

February 11, 2008

## Vandal Parent Newsletter

SNOW DAY! The concept is still magic for college students and faculty. The world is suddenly less ordered and you get an unexpected day to use for fun, rest or even catching up on homework.....unless you are responsible for clearing the sidewalks and parking lots. Students responded by “sleeping-in”, making large igloos, snow sculptures and anatomically correct “snow men” and “snow women”.

You probably heard that the University of Idaho had “two snow days” a week and a half ago. It was the first closure of the university due simply to snow in more than 25 years. The “winter of 08” will be the winter that is used in northern Idaho as a point of comparison for many other winters to come. Roads in the region are being closed periodically due to blowing snow and high winds so there have been travel hardships.....but it has also been incredibly beautiful. The harsh weather patterns are changing and a slow melt has started.

Enough of the weather report.....

The first round of tests is taking place and students seemed to be very focused.

Coats, ties and nice dresses will be evident in unusual numbers on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. The Career Expo (career fair) will fill the Kibbie Dome floor as prospective employers and job seekers share information. We collaborate with Washington State University so that a large number of potential employers will find the opportunity attractive. On Tuesday evening, we will host an etiquette dinner so that students can sharpen their social and interview skills. The etiquette dinner is an entertaining and very high quality program held annually during the spring semester.

So far, our students have been spared from a major flu outbreak. If your son or daughter complains about cold or flu symptoms, urge them to get to the Student Health Clinic or to Quick Care and then stay in bed. Urge them to aggressively take care of themselves and send them a gift pack of hand sanitizer.

Next week, will feature President’s Day three-day weekend with no classes on Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> and during the remainder of the week our campus will be filled with the sound of jazz. More than 10,000 high school and college students will come to the University of Idaho to listen to jazz greats and participate in clinics and workshops. Each evening, the Kibbie Dome will be the site of a major concert to feature the best of this talent.

A few days ago, a group of students enjoyed dinner at President White’s home where they told him about their incredible service trip to Peru. In early January, 24 students and 4 staff committed two weeks of their winter break to working on a youth center in Cai Cay, Peru. Their stories described hard physical labor, deep learning about another

culture and many reflections about self-discovery. One of the students had never flown on an airplane and his observation seemed to describe the central theme of the entire trip. He said, "Clouds are pretty cool when you have a chance to see them from the other side". Our students agreed that indeed the world looks like a very different place when you get to see it from a different perspective.

In the next few days, you may receive a phone call from a University of Idaho student asking you to make a donation to the Parents Association. These contributions will be used to fund innovative programs to improve campus life. Our Parent Advisory Board participates in decisions about how these funds are spent. Your contributions support projects such as:

- Parent orientation and parent services
- Campus safety and alcohol education initiatives
- Promotion of the "holiday bus program"
- Alternative spring break service projects
- Parent Association scholarships for high need students
- Parent Advisory Board meetings

Members of our Parents Advisory Board meet on campus twice a year to give advice about parent services and campus life issues. I am grateful for their guidance and interest in partnering with us as we serve the students at the University of Idaho. Their names can be found at [www.uidaho.edu/dos](http://www.uidaho.edu/dos).

The March issue of *Reader's Digest* will feature a presentation about campus safety issues. The article will be "Is Your College Student Safe at School?" I have not seen the article but we have been notified that the University of Idaho is ranked among the safest colleges and universities. I am pleased with the external evaluation of our campus climate but I know that risks do exist and that safety is a fragile quality that can easily be damaged. We must work constantly on many issues for this environment to continue to earn this ranking.

Best wishes,

Bruce M. Pitman  
Vice Provost for Student Affairs/Dean of Students