



America 250 documentary series highlights how access to higher education fuels progress

Iowa State University is featured in the America 250 documentary series for advancing innovation through accessible education, research and entrepreneurship.

AMES, IA, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The "American Spirit" is defined by the innovation and ingenuity that have shaped the United States throughout its history.

In celebration of America's 250th anniversary, a documentary series hosted on USA TODAY highlights the organizations and industries continuing to drive innovative discoveries and breakthroughs. [Iowa State University's](#) distinct land-grant approach to higher education combines affordability, hands-on learning and industry-connected research to spark innovation, expand opportunity and deliver real economic impact.

Inventor, educator and Iowa State alumnus George Washington Carver said, "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." As a land-grant institution, Iowa State offers an accessible, practical education that prepares students to make a meaningful impact and opens pathways to the life-changing opportunities of higher education. Nearly 75% of Iowa State students receive scholarships and grants and nearly half graduate without debt.

"Iowa State is 'The People's College' and we welcome all students who desire a better life and a better world," said David Cook, Iowa State University president. "In addition to making higher education more accessible, we are preparing students to be difference makers and go out into the world and change the lives of others."

Iowa State's mission of teaching, research and outreach has remained constant throughout the university's history. Collaborations with other higher education institutions and partnerships with business and industry are vital to research and outreach efforts. Iowa State's Digital Ag Innovation Lab is an example of science-driven solutions making an impact on the world.

"We are ultra passionate about making an impact on others," said Matt Darr, Iowa State University professor of agriculture and biosystems engineering. "Part of that work is helping companies develop new innovation and technology that will ultimately change society."

The Digital Ag team has more than 100 patents and tech transfer licenses enhancing agricultural productivity and efficiency through science-driven solutions that tackle real-world problems. The

team also works directly with farmers to provide training through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach programs.

Students have access to a state-of-the-art Student Innovation Center to explore new ideas and collaborate with their peers and faculty. Iowa State's robust ecosystem of entrepreneurial courses and programs empowers students to transform ideas into innovations and develop skills that serve them throughout their career.

Boluwarin Ojo chose Iowa State for its strong industrial design program and because of the flexibility to build a portfolio as a student. During her time at Iowa State, Ojo identified a need for women with long hair working in the trades. Through courses and entrepreneurial programs, Ojo developed a solution – a special welding cap, which she launched into a business.

"Having that network of other students who are just as driven as me, just as passionate as me was really, really motivating. From there, I started thinking more like a business owner, not just an inventor, but now an entrepreneur, a business owner, a CEO and that's what really launched me forward," Ojo said.

The future of America will be shaped by students like Ojo who are applying the knowledge and critical thinking skills developed at Iowa State, and other institutions of higher education, to change their lives and the lives of others.

Iowa State's integrated approach – combining access, innovation and engagement – positions the university as a national leader in delivering the promise of the land-grant mission.

[WATCH THE CAMPAIGN LIVE HERE.](#)

About Iowa State University

Iowa State University is a student-centric leading research university with a comprehensive "land-grant" mission of education, innovation, extension and outreach that benefits Iowans and the world. The university is a national leader for providing innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities for all students. Iowa State enrolls more than 31,000 students and employs more than 6,000 faculty and staff.

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