



Advocacy Newsletter  
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**HELLO!** My name is Allie Raines and I am the designer for the Advocacy Newsletter from the Iowa United Nations Association. I just finished my junior year at Drake University studying graphic design and environmental science, with a minor in magazine and brand media. My hometown is in Missouri, but I am so excited to become more involved in Iowa through this newsletter.

This semester I have been working on many new designs and projects, and you can view them in my portfolio at [arainesdesign.myportfolio.com/](https://arainesdesign.myportfolio.com/)

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# SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BOOM: IOWA & GLOBALLY

Jane Shuttleworth |  
Member of the Iowa UNA Advocacy Committee

In Iowa and across the globe, the artificial intelligence (AI) boom and the data centers they depend on are driving the fastest growing demand for electricity in 25 years.

A data center is a building with banks of computers and network equipment used to store and manage data and information generated by AI as well as cryptocurrency, e-commerce, and cloud computing.

Currently there are over [11,000 data centers in the world](#), a number predicted to triple in the next five years. Iowa's wind energy and rich water resources have lured the development of data centers [with 104 located across the state](#) and 76 in the Des Moines area alone.

While the benefits and potential of AI are numerous, the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of data center proliferation are making them an increasingly significant area of concern and interest for stakeholders, communities, and policy makers. They consume large amounts of water - which is becoming scarce in many places, rely on critical minerals that are often mined unsustainably, use massive amounts of electricity that generate greenhouse gases and produce electronic waste. They also consume large amounts of land: on average, data centers cover 100,000 square feet, and some large-scale centers cover ten million feet.

[Researchers say](#) that in 2025 AI's carbon emissions were equivalent to that of all of New York City, and that its freshwater consumption

exceeded the global consumption of bottled water. An inquiry to ChatGPT, due to its use of massive neural networks and computing power, [consumes 10 to 20 times more energy](#) than the same inquiry using Google.

Data centers also have economic and social impacts. Concerns include impacts on communities and stakeholders to pay for water infrastructure development; rising energy costs, speculation and risk of overbuilding. In Iowa, the [Hubbel Environmental Law Institute](#) recently brought together a panel of experts to explore how data center development intersects with zoning and permitting, legal and regulatory frameworks, community engagement, and natural resource management.

On a global level, the environmental impacts of AI were the topic of the December 2025 United Nations Environmental Assembly and of an [issue paper](#) produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a global authority on the environment and sustainability. In the report, UNEP recommended [five main goals for countries to implement](#).

## THE FIVE GOALS

### GOAL #1:

Establish standardized procedures for measuring AI impacts.

### GOAL #2:

Develop regulations to require companies to disclose the

environmental impact of AI-based products and services.

### GOAL #3:

Require tech companies to make AI algorithms more efficient to reduce their energy demand.

### GOAL #4:

Be encouraged to "green" their data centers by using renewable energy to offset carbon emissions.

### GOAL #5:

Incorporate AI-related policies into their broader environmental regulations.

## 2026 IOWA LEGISLATIVE SESSION & UNEP CONCERNS

[HF 2447/HF 2690](#) addressed transparency and reporting of water and energy use by data centers. It would require regular reporting of water usage and energy consumption, including full disclosure of water resources, energy usage, and on-site power generation to the state regulators - the Iowa DNR and Utilities Commission. It also included oversight of utility rate structures for data centers and a provision for regulators to consider how/if data centers shift costs to customers. In sum, the bill would make data centers transparent and accountable for their resource use and grid impact.

[HF 2001](#) addressed strain on local water supplies from data center cooling systems. It would require water efficient cooling systems and

encourage use of recycled and non-potable water resources and create penalties for noncompliance.

Various other bills were introduced to protect regular customers from shouldering or subsidizing massive power users. Some versions proposed a separate utility rate class for data centers to prevent higher electrical costs from being shifted to consumers. Other proposals required utilities to file rates before construction and potentially delay such projects until proven communities are protected from subsidizing massive power users.

[HF 2688/SF 614](#) were introduced to ensure companies receiving tax breaks follow tight rules to ensure they meet investment requirements to qualify for such breaks. These proposals would require data centers to register with the state, to file annual reports tied to tax exemptions, to track items like electricity use tied to tax benefits, and to plan for backup power sources.

[HSB 713/HF 2642](#) was focused on how Iowa manages surface and groundwater withdrawals by data centers and other high volume water users such as wastewater treatment plants, agriculture and industry. It would clarify what counts as a beneficial use of water under state law, and what entities can legally withdraw large amounts of water.

*None of these bills passed the 2026 legislative session.*

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# DATAFICATION & THE FUTURE OF PEACE

## THE HIDDEN RISKS OF THE DATA REVOLUTION

Harper Dunne | MSc Conflict and Peacebuilding Candidate at Durham University, UK  
Former Iowa UNA College Ambassador from the 2024-25 cohort

The world is living through a profound technological shift. Artificial intelligence, robotics, and genome editing often dominate headlines, but beneath these innovations lies a more subtle force reshaping our world: datafication, or the conversion of human life into data that can be stored, analysed, and monetised. This transformation has created new opportunities but also has important implications for conflict, security, and peace.

This article explores three levels at which datafication threatens peace: the international, the individual, and the epistemic. Across all three, there is a strong role for international organizations to shape the global norms that protect people and societies in a world where data has become both a resource and a weapon.

### LEVEL ONE A NEW BATTLEFIELD DATAFICATION & INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

The explosion of data has created a new virtual arena where states and non-state actors can wage conflict without crossing a single physical border. This “grey zone” of activity, neither peace nor open war, has become a defining feature of 21st-century geopolitics. Disinformation, cyberattacks, and digital influence operations now allow adversaries to destabilise societies from afar, often with little accountability.

### DISINFORMATION AS A STRATEGIC WEAPON

Disinformation is not new, but datafication has made it vastly more

powerful: the ability to purchase or steal detailed personal data allows hostile actors to tailor false narratives to specific groups with unprecedented precision. [The Russian interference in the 2016 US election](#) demonstrated how targeted disinformation could inflame social divisions, suppress voter turnout, and erode trust in democratic institutions, and all without a single soldier ever crossing a border.

Similar tactics are now used globally. ISIL and other groups that utilize civilian violence [have been found to exploit personal data](#) to identify and radicalise vulnerable individuals. Governments have used coordinated networks of fake accounts to manufacture the illusion of public support or to deny human rights abuses in a practice called ‘astroturfing,’ as seen in the CCP-promoted narrative that the Uyghurs are not being systematically mistreated but rather are happy members of Chinese society willingly undergoing cultural education processes.

### THE ABSENCE OF GLOBAL NORMS

Despite the scale of these threats, the international system has no widely accepted norms governing digital incursions. Unlike the well-established concept of territorial sovereignty, data sovereignty remains undefined.

For the UN, this gap represents both a challenge and an opportunity. A global conversation on [‘virtual territorial integrity’](#) acceptable state behavior in cyberspace, and the protection of civilian data is urgently needed. The UN’s convening power makes

it the only body capable of leading this effort, perhaps building on the structures in existing UN-orchestrated international treaties and human rights protection mechanisms.

### LEVEL TWO HUMAN SECURITY IN THE AGE OF DATAFICATION

The UN’s own [Human Security Framework](#) reconceptualizes security from purely state-centered towards a human-centered model. Datafication threatens these human security principles in ways that are both tangible, such as identity theft, and intangible, such as the erosion of privacy or the rise of discriminatory surveillance.

### PERSONAL SECURITY CRIME, EXPLOITATION & THE LOSS OF PRIVACY

The sheer volume of personal data collected through everyday activities such as shopping, exercising, communicating, etc, has created fertile ground for cybercrime. In the United States alone, [cybercrime losses reached billions of dollars in 2024](#), affecting millions of people. Datafication has normalised a level of surveillance that would have been unimaginable a generation ago: wearables track our heart rates, phones track our movements, and online platforms track our preferences. Even when this data is used for convenience or commercial purposes, it creates a permanent record of our lives that can be misused by corporations, governments, or malicious actors. For example, health insurance companies [use hyper-specific, theoretically private information](#) (e.g., amount of television watched

or size of clothes purchased) to adjust their predictions of health costs and therefore their rates.

As long as data remains a lucrative commodity, individuals will remain vulnerable to theft, fraud, and exploitation.

### POLITICAL SECURITY PROFILING, REPRESSION & PREDICTIVE POLICING

Datafication also threatens political freedoms. Governments now have access to vast quantities of personal information that can be used to monitor dissent, target activists, or discriminate against minority groups. [Predictive policing tools](#), for example, often rely on biased datasets that disproportionately flag certain communities as “high risk,” reinforcing cycles of over-policing and mistrust.

In more authoritarian contexts, the dangers are even greater. Data from phones, credit cards, or social media [can be used to track individuals in real time, identify political opponents, or suppress civil society](#). These practices directly undermine SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and challenge the UN’s commitment to protecting civic space.

### LEVEL THREE EPISTEMIC RISKS WHEN DATA UNDERMINES PEACEBUILDING

Datafication also affects the knowledge systems that underpin peacebuilding. [The UN and many NGOs increasingly rely on data](#) to monitor violence, allocate resources, and design interventions.

While data can be invaluable, it also introduces new risks.

### WHEN DATA BECOMES A WEAPON

In conflict settings, sensitive data can fall into the wrong hands. Even anonymised datasets can often be re-identified, putting vulnerable populations at risk. The collapse of the Afghan government in 2021 illustrated this danger vividly: [biometric databases left behind by international actors were used by the Taliban to identify and target former security personnel and civil society members](#).

### THE MYTH OF OBJECTIVITY

A second epistemic danger of datafication is the belief that data is inherently objective. In reality, data reflects the biases of those who collect it and the algorithms that analyse it. [Overreliance on quantitative indicators can sideline local knowledge](#), flatten complex political dynamics, and justify interventions that do not align with community needs.

The UN’s own data strategy acknowledges this tension. While data can improve decision-making, it must be balanced with qualitative insights, local perspectives, and an awareness of structural biases, particularly those rooted in Global North assumptions about the Global South. A growing movement within peacebuilding calls for a shift away from externally driven, expert-led models toward approaches that prioritise local agency. This aligns with the UN’s emphasis on sustaining peace, national ownership, and inclusive processes. Elevating local

perspectives can counterbalance the distortions created by datafication and ensure that peace efforts remain grounded in lived realities rather than abstract metrics.

In sum, datafication has been and will continue to shape the landscape of conflict and peace on international, individual, and epistemic levels, creating new risks that occupy both the realms of the physical and the intangible. From destabilising democratic systems through disinformation, to undermining human security via surveillance, profiling and exploitation, to distorting the knowledge systems that undergird peacebuilding, datafication’s challenges are inherently transnational and complex. These dynamics underscore the need for a coordinated global response, particularly during this moment of decreasing faith in international systems. Yet, the United Nations is the only body with the convening and normative power capable of leading the development of international standards on the complex and rapidly changing evolution of the digital and data spaces.

The future does not have to be determined by technology alone. With thoughtful governance, multilateral cooperation, and a commitment to human rights, the UN could lead the way for society to ensure that datafication becomes a tool for sustaining and promoting peace, rather than undermining it.

## A PATH FORWARD FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSIBLE DATAFICATION

The risks of datafication are diffuse, indirect, and often invisible. That makes them harder to regulate than tangible threats easily measured in dollars or lives. But the UN has a long history of building global norms around emerging dangers, and it could do so again.

A forward-looking UN agenda on datafication could include:

- 1 Developing international norms on virtual territorial integrity, clarifying what constitutes unacceptable digital interference, and fostering a collaborative process towards a shared framework for enforcement.
- 2 Supporting initiatives that improve digital literacy and civic resilience by helping individuals understand and protect their data.
- 3 Strengthening global data protection standards, especially in humanitarian and conflict settings.
- 4 Ensuring that peacebuilding remains people-centered, with local knowledge valued alongside quantitative data.



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# DECLINING GLOBAL FERTILITY RATES

Jozef Figa | Member of the Iowa UNA Advocacy Committee

## U.S. OWES MUCH IN CURRENT & BACK UN DUES

Caryl Lyons | Member of the Iowa UNA Advocacy Committee

The United Nations is heading toward a financial crisis. Many of the 193 UN member nations are behind in their dues. As of the February 8, 2026 due date, only 55 of the 193 nations had paid their current budget assessments. Many countries are in arrears to the UN, owing not only current dues but back dues. The United States, the country with the world's largest national economy, owes the most.

Member states contribute funding to the United Nations through several streams: the UN's regular budget, its peacekeeping budget, and voluntary contributions made to other specialized agencies. The UN's regular budget is funded through assessed contributions determined every three years based on each country's ability to pay. All 193 countries that are members are assessed an amount to cover the costs of salaries and of basic programs for operating the UN. The UN's peacekeeping budget is also funded with assessed contributions, with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council assessed at higher rates than others. The peacekeeping budget covers the costs of peacekeeping missions across the world. Voluntary contributions are made to other specialized UN agencies to which countries choose to belong.

Since the UN's founding, the United States [has been the largest financial contributor](#) to the United Nations and its many programs. For the UN's regular budget, the United States has always been assessed the most, contributing about 22% of the regular budget. In

comparison, China is assessed 20% and Japan 6.9%. The United States is also assessed a large percentage of the peacekeeping budget, capped by Congress at 25%. In terms of voluntary contributions, U.S. contributions are declining as the current administration has withdrawn from various UN groups, including UNESCO (the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and a one-year withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO).

By the beginning of February 2026, the U.S. owed \$2.19 billion in assessed contributions for the regular budget and an additional \$2.4 billion for "current and past peacekeeping missions." The United States also owes \$827 million not paid into last year's regular budget and another \$767 million for this year's regular budget. The Associated Press reported on February 20, 2026, that the U.S. had paid about \$160 million towards its unpaid dues, [far short of the \\$4 billion it owes](#).

### CONTACT YOUR IOWA REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

Encourage full payment to the UN for both past assessments and those due for 2026. The peacekeeping operations alone save huge amounts of money for the U.S. and for the world, compared to the costs of war, and since no one country can take on this responsibility alone. Full funding of the UN is essential to avert financial crisis and to ensure that the UN can continue its vital work.

Local governments are closing small schools in Poland—mostly in villages. The reason is a lack of enrollment. In the next 10 years, there will be 1 million fewer students in Poland, so more schools will close. There are fewer and fewer children being born in Poland. The average Polish woman, age 15-49, gives birth to 1.1 children, the lowest rate in the European Union (EU). The replacement number, the fertility needed for one generation to replace another, is 2.1.

Declining fertility rates in Poland represent a global trend. The [global fertility rate has declined](#) from 5 in 1950 to 2.2 in 2024, and it is expected to fall below the 2.1 replacement level by 2050. The fertility rate in the EU is 1.38, and it has been systematically decreasing. The US had been experiencing 20 years of systematic fertility decrease with the current fertility rate at 1.62. Japan has been experiencing slight fertility increases for the last three years, but its current coefficient of fertility is 1.38. Countries with the lowest fertility rates include South Korea at 0.75. The highest fertility rates are in Africa. The highest rates in the world can be found in Chad (5.94), Somalia (5.91), the Democratic Republic of Congo (5.90), and the Central African Republic (5.81).

But fertility rates in Africa are also falling, consistent with the global trend. (See global fertility rates by country [here](#).)

Declining global fertility rates have important implications for global society and [risk the prosperity and well-being of future generations](#). Fertility rates are negatively correlated with the levels of economic development and the income of the population. Declining fertility rates can lead to labor shortages and limit economic growth. They also put burdens on social security systems with fewer young people to support aging populations.

According to the theory of [demographic transition](#), pre-industrial societies are characterized by high death rates and high birth rates, leading to a population equilibrium. Industrialization is correlated with high birth rates and a significant decrease in death rates, resulting in a rapid population expansion. Eventually, birth rates decrease and population reaches another equilibrium. However, what we observe in Europe, in Japan, in South Korea, and in the US, is a decrease in birth rates and an expanding life expectancy, resulting in both the aging and the shrinking of populations.

The causes of low birthrates include family planning and the high costs of childcare and housing. Another factor is delaying childbearing due to the pursuit of education and/or the development of careers. The result is that women become pregnant later in their lives. In many countries, including the US, the highest fertility rates are attributed to women over 30. But since the most fertile years for women are ages 20-24, these late pregnancies translate into an overall low coefficient of fertility and a stagnant or shrinking population. Under these circumstances, even fewer children will be born to the subsequent generations., which, in turn, translates into the closing of schools and also into shortages of workers in many occupations and professions, including health care.

A [survey of fourteen countries](#) conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with YouGov found that 20% of reproductive age adults believe that they won't be able to have the number of children they desire. The reasons they list include financial limitations, fears about the future (including climate change, environmental degradations, wars, and pandemics) and being able to have children at times they prefer.

# SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC HEALTH WHY THE U.S. SHOULD RECONSIDER ITS EXIT FROM THE WHO

**Thomas Boakye | 2025-26 Iowa UNA College Ambassador from Iowa State University**

*This piece was previously published as a blog on the Iowa UNA website in April 2026.*

The United States was one of the [founding nations](#) of the UN after the end of World War II, helping to create an international system of cooperation, including specialized agencies that would work together to address important global issues. One of the specialized agencies created through this process was the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), established in 1948, to coordinate international public health activities.

The United States has historically been a leader in the WHO, contributing significantly as a funder and an important partner in developing policies that guide the WHO. Hitherto, the United States has been the largest financial contributor to the WHO, contributing over [\\$163 million and \\$816 million](#) annually over the last 10 years. In addition, U.S. scientists and public health agencies have collaborated with the WHO on global disease elimination projects, including [eradicating polio](#), and through [global influenza surveillance systems](#) to identify new strains of viruses.

Despite the longstanding relations between the United States and the UN agency, an [executive order](#) was issued on January 20, 2025, instructing the U.S. to withdraw from the WHO.

That occurred formally on January 22, 2026. The primary reasons given were dissatisfaction with the WHO's performance during COVID-19 and uncertainty about U.S. funding obligations to the organization.

WHO receives most of its funds through both mandatory ([assessed](#)) and [voluntary \(donated\)](#) contributions from member states (the U.S. used to be a key donor). Historically, that has meant [81%](#) of the WHO's funding comes from voluntary sources, with only 19% coming from assessed sources. Therefore, the WHO's reliance on large, unconventional donations, such as those from the USA, will likely create a gap in its financial structure until an alternative funding source can be established.

With the United States withdrawing from the World Health Organization, U.S. funding will no longer be available to support global disease surveillance efforts that help countries respond to disease outbreaks. One immediate example of this is that there will not be a U.S. contribution to the [Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System \(GISRS\)](#), a key platform used by the WHO to track flu viruses and inform vaccine formulation each year. The Infectious Disease Society of America has noted that withdrawal from the WHO could also limit the U.S. ability to obtain shared flu virus surveillance information that the U.S. relies upon to create vaccines.



This development may signal a decline in the United States' global soft power influence. As Joseph S. Nye Jr. argues in *Soft Power: [The Means to Success in World Politics](#)*, a nation's ability to achieve its objectives increasingly depends not only on coercion or payment but also on attraction and legitimacy within international institutions. Participation and voting in international organizations have traditionally been among the United States' primary tools for exercising "soft power," or the ability to shape conditions, develop partnerships, and gain legitimacy through non-military coercion. Historically, and on numerous occasions over many decades, when the United States has been engaged with the WHO, it has established international health guidelines, mobilized donors, demonstrated collective humanitarian support, and set the international agenda through leadership.

However, a U.S. withdrawal from the WHO, at a time when the likelihood of pandemics or other global health emergencies is increasingly intertwined with the economic security of all nations and the geopolitical competition among them, will significantly undermine the U.S.'s global health governance presence. [Experts](#) have already identified that a U.S. withdrawal may impede global disease detection and prevention efforts and, additionally, may limit U.S. credibility with allied nations that rely on a continued U.S. commitment to providing predictable multilateral health engagement.

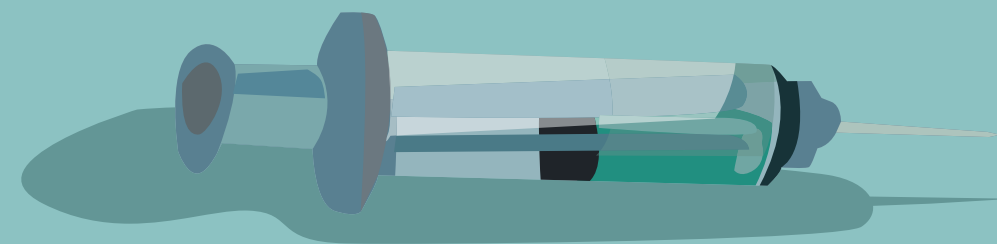
Some have commented that the reliance on U.S. hard power does not adequately account for the international dimensions of global health security. Support for multilateral organizations like the WHO could have a much greater overall value to the world. In addition, by supporting preventative measures designed to detect and contain outbreaks of disease, the United States will be better positioned to respond

effectively to those potential outbreaks that could eventually impact its communities and economy than if it were to operate under the assumption that all outbreaks would be handled solely by the U.S.'s own capabilities.

While the U.S. might have valid concerns about withdrawing from the WHO, there are ways to raise concerns about transparency and governance within the organization. Reform efforts can occur through internal organizational channels, supported by collaborative, constructive oversight to improve the organization's accountability. Strategies for reform include improving the clarity of budget allocations, increasing oversight of program outcomes, and increasing bipartisan involvement in the U.S. regarding the WHO.

The WHO and the rest of the UN system should likewise make their memberships more attractive and responsive to current member needs through greater clarity in outcome reporting, introduce reforms to their governance processes to allow for the inclusion of member state voices, and develop deeper partnerships with civil society and the scientific community in order to maintain the technical integrity of the organization.

Public health outcomes are interrelated with foreign policy issues. Thus, strengthening global health cooperation within organizations like the WHO can help build collective defenses against disease, enhance diplomatic influence, and build goodwill for the U.S. The rise of international health threats that cross borders quickly and the increasing reliance on multilateral relationships to achieve economic and strategic stability are redefining how the U.S. must use its power in the world beyond its military.





# COLLEGE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM THE IOWA UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION (UNA)

**Charlye Willis | 2025-26 College Ambassador from the University of Northern Iowa**

The Iowa United Nations Association (UNA) College Ambassadors Program offers students across the state of Iowa a unique opportunity to advance their advocacy and leadership skills while engaging in global issues. A key focus is on advancing the mission of the United Nations. The Iowa UNA engages in this by helping students learn how to advocate effectively for various global issues such as human rights, climate action, and global health.

Ambassadors join as part of an academic-year and collaborate closely with Executive Director Debra DeLaet to amplify advocacy both on social media and their campuses. During the year, students participate in workshops, coordinate outreach initiatives, and create blogs with the mission of raising awareness and support of the United Nations.

In March, the program was able to host the Iowa UNA College Ambassador Workshop on Drake's Campus. Students were able to deepen their understanding of what the United Nations is and what their role as an ambassador is. During this time, they were able to explore the core functions of the United Nations and how these global issues connect to issues in their communities.

The workshop was also honored to welcome a visit from Jarrett James Lash, the current UNA-USA Youth Observer to the United Nations. During the workshop, Lash conducted his national Listening Tour. He engaged with the college ambassadors to spark conversation around what challenges are pressuring the youth today. These discussions were insightful and helped create collaboration and community between the ambassadors.

Following the workshop, Lash presented on Youth, Power, and the Future of U.S. Leadership at the United Nations, sharing meaningful insights collected from national survey data. One notable find was that the trust and support for the United Nations has remained stable over time and is consistent across all political affiliations. This is an encouraging sign for the future of the United Nations.

Another opportunity the ambassadors had was to visit the Iowa State Capitol. They were able to take a tour, meet people, and see the importance of civic engagement at all levels. It was another time for these students to get to know each other and learn more about each other's campuses.

College ambassadors come from various Iowa institutions such as: Drake University, University of Iowa, Iowa State University, University of Northern Iowa, Cornell College, and William Penn University. All of these ambassadors have shared a blog this year, participated in workshops, and built relationships as well as advocacy skills. They not only learned about global issues—but they have also been actively contributing to raising awareness and connecting people.

The Iowa UNA College Ambassadors Program provides students with a platform to grow as leaders. Ambassadors expand their understanding of international issues and find ways to make a tangible impact within their communities and across Iowa. By empowering young voices and fostering meaningful dialogue, the program demonstrates how local action can support global change.

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# POSTING OUR VALUES LIVING OUT SUSTAINABLE GOALS

**Carissa Phan | 2025-26 College Ambassador  
from Drake University**

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, work to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. During the March 2026 College Ambassador workshop with the 14th UNA-USA Youth Observer to the United Nations, Jarrett James Lash highlighted the importance of pinpointing one or two Sustainable Development Goals that we as individuals can live out in our daily lives. He gave us a small postcard showcasing all the SDGs and encouraged us to put it somewhere where we would view it every day, allowing us to reflect on the ways we live sustainably.

All ambassadors identified the SDGs that matter the most to them. Here are a couple:

## **FROM CHARLYE WILLIS:**

“The SDG that resonates most with me is SDG 3: good health and well being. I live this out through promoting student wellness and sharing resources on campus about how students can better help their well-being.”

## **FROM CARISSA PHAN:**

“I resonate most with SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions. As someone wanting to go into a career with international law, I believe the promotion of justice, particularly as it relates to war crimes, is crucial to international order. I live this out through promoting local advocacy and presenting about inequalities in our community.”

*You can read more about the Sustainable Development Goals in A Guide for Thinking Globally, Acting Locally During Isolationist Times by Jane Shuttleworth and Caryl Lyons from our December 2025 edition of the IUNA Newsletter.*

# THE AGE OF ACTION

## LIVING OUT SUSTAINABLE GOALS

**Allie Raines | Founder of Griff's Thrift**

Adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) describe a blueprint for protecting peace and the planet. These goals are more than just a list to look at, but a guide to live by.

While attending Drake University, it has been my intention to inspire those around me to pursue and champion sustainable actions. My goal has always been to learn how to best communicate environmental topics to those around me, even before learning of the SDG list.

One of the best practices is to lead by example.

These past few months I have been working with a subcommittee of the Drake Environmental Action League, a Registered Student Organization at Drake since 2008, to create a more sustainable campus. From December of 2025 to today, we have been working tirelessly organizing a Free Store Initiative to open at Drake.

This is a community initiative where any items donated or collected are available to the public for free, with no money exchanged. These items include clothes, school and office supplies, and even furniture. Our goal is to help increase sustainability by recovering items from students, staff, faculty, and student organizations for use elsewhere.

Since our ribbon cutting on April 3rd of 2026 we estimate a total of 320 pounds of waste diverted from landfills through our store, named Griff's Thrift.

Griff's Thrift helps to maintain equality in educational opportunities and in access to clothing and furniture for the well being of all community members on Drake's campus. Our secondary mission is to ensure sustainability in consumption.

The connections Griff's Thrift has created in one month have targeted not one, but seven of the SDGs. When we come together, our actions will create a better environment for all.



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## WE'RE MOVING!

Beginning on **July 1, 2026**, Iowa United Nations Association will have a new home in Des Moines, our capitol city!

## OUR NEW ADDRESS:

620 Pleasant St., Suite #242  
Des Moines, IA 50314

Please update your book and send future correspondence to our new address **beginning in July**.

## NEWS & ADVOCACY

[UN News](#): UN News offers global perspectives on current international events with an emphasis on UN agencies and initiatives. You can subscribe to the UN News newsletter, which will be sent to your email, for free at [this link](#).

[United Nations Events and News](#): The United Nations publishes key events and news on its webpage. Here, you can gain access to information about UN meetings, media alerts and briefings, and press conferences. You can get access to live streaming of certain meetings and also access interviews, videos, and documentaries.

[Better World Campaign](#): The Better World Campaign (BWC), like UNA-USA, is part of the UN Foundation. BWC publishes news and a blog that emphasize advocacy. It is an excellent resource for perspectives that make the case for strong U.S. support of the United Nations in a range of issue areas.

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# & WHERE TO FIND US HOW TO REACH US

C/O Iowa UNA | 20 E Market St. Iowa City, IA 52245

## SOCIAL MEDIA

LinkedIn: Iowa United Nations Association  
 Facebook: Iowa United Nations Association  
 Instagram: @una-iowa-division  
 VIEW OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.IOWAUNA.ORG](http://WWW.IOWAUNA.ORG)

## JOIN NOW

Please join the UNA-USA movement to help us advocate for the vital work of the United Nations. You can become a member or renew your membership at this link. <https://unausa.org/join/> When you join UNA-USA, you will indicate your local membership in either the Iowa Division or one of our local chapters in Cedar Valley, Linn County, or Johnson county.

## HELP US BY DONATING

Your generous donations help support our work in support of climate action, gender equity, human rights, and refugees. To donate online, go to [www.iowauna.org](http://www.iowauna.org) and select the Donate button. You also may donate to Iowa UNA through Venmo @ Iowa-UNA.

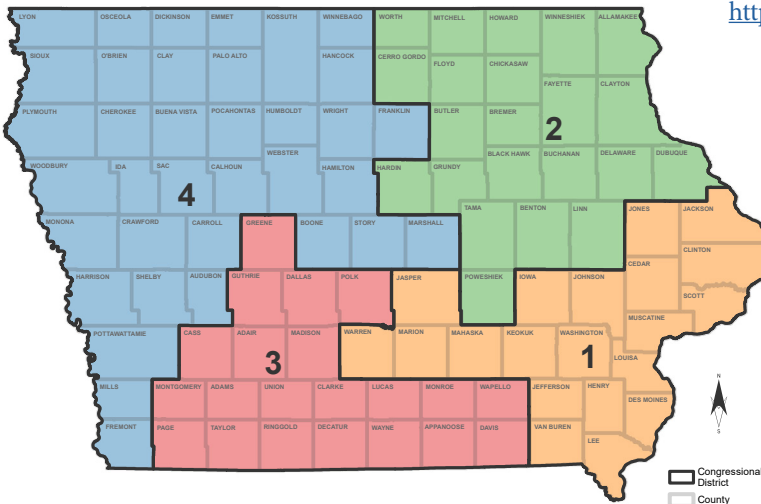
# HOW TO CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump (R)  
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20006  
[www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact)

Senator Charles Grassley (R)  
 135 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20510  
 (202) 224-3744  
[www.grassley.senate.gov/contact](http://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact)

Senator Joni Ernst (R)  
 111 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20510  
 (202) 224-3524  
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IOWA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS  
 Effective Beginning with the Elections in 2022 for the 118th U.S. Congress



District 1: Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R)  
 1716 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20515 | (202) 225-6576  
<https://millermeeks.house.gov/>

District 2: Representative Ashley Hinson (R)  
 1429 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20515 | (202) 225-2911  
[www.hinson.house.gov/](http://www.hinson.house.gov/)

District 3: Representative Zach Nunn (R)  
 1034 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20515 | (202) 225-5476  
[nunn.house.gov/](http://nunn.house.gov/)

District 4: Representative Randy Feenstra (R)  
 1440 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
 Washington D.C. 20515  
 (202) 225-4426  
[feenstra.house.gov](http://feenstra.house.gov)