I. Diversity Mission/Vision Statement

Information Technology Services (ITS) is a strong supporter of diversity efforts at Iowa State University. We fully believe that a diverse and supportive work environment is advantageous and necessary for us to meet our departmental objectives and serve our customers. As such, we have adopted a comprehensive and inclusive official statement of our beliefs in this area.

Our diversity statement, as posted on our website (http://www.it.iastate.edu/policies/diversity/), reads as follows:

Information Technology Services is fully committed to supporting the diversity goals of Iowa State University. A diverse and supportive workplace not only fosters good employee relationships, it also promotes individual growth and understanding that is vital to a creating both a dynamic workforce and an institution that is able to respond to the challenges of a changing educational environment.

As a service organization, we have daily interactions with a wide variety of faculty, staff, and students and we strive to treat them all equally and provide quality service that meets their needs. We believe that as a public institution, Iowa State University has a responsibility to serve the public in a non-discriminatory manner that reflects our commitment to promoting a just environment.

We support the educational goals of the university by providing teaching and learning accommodations to faculty, staff, and students. Further, we support the
diversity goals of the university through the understanding and application of federal, state, and local laws and the policies of Iowa State University.

In order to ensure that this statement accurately reflects both the goals of the department and the University, it was vetted not only by senior ITS leadership but also by the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Office.

The creation and public posting of this statement was one of the major steps forward during this reporting period. Considerable time and attention was given to crafting a statement that is both visionary and specific. It reflects an awareness and understanding of the importance of this area and a renewed commitment to operating in a just and accessible manner.

This statement was developed during the first full year of operation of the ITS Diversity Committee, itself a manifestation of departmental concern. This committee meets periodically to review and discuss diversity issues and shares information about events, opportunities, and concerns.

As part of that effort, the committee has begun to take an active role in disseminating information to ITS staff about diversity activities. Appropriate notices are included as part of the weekly ITS newsletter, which goes out to all ITS staff.

II. Diversity Efforts

Although ITS provides direct and vital support to pedagogy and research, our diversity efforts are primarily aimed at our staff and clients rather than formal instructional programs. This means that our activities are most appropriate when viewed against the University’s stated Implementation Goals of Institutional Commitment (Goal 1), Population Representation (Goal 4), and Group Relations (Goal 5).

As a service organization, ITS must provide fair and effective support to all our clients. We work on a daily basis with faculty, staff, and students with a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, and, in some cases, physical abilities. We strive to treat them all equally and provide services that meet their needs with respect and professionalism.

This is not a new role for ITS. Our efforts in this area go back to the very beginning of the department. We have long understood the need to engage both employees and students in ways that are inclusive and supportive.

One example of this is the policy that all ITS employees must complete the Discrimination and Harassment Training course offered by the Human Resource Services Office. This fosters better understanding and underscores the importance that the department attaches to this area.

Our efforts in recruiting new employees have also reflected that point of view. Even though budget considerations have affected this activity during the past year, we plan to continue to recruit at a variety of local and regional job fairs when funds become available:
• ISU Business/LAS Career Fair
• Regents Career Fair with ISU Human Resource Services
• ITS’ own student job fair held in February and August
• Online job boards such as desmoineshelpwanted.com, dice.com, careerbuilder.com, and educause.edu
• Placement offices at ISU, UNI, University of Iowa, Drake, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Minnesota, and Buena Vista.
• ITS participates with other HR liaisons working with ISU Marketing to enhance ISU employment efforts

In addition to these outreach activities, extensive efforts are made to advertise leadership and senior level positions in venues that might attract a diverse pool of candidates. Further, efforts are made to ensure that student employees are also representative of racially and ethnically diverse groups.

A major part of the diversity efforts that ITS engages in involves assisting faculty, staff, and students who have special technology needs for learning and teaching.

• Websites are developed and maintained by ITS in a manner consistent with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act
• Several areas within ITS maintain a close working relationship with the Student Disability Resources Office (SDR)
• Short-term checkout of laptop computers containing assistive technology software, as well as training and troubleshooting, on request from SDR
• Fifteen closed-caption decoding units available for temporary installation in campus classrooms
• Closed captioning transmitters and decoders are installed in all new and remodeled large classroom facilities
• Providing demonstrations of assistive technology as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, as well as at other times of the year
• Provide assistive technology in computer labs across campus. This includes not only ITS labs, but also the Parks Library and the Athletic Success Center

III. Best Practices/Final Comments

Supporting diversity efforts is about more than just defined programs and initiatives. It is a departmental culture that manifests itself in many ways. ITS strives to encourage that culture in ways that, taken on their own, may not seem to have broad impact, but, when taken together as accepted and expected, help to develop an inclusive and just work environment.

Departmental communications are one example. Visual communication materials produced by the department feature faculty, staff, and students of various races and ethnicities and articles in our weekly departmental electronic newsletter highlight activities and opportunities for staff involvement. The United Way, National Special Olympics, and other service groups have
benefited from the involvement of ITS employees. This effort has increased over the past year through the active involvement of the ITS Diversity Committee in locating and sharing even more events.

ITS also strives to promote the concept of our department being more than just a place to come to work. Various groups within the organization will host periodic get-togethers during the lunch hour where everyone is invited to share food, conversation, and camaraderie. This helps us all get to know one another better and strengthens relationships that benefit the individuals, the department, and the University community.

By far, some of the most important aspects of awareness and support come from our relationships with other entities, both on and off campus. In addition, to the Student Disability Resources Office, ITS maintains valuable, functional ties with the State Office of Human Services, the Youth Leadership Forum, the International Students and Scholars Office, and the Human Resources Office.

In recognition of the ever-increasing role that technology plays in the lives of everyone, ITS continues to maintain a set of fifty “lender” cellular telephones that are used by many groups, including international students and scholars.

Episodes of our “Talk About IT” video series, which is posted on the ITS website, deal with issues of accessibility and its importance to all members of the university community.

Several ITS staff members are active participants in online discussion groups dealing with assistive technology, not only sharing their knowledge, but also learning from the experiences of others.

We believe that through our programs, initiatives, relationships, and departmental culture, Information Technology Services is working hard to support Iowa State University in its goals to provide a just and accessible environment that truly represents the ideals of a world-class university.