

December 14, 2007

Vandal Parents Newsletter

Fall semester has come to an end. The impact of long hours of study was evident as students fell asleep in the Library or on the soft chairs in the Commons. They were tired this week...for the right reasons! More than a few students were obviously cramming with the help of coffee in the Commons.....you could tell that they were trying to stuff a few more facts into their brains with hopes that the information would stay for a few more hours until the test had been finished.

Campus looks like a holiday postcard. A fresh cover of snow and bright decorations create a festive setting. It is beautiful.

Last weekend, approximately 739 students and their families took part in Winter Commencement. They still had to pass final exams and pay parking tickets before they earned their diploma but the smiles were very broad. The mid-year Commencement ceremony has become an important event for many families who might not be able to return for a May ceremony.

Last weekend, several other major events added pageantry and excitement to the close of the semester. The extraordinary Holiday concert featuring 700 musicians was enjoyed by more than 5000 guests in the Kibbie Dome. We also honored 55 of our most outstanding students and their most influential faculty at the Alumni Association Awards for Excellence dinner and ceremony. A list of those students and faculty can be found at <http://www.supportui.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=86623>.

Now that final exams are finished, naturally you will want want information about their grades. Grades will be posted on their electronic transcript in the next few days. Your Vandal can go online to get the happy news but a paper "report card" will not be sent to your home.

The University will generally be closed from December 21st until January 2nd. Many offices will provide limited service and emergency phone numbers during this time. However, we will be delighted to accept your payments for spring semester tuition and fees through the vacation period. Please ask your Vandal to print a copy of their fee statement available through their Vandal web account so that you will know how much needs to be paid. You will not be sent a paper billing statement for spring semester.

Approximately 28 Vandals will have a brief vacation with family and then will depart on an extraordinary adventure. They will travel to Peru to build a school in a remote village. They will change lives and will be changed themselves by this experience. They will also commit a couple days to learn more about the culture and history of Peru by visiting the ruins of Machu Picchu. A large number of students applied to do this work and pay a portion of their expenses but the size of the group needed to be small. These experiences transform lives of all involved. I will report on their trip when they return.

A highlight of fall semester actually took place in Washington, D.C. at the White House last month when President George W. Bush honored the University of Idaho with the nation's most prestigious arts award. The National Endowment of the Arts recognized the Lionel Hampton International Jazz Festival with the National Medal of Arts. President White accepted the medal on behalf of the University in an East Room ceremony. The ceremony also honored several other individuals who have marked our cultural landscape. You can see ceremony footage at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071115-1.html.

Here is a friendly reminder about the spring semester schedule. Spring semester begins on January 9, 2008. The first day of classes will be on Wednesday...not Monday of that week. There are also a few seats available on the Holiday Break Bus for the return trip to campus on Monday, January 7th. You can make reservations for a one way return by calling our office after January 2nd at 208/885-6757.

I hope that your family will have a restful and joyful time during this holiday season.

Happy Holidays

Bruce Pitman
Vice Provost for Student Affairs/Dean of Students