Incorporating the IOWA Challenge into Teaching

Faculty and instructors can help students meet IOWA Challenge expectations by providing opportunities for students to reflect on what it means to excel, stretch, engage, choose, and serve. The following tips are designed especially for teachers of First-Year Seminars, but can be applied in other courses, too.

**From the Beginning**

Emphasize Challenge expectations from the very start of your course.

- Incorporate The IOWA Challenge into your course syllabus. The best approach is to offer specific examples of how your course will address Challenge goals. For example, "This course will help you meet IOWA Challenge expectations by asking you to view problems from multiple perspectives (stretch) and encouraging you to set high academic goals (excel)."
- Mention the Challenge during the first week of class and prompt students to discuss one or more of its five expectations.
- Ask students to write for five minutes about how each expectation relates to the class, then ask them how they can meet these expectations during the semester. Invite them to share their ideas during a class discussion. Post their ideas—with students’ names—on your course’s ICON site.
- Ask students to write personal goals for each of the five expectations, including brief reflections on why they established those goals, how they expect to achieve them, and the short- and long-term impact these expectations might have on their learning. Invite them to revisit these goals and reflections several times during the semester. Suggest they keep these reflections throughout their time at Iowa and get back in touch with you once they’ve graduated.
- Assign The IOWA Challenge web site as required reading.

**Throughout the Semester**

As appropriate, revisit IOWA Challenge expectations in brief classroom discussions or writing assignments. These questions might spark student interest:

- Why do these expectations matter to your lives and the life of the UI and other communities?
- How can these expectations relate to broader expectations for what it means to be a citizen in a democracy?
- Are The IOWA Challenge expectations universal or culturally specific?
- Have these kinds of expectations changed since your parents and grandparents were 18 years old? If so, how and why?
- Do you think these five expectations will be the same at the UI 50 years from now?
- How should faculty and staff members accept The IOWA Challenge?
Stress Academic Excellence
Help students understand the importance of excelling academically. Here are just a few ideas used by UI faculty:

- Use ICON to see if students have downloaded the course syllabus by the assigned date. If they have not, e-mail them to let them know you’re paying attention to their academic lives.
- Encourage class attendance: “It matters to me and your fellow students that you join the discussion. When you’re here, you change the classroom learning experience for everyone.”
- Ask questions about content from classes that were least attended. This gives the message that excellence depends on attending and engaging with the material, other students, and you.

Course Evaluations
Include IOWA Challenge-related questions in course evaluations (including ongoing evaluations such as one-minute papers):

- Did this course (or unit, reading, etc.) challenge you to set and meet high standards for yourself?
- Did the readings this week encourage you to step outside your comfort zone? Why does that matter?
- Did this course cause you to work harder than you thought you could?

Other Ideas
A few other ideas suggested by faculty:

- Briefly describe to students how faculty peers are meeting The IOWA Challenge.
- Invite a guest speaker to class to talk about how he or she gained success. Reinforce key points that seem to relate to The IOWA Challenge.
- Post The IOWA Challenge in your classrooms and office.

Your Own Ideas
Don't hesitate to explore new ways to include The IOWA Challenge in your teaching, and if you discover something exciting or effective, let the Student Success Team (http://sst.provost.uiowa.edu) know.

For more ideas about teaching and learning, including ways to incorporate The IOWA Challenge into instruction, visit the Center for Teaching website (http://centeach.uiowa.edu) or contact Center Director Jean Florman at jean-florman@uiowa.edu.