



OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

Q1 | FY21 July–September

The Office of Strategic Communication supports the University of Iowa mission by using communication to build awareness and appreciation for the university's people and programs. We provide counsel and produce content that advances the priorities of the university, connects with people emotionally and intellectually, and compels them to act on our behalf.

PREVIOUS QUARTERLY REPORTS AT [OSC.UIOWA.EDU/REPORTS](https://osc.uiowa.edu/reports).

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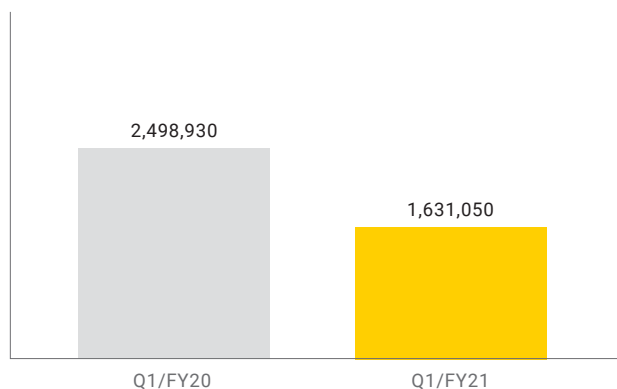
IOWA

UIOWA.EDU

Following the launch of a redesigned website mid-way through the previous quarter, we continue to experience the expected decline in overall site traffic due to the more intentional focus on prospective students. Preliminary data suggests that visitors to the new homepage (uiowa.edu) are more likely to complete a secondary action on admissions.uiowa.edu, such as apply or request information. If this preliminary trend continues, it will influence future web content strategy, paid promotion, and organic promotion.

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

34.5% ↓



AVERAGE (VISIT) SESSION DURATION

2:25

7.7% ↓ (from Q1FY20)

SESSIONS ORIGINATING IN IOWA

779,923

22.3% ↓ (from Q1FY20)

U.S. SESSIONS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE IOWA

262,837

23.3% ↓ (from Q1FY20)

SESSIONS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE THE U.S.

52,858

38.7% ↓ (from Q1FY20)

A screenshot of the UIowa.edu homepage. The header features the 'IOWA' logo, navigation links for 'Apply', 'Visit', and 'Request Info', a search bar, and a menu icon. A blue banner below the header contains an 'Info' message about hybrid instruction and a link to 'COVID-19 information'. The main content area has a large aerial image of the campus with the text 'Start your story here' and three buttons: 'CAMPUS VISITS', 'AREAS OF STUDY', and 'COST AND AID'. The footer is yellow with the text 'BE A HAWKEYE', a paragraph about Iowa, and a 'REQUEST INFORMATION' button with a right arrow.

CONVERSIONS (combined clicks on Apply, Visit Campus, Request Information)

33,640

272.2% ↑ (from partial previous quarter)

CLICKS ON 'APPLY' CTA

15,296

330% ↑ (from Q1FY20)

CLICKS ON 'VISIT CAMPUS' CTA

13,790

N/A

CLICKS ON 'REQUEST INFORMATION' CTA

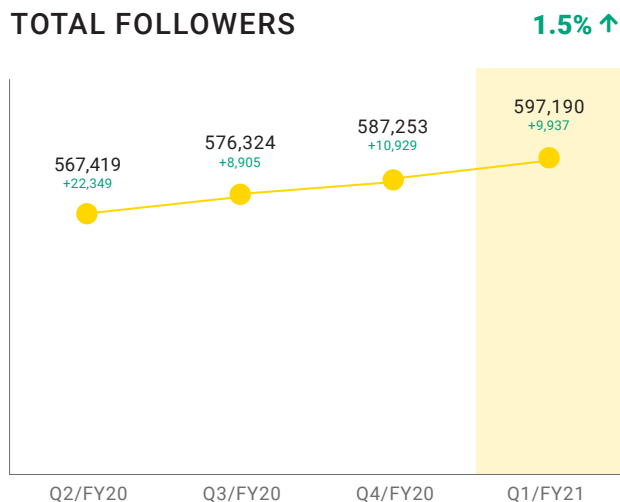
3,830

N/A

SOCIAL MEDIA

During Q1, OSC adjusted its social media strategy to reflect the anxiety and fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Forced to post 40% less content to avoid angry responses from followers, the university lost much of the traditional back-to-school excitement and follower engagement, resulting in declines in key metrics from the same period last year.

TOTAL FOLLOWERS



NEW FOLLOWERS

9,937

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

17,905,945

40% ↓

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

1,917,225

29% ↓

TOP POSTS

University of Iowa @uiowa · Aug 6

Research shows that if more than 80% of the population wears a face covering, the pandemic would end. [#MaskUpIA](https://spr.ly/6012GZD9j)

23 235 581

University of Iowa Published by Mike Benning [?] · September 7

♥️ This little University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital NICU alumnus wasn't about to miss his chance to wave to the kids this weekend. Thank you to everyone that participated in a special Hawkeye wave for all the precious children.

+2

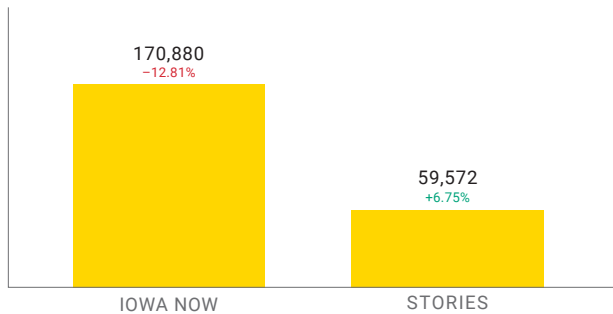
Note all percentage comparisons represent Q1/FY21 vs. Q1/FY20.

NEWS AND FEATURES

Our top-viewed news stories posted longer than usual average time on page, topping five minutes across the board. In features, our fall enrollment story and infographic drew nearly three times as many viewers as last year—9,383 compared to 3,276 in fall 2019. The increase is in part due to OSC also publishing it as an achievement on the UI's [Merit Page](#), making it easier for first-year students to share it with friends and family on their social media channels.

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS

8.47% ↓



AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE

Iowa Now	2:43	24.79% ↑
Stories	4:04	9.90% ↓

TOP NEWS PUBLISHED IN Q1 BY PAGEVIEWS

	PUB DATE	AVG TIME ON PAGE
6,360 Fuentes pursuing research and leadership opportunities; Kregel named interim provost	07/16/20	5:59
6,323 Libraries preserving images of spray-painting from Black Lives Matter protests	07/09/20	5:12
6,284 Iowa football program review complete	07/30/20	7:02
4,557 UI campus cleans up after Monday's derecho storm downs trees, damages buildings	08/12/20	8:13
3,872 'US News' ranking includes University of Iowa among nation's best universities	09/14/20	5:42

TOP FEATURES PUBLISHED IN Q1 BY UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

	PUB DATE	AVG TIME ON PAGE
9,383 Class of 2024 by the numbers	09/10/20	4:48
4,821 Cancer care inspires career in nursing	07/06/20	3:45
3,844 Manufacturing drugs for coronavirus treatment	08/11/20	5:09
2,779 From the DI to USA Today	08/12/20	3:53
2,635 Sister's cancer fight inspires medical dreams	07/29/20	6:41

TOP SOURCES OF TRAFFIC IN Q1 BY UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

Iowa Now:

~71,000 Google
~32,000 Faculty/staff email
~31,500 Direct

Stories:

~23,700 Direct
~19,500 Social (organic)
~10,200 Social (promoted)

OSC EMAIL CONTENT

Each month, OSC delivers a curated email to internal audiences consisting of **faculty and staff** (about 26,000 sent weekly), **undergraduate students** (about 23,000 sent twice per month), **graduate students** (about 7,000 twice per month) and **parents and families** (about 31,000 sent once per month).

IowaNow email open rates during Q1 remained consistent across the board, with higher than usual open rates for the July 9 email to faculty and staff, which had a 52% open rate, and the Sept. 3 and Sept. 17 undergraduate student emails, both of which had a 57% open rate. The lists below highlight the content that drove the higher open rates. OSC has plans to deploy a redesigned IowaNow email product at the start of Q2 to gauge whether better graphics and improved readability will improve open rates.

Q1 EMAIL CONTENT WITH HIGHEST READER CLICK RATES (Non-Covid Iowa Now emails)

Faculty/Staff

	CLICK RATE	PUB DATE
UI preserving spray painting images from BLM protests	4,049	07/09/20
Fuentes to pursue new opportunity, Kregel named interim provost	3,107	07/16/20
UI campus cleans up after derecho storm downs trees	2,311	08/13/20
Iowa football program review complete	1,872	07/30/20
A message of thanks from President Harreld	1,508	09/03/20

Undergraduate students

Class of 2024 by the numbers	604	09/17/20
A message of thanks from President Harreld	365	09/03/20
Iowa football program review complete	269	07/30/20
Sign a virtual wall for Stanley Museum of Art	234	09/17/20
Cambus announces service changes	215	07/30/20

Graduate students

	PUB DATE	
Class of 2024 by the numbers	269	09/17/20
Fuentes to pursue new opportunity, Kregel named interim provost	153	07/16/20
A message of thanks from President Harreld	148	09/03/20
Iowa football program review complete	145	07/30/20
Cambus reinstates service to some stops, adjusts weekday residence hall service	101	09/03/20

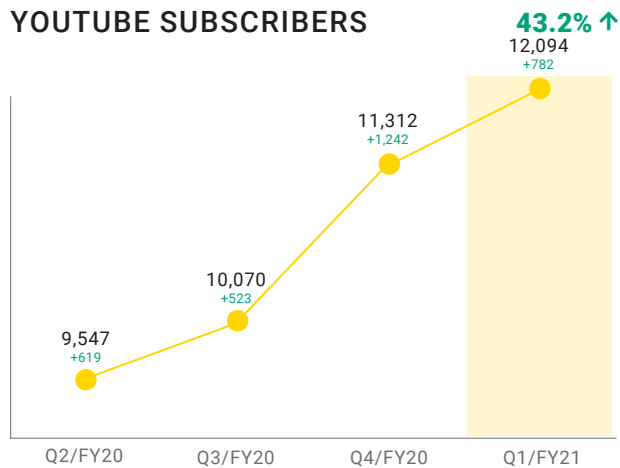
Parents and families

	CLICK RATE	PUB DATE
Class of 2024 by the numbers	905	09/17/20
Virtual family weekend 2020 is Sept. 25–27	665	09/17/20
Fall welcome message from President Harreld and Interim Provost Kregel	477	08/20/20
US News ranking includes UI among nation's best universities	238	09/17/20
Gustavus Hinrichs: A derecho of a man	198	08/20/20

VIDEO

Our most viewed videos this quarter were COVID-19-related campus updates. The [top viewed video](#) featured Rod Lehnertz providing a building tour to highlight modifications made to encourage safe distancing. The videos shared in email updates show high engagement, suggesting that our audiences appreciate timely and relevant video content about the university's response to the pandemic.

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS



TOP VIEWED NEW YOUTUBE VIDEOS

5,806	What to expect when you return to the classroom 08/07/20
5,309	Fall 2020 information for parents and families 07/29/20
4,102	Vaccine trial update 09/28/20

YOUTUBE TOTAL VIEWS

178,002 **20.3% ↑**

YOUTUBE ORGANIC VIEWS (not promoted)

176,474 **20.3% ↑**

YOUTUBE MINUTES WATCHED

726,672 **40.8% ↑**

YOUTUBE ENGAGEMENTS

(LIKES/DISLIKES/COMMENTS/SHARES)

4,448 **4.9% ↓**

TOP LIVE-STREAMED EVENTS BY VIEWS

2,700	Medicine White Coat Ceremony 08/14/20
1,552	Nikole Hannah-Jones Lecture 09/22/20
1,400	July 1 Campus Forum 07/01/20

VIDEO PERFORMANCE ON UI SOCIAL MEDIA

34,418	viewed the entire video
70,516	viewed at least 50%
18,000	engaged with the video post

MEDIA RELATIONS

Nearly all incoming media inquiries were related to the start of the fall semester and the university's response to COVID-19, resulting in 33% more inquiries than the previous quarter. During this time, the media relations team also served as a valuable resource for many campus partners by providing advice and counsel for managing sensitive or emerging issues related to a number of topics.

TOP NOTABLE NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS



MOST SUCCESSFUL PROACTIVE PLACEMENTS

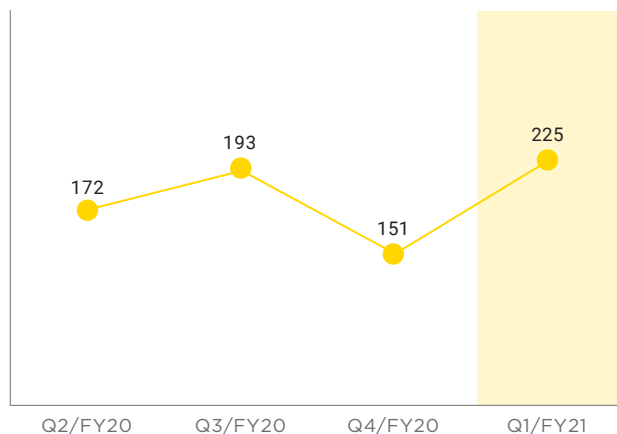
NBC.com (and picked up by affiliates nationwide)—
Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, "UI study
finds parents play key role in teaching kids how to cross
busy streets"

Richard Lewis

Marketplace public radio program—Andrea Luangrath,
Tippie College of Business: "How the pandemic is creating
a 'low-touch' economy"

Tom Snee

MEDIA INQUIRIES MANAGED BY OSC



** Please note this data does not include responses to proactive pitches or stories from UIHC or Athletics.*

CAMPUS MEDIA TRAINING SESSIONS PROVIDED BY OSC

1

Several USG executive board members

TOP INQUIRIES BY SUBJECT

The start of the fall semester and the university's response to all things related to COVID-19

MARKETING

OSC's marketing efforts in Q1 focused primarily on implementing the new university brand across campus, supporting undergraduate- and graduate-level recruitment marketing, and increasing multimedia support for campus communication related to COVID-19.

CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION

For Iowa digital campaign

Thanks to timely content related to COVID-19, more Iowans are engaging with the For Iowa campaign

AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE

5:05

UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

20,091

IMPRESSIONS

1,567,308

School counselors' awareness campaign

This year's outreach to a key influencer group in the college search process focused on display ads in the August and September editions of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) e-newsletter and a full-page, full-color ad in the Fall 2020 edition of the NACAC quarterly magazine.

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50,000

VIDEO PARTNER PROJECTS OF NOTE

College of Dentistry video tour for prospective students

College of Dentistry

Campus Forums (Total of 10)

Office of the President

Iowa Virtual Human Summit, August 12, 2020

Iowa Technology Institute

CREATIVE PARTNER PROJECTS OF NOTE

Admissions Travel Guide

16,200 printed

Admissions Transfer Guide

3,075 printed

Admissions Senior Intro Brochure

35,100 printed

Admissions Why Iowa Brochure

68,125 printed

Admissions Junior Search Book

35,075 printed

Admissions Financial Aid Guide

75,650 printed

BRAND.UIOWA.EDU (new brand site launched May 26)

TOTAL SITE VISITS—29,372

66.4% ↑

SITE DOWNLOADS—1,878

TOTAL BRAND INQUIRIES—608

TOTAL LOCKUPS—86

PHOTOSHOOTS

65

DEPARTMENTS SERVED BY OSC PHOTO

18

(Photo Studio currently closed due to COVID-19)

PHOTOSHELTER DOWNLOADS

7,357

65.07% ↓

MERIT

OSC uses Merit to publish and share stories about student accomplishments including making the Dean's List, participating in a club activity, landing an internship, studying abroad, earning a certificate, or participating in research. The accomplishments are then shared with media outlets, high schools, hometown legislators, and on participating students' social media accounts.

STORIES—26

30% ↑

STUDENTS RECOGNIZED—5,664

8% ↑

ONLINE PAGE VIEWS—11,924

43% ↓

HIGH SCHOOLS RECEIVED UPDATES—1,100

NC

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIONS—4,400

175% ↑

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS—758,000

114% ↑

CORONAVIRUS.UIOWA.EDU

Q1 saw a substantial increase in traffic to the coronavirus site that largely correlates with the return of students to campus and the resumption of fall classes. Of particular note is a 600% increase of in referrer traffic, largely driven by a strategy of centralizing coronavirus-related information in one location (coronavirus.uiowa.edu) and having all campus websites point back to it as the canonical source of COVID-19-related information. This strategy helps the Iowa effectively meet the information needs of its audiences during a time of change and crisis. We expect future performance to correlate with coronavirus-related news cycles and with the academic calendar.

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

259,370

(71.3% ↑ from previous quarter)

BOUNCE RATE

53.18%

(3.4% ↓ from previous quarter)

TOTAL USERS (VISITORS)

86,698

(70.9% ↑ from previous quarter)

SESSIONS (VISITS)

139,787

(76.3% ↑ from previous quarter)

AVERAGE SESSION DURATION

1:29

(6.1% ↓ from previous quarter)

TOP CITIES (FROM WHERE SEARCH ORIGINATED)

Iowa City	24,122 users (122.0% ↑ from previous quarter)
Chicago	4,777 users (253.1% ↑ from previous quarter)
Cedar Rapids	4,045 users (49.3% ↑ from previous quarter)
Omaha	2,921 users (148.0% ↑ from previous quarter)
Des Moines	2,178 users (74.8% ↑ from previous quarter)

TOP TRAFFIC SOURCES

Direct	36,558 users (12.4% ↑ from previous quarter)
Google organic	28,251 users (249.6% ↑ from previous quarter)
Uiowa.edu referral	13,111 users (77,023.5% ↑ from previous quarter)

DEVICE TYPE

Desktop	42,243 users (59.9% ↑ from previous quarter)
Mobile	42,730 (80.9% ↑ from previous quarter)
Tablet	1,917 (56.7% ↑ from previous quarter)

TOP 10 SEARCHES ON THE SITE

Recreational (new search query this quarter)
Testing (2,400% ↑ from previous quarter)
Temporary Alternative Work Arrangement
(new search query this quarter)
Temporary Alternative Learning Arrangement
(new search query this quarter)
academic calendar (39.1% ↓ from previous quarter)
Housing (100% ↑ from previous quarter)
Travel (51.9% ↓ from previous quarter)
calendar (no change from previous quarter)
Calendar (10.0% ↑ from previous quarter)
self report (new search query this quarter)

TOP 10 GOOGLE SEARCHES RELATED TO THE SITE

university of iowa covid (591.6% ↑ from previous quarter)
uiowa covid (439.2% ↑ from previous quarter)
university of iowa fall 2020 (376.8% ↑ from previous quarter)
university of iowa coronavirus (99.3% ↑ from previous quarter)
university of iowa covid cases (43,150.0% ↑ from previous quarter)
university of iowa covid dashboard (new search query this quarter)
university of iowa covid 19 (62.3% ↑ from previous quarter)
iowa university covid (1,261.5% ↑ from previous quarter)
u of iowa covid (639.5% ↑ from previous quarter)
university of iowa (718.9% ↑ from previous quarter)

CORONAVIRUS.UIOWA.EDU (cont.)

COVID-19 CAMPUS UPDATE EMAIL CONTENT WITH HIGHEST OPEN RATES

Faculty/Staff (Average open rate is about 37%)

	SENT	OPEN RATE	PUB DATE
<u>FY 2021 budget announcement</u>	26,549	53.0%	07/10/20
<u>Face coverings for students, letter regarding ICE ruling, and mental health discussions</u>	26,544	49.0%	07/13/20
<u>Employee health and safety acknowledgement, rec services phased reopening</u>	26,527	49.0%	07/06/20

Undergraduate students (Average open rate is about 40%)

<u>A message from President Harreld, sharing self-reported COVID cases, building attendant program</u>	21,973	69.0%	08/24/20
<u>Face coverings for students, letter regarding ICE ruling, and mental health discussions</u>	16,947	67.0%	07/13/20
<u>What to do if you get sick, winter 2020 and spring 2021 academic calendar, TAWA and TALA reminder, self-reported COVID update</u>	21,935	65.0%	09/14/20

Graduate students (Average open rate is about 65%)

<u>FY 2021 budget announcement</u>	5,350	70.0%	07/10/20
<u>A message from President Harreld, sharing self-reported COVID cases, building attendant program</u>	6,892	69.0%	08/24/20
<u>COVID-19 mitigation on campus, tuition and fee payment revision, virtual commencement, self-reported COVID testing update</u>	6,979	68.0%	09/02/20

Parents and families (Average open rate is about 38%)

<u>Face coverings for students, letter regarding ICE ruling, and mental health discussions</u>	28,103	51.0%	07/13/20
<u>Campus COVID-19 metrics, enforcing classroom requirements</u>	31,989	49.0%	08/17/20
<u>COVID-19 mitigation on campus, tuition and fee payment revision, virtual commencement, self-reported COVID testing update</u>	31,656	49.0%	09/02/20