REFERENCES


Date: 6/21/2016

To: Emily Brown
506 NE Stone Valley Drive
Ankeny, IA 50021

CC: Dr. Suman Lee
204B Hamilton Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Attitudes of Iowa State Students Regarding Student Government

IRB ID: 16-280

Study Review Date: 6/21/2016

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.

- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that approval from other entities may also be needed. For example, access to data from private records (e.g., student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Exempt Study Review Form

Title of Project: Attitudes of Iowa State Students Regarding Student Government

Principal Investigator (PI): Emily N. Brown

Degrees: MS

University ID: 517998481
Phone: 515-231-9429
Email Address: enb@iastate.edu

Correspondence Address: 506 NE Stone Valley Dr, Ankeny, IA 50021

Department: Journalism and Mass Communication
College/Center/Institute: Liberal Arts and Sciences

PI Level: □ Tenured, Tenure-Eligible, & NTER Faculty
□ Adjunct/Affiliate Faculty
□ Collaborator Faculty
□ Emeritus Faculty
□ Visiting Faculty/Scientist
□ Senior Lecturer/Clinician
□ Lecturer/Clinician, w/Ph.D. or DVM
□ P&S Employee, P37 & above
□ Extension to Families/Youth Specialist
□ Field Specialist III
□ Postdoctoral Associate
□ Graduate/Undergrad Student
□ Other (specify):

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS (Required when the principal investigator is a student)

Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Suman Lee

University ID: 992354363
Phone: 515-294-0496
Email Address: smlee@iastate.edu

Campus Address: 201 Hamilton
Department: Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication

Type of Project: (check all that apply) □ Thesis/Dissertation component
□ Class Project
□ Other (specify: creative)

Alternate Contact Person:
Email Address:
Correspondence Address:
Phone:

ASSURANCE

• I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate and consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct.

• I agree to provide proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any problems to the IRB. See Reporting Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems for details.

• I agree that modifications to the approved project will not take place without prior review and approval by the IRB.

• I agree that the research will not take place without the receipt of permission from any cooperating institutions, when applicable.

• I agree to obtain approval from other appropriate committees as needed for this project, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (if the research involves biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (if the research involves x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc.; and to obtain background checks for staff when necessary.

• I understand that IRB approval of this project does not grant access to any facilities, materials, or data on which this research may depend. Such access must be granted by the unit with the relevant custodial authority.

• I agree that all activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University policies.

Signature of Principal Investigator
Date

Signature of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty
Date
(Required when the principal investigator is a student)

Printed Name of Department Chair/Head/Director

Signature of Department Chair/Head/Director
Date

For IRB 
□ Not Research Per Federal Regulations
□ No Human Participants
Review Date: June 21, 2014

Use Only 
□ Minimal Risk
EXEMPT Per 45 CFR 46.101(b):
□ Moderate Risk

IRB Reviewer’s Signature

Office for Responsible Research
Revised: 8/15/13
Part A: Key Personnel

1. List all members and relevant qualifications of the project personnel and define their roles in the research. Key personnel include the principal investigator, co-principal investigators, supervising faculty member, and any other individuals who will have contact with the participants or the participants' data (e.g., interviewers, transcribers, coders, etc.). This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project. For more information, please see Human Subjects – Persons Required to Obtain IRB Training.

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Interpersonal contact or communication with subjects, or access to private identifiable data?</th>
<th>Involved in the consent process?</th>
<th>Contact with human blood, specimens, or other biohazardous materials?</th>
<th>Other Roles in Research</th>
<th>Qualifications (i.e., special training, degrees, certifications, coursework, etc.)</th>
<th>Human Subjects Training Date</th>
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Please complete additional pages of key personnel as necessary.
2. Does your study include children (persons under age 18) as research subjects?

| Yes | No |

If **Yes**, please read and respond to the following:

ISU policy requires that background checks be completed for all researchers and key personnel who will have any contact with children involved in this research project. Details regarding this policy can be found [here](#). **Principal Investigators and faculty supervisors are responsible** for ensuring that background checks are completed BEFORE researchers or key personnel may have any contact with children. Records documenting completion of the background checks must be kept with other research records (e.g., signed informed consent documents, approved IRB applications, etc.) and may be requested during any audits or Post-Approval Monitoring of your study.

| Agreed |

2.a. Please check here to indicate that you have read this information and agree that you will comply with these requirements.

---

### Part B: Funding Information and Conflicts of Interest

1. Is or will the project be externally funded?

| Yes | No |

If **No**, skip to question 8.

If **Yes**, please identify the type(s) of source(s) from which the project is directly funded.

- Federal agency
- State/local government agency
- University or school
- Foundation
- Other non-profit institution
- For-profit business
- Other; specify: ____

2. Is ISU considered to be the Lead or Prime awardee for this project?

| Yes | No |

3. Are there or will there be any subcontracts issued to others for this project?

| Yes | No |

4. Is or will this project be funded by a subcontract issued by another entity?

| Yes | No |

5. If ISU is the recipient of the subcontract, does it involve any federal funding, such as federal flow-through funds?

| Yes | No |

6. If this project will be externally funded, please provide the complete name(s) of the funding source(s); please do **not use acronyms**. If any subcontracts will be issued to others, please describe and include a list of all entities.
Part C: General Overview

Please provide a brief summary of the purpose of your study:

The purpose of the study is to identify perceptions, attitudes and motivations of Iowa State female students regarding student government by interviewing students. Study results will be used to inform creative component, which is a public relations campaign to encourage more Iowa State female students to run for student government positions. These interviews will provide more information about the public relations campaign's target public. Potential questions may ask about motivations to be a student government leader, reasons they participate in student government, obstacles that keep them from running for student government, and experience in high school student government.

Please provide a brief summary of your research design:

Iowa State female students will be asked to participate in interviews in person or over the phone. Interviews are expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be recorded, but names and other identifiers will not be recorded or associated with the files. Students will be selected through snowball sampling, including both student government leaders and students who have the potential to be student government leaders.

Part D: Exemption Categories

☐ Yes  ☒ No  1. Are you conducting research on Educational Practices (e.g., instructional techniques, curriculum effectiveness, etc.)? If Yes, please answer questions 1a through 1e. If No, please proceed to question 2.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  1.a. Will the research be conducted in an established or commonly accepted educational setting, such as a classroom, school, professional development seminar, etc.?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  1.b. Will the research be conducted in any settings that would not generally be considered to be established or commonly accepted educational settings? If Yes, please specify: _____
☐ Yes  ☐ No  1.c. Will the research procedures and activities involve normal educational practices (e.g., activities that normally occur in the educational setting)? Examples include research on regular or special education instructional strategies or the effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  1.d. Will the research procedures include anything other than normal educational practices? If Yes, please specify: ______

☐ Yes  ☐ No  1.e. Will the procedures include randomization into different treatments or conditions, radically new instructional strategies, or deception of subjects? If Yes, please specify: ______

☒ Yes  ☐ No  2. Does your research involve use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior? If Yes, please answer questions 2.a. through 2.b. If No, please proceed to question 3.

☒ Yes  ☐ No  2.a. Will the research involve one or more of the following? (Check all that apply.)

☐ The use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement)
☒ Surveying or interviewing adults
☐ Observations of public behavior* of adults
☐ Observations of public behavior* of children, when the researcher will not interact or intervene with the children

*Note: Activities occurring in the workplace and school classrooms are not generally considered to involve public behavior.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  2.b. Are all of the participants elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  3. Does the research involve the collection or study of currently existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens? If Yes, please answer questions 3.a. through 3.b. If No, please proceed to question 4.

☐ Yes  ☐ No  3.a. Are all of the data, documents, records, or specimens publicly available?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  3.b. Will the data you record for your study include ID codes? If Yes, please answer 3.b.(1) and 3.b.(2).

☐ Yes  ☐ No  3.b.(1). Does a "key" exist linking the ID codes to the identities of the individuals to whom the data pertains?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  3.b.(2). Will any persons on the research team have access to this key?
4. Does your research involve Taste and Food Quality tests and Consumer Acceptance Studies involving food? If Yes, please answer questions 4.a. through 4.c. If No, please proceed to question 5.

4.a. Is the food to be consumed normally considered wholesome, such as one would find in a typical grocery store?

4.b. If the food contains additives, are the additives at or below the level normally considered to be safe by the FDA, EPA, or Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA? Consider additives in commercially available foods found at a grocery store and/or any additives that are added to food for research purposes.

4.c. If there are agricultural chemicals or environmental contaminants in the food, are they at or below the level found to be safe by the FDA, EPA, or Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA?

5. Is your study a research or demonstration project to examine
   • Federal public benefit or service programs such as Medicaid, unemployment, social security, etc.; or
   • Procedures for obtaining benefits or service under these programs; or
   • Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
   • Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs?

5.a. If Yes, is the research or demonstration project pursuant to specific federal statutory authority?

Part E: Additional Information

6. Does your research involve any procedures that do not fit into one or more of the categories in items #1–#5 listed above, such as the following? (Check all that apply.)
   □ Usability testing of websites, software, devices, etc.
   □ Collection of information from private records when identifiers are recorded
   □ Procedures conducted to induce stress, moods, or other psychological or physiological reactions
   □ Presentation of materials typically considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading
   □ Video recording or photographing non-public behaviors
   □ Use of deception (e.g., misleading participants about the procedures or purpose of the study)
   □ Physical interventions, such as
      □ blood draws
      □ new collection of biological specimens
6. a. If Yes, is your research conducted in an established educational setting, and are the checked procedures part of normal educational practices given that setting? If Yes, please describe:

7. Do you intend or is it likely that your study will include any persons from the following populations? (Check all that apply.)

- Prisoners
- Cognitively impaired
- Children (persons under age 18)
- Wards of the State
- Persons who are institutionalized

7. a. If Yes, please describe how they will be involved and what procedures they will complete:

8. Will any of the following identifiers be linked to the data at any time point during the research? (Check all that apply.)

- Names: □ First Name Only □ Last Name Only □ First and Last Name
- Phone/fax numbers
- ID codes that can be linked to the identity of the participant (e.g., student IDs, medical record numbers, account numbers, study-specific codes, etc.)
- Addresses (email or physical)
- Social security numbers
- Exact dates of birth
- IP addresses
- Photographs or video recordings
- Other; please specify: ______

9. Is there a reasonable possibility that participants' identities could be ascertained from any combination of information in the data? If Yes, please describe:

10. Will participants' identities be kept confidential when results of the research are disseminated?

11. Could any of the information collected, if disclosed outside of the research, reasonably place the subjects at risk of any of the following? (Check all that apply.)
12. Does the research, directly or indirectly, involve or result in the collection of any information regarding any of the following? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Use of illicit drugs
☐ Criminal activity
☐ Child, spousal, or familiar abuse
☐ Mental illness
☐ Episodes of clinical depression
☐ Suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
☐ Health history
☐ History of job losses
☐ Exact household income other than in general ranges
☐ Negative opinions about one’s supervisor, workplace, teacher, or others to whom the subject is in a subordinate position
☐ Opinions about race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other socially sensitive or controversial topics
☐ Sexual preferences or behaviors
☐ Religious beliefs
☐ Any other information that is generally considered to be private or sensitive given the setting of your research; if so, please specify: __________

After completion of Parts A, B, and C of this application, please send the completed form to:

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Office for Responsible Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, IA 50011-2200

Data collection materials (e.g., survey instruments, interview questions, recruitment and consent documents, etc.) do not need to be submitted with this application.

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the IRB office at IRB@iastate.edu or 515-294-4566.