

## Vandal Parents Newsletter

We are in the midst of a robust, busy and stimulating season. The last two weeks have been filled with inspirational and thought provoking programs that make the University of Idaho an incredible place to live and learn. I will describe more of this later in this letter but first I must address an important health issue.

On Friday, a UI student was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. You probably know that this disease is potentially fatal if not addressed quickly and accurately. This form of meningitis is potentially contagious to others who are directly exposed through shared use of food utensils, kissing or coughing. The risk to others is small but important for those who live in close proximity.

Let me review what has taken place.

On Wednesday morning, a student who lives in Kappa Sigma Fraternity became ill. At 10:30 am, he was taken to Gritman Medical Center and the ER physician made a very rapid and accurate diagnosis. The diagnosis was confirmed on Friday when test results were received.

As soon as bacterial meningitis was suspected on Wednesday, officials moved quickly on the presumption of risk. In the next hours, members of Kappa Sigma and close friends were examined at the Student Health Center and given antibiotics. The infected student was also transported to Boise to be near family. His faculty was also notified and a public health alert was issued.

The Kappa Sigma Fraternity leaders did a splendid job getting the student to medical care and then organizing the effort to identify close friends who needed medical attention.

I am pleased to report that the infected student is recovering very rapidly and was released from the hospital on Sunday. I am also pleased that no other cases have been reported. While the risks to others is very small, the campus community will be closely monitored in the next two weeks and campus wide education activities will help students understand symptoms and have information about local resources. I have attached information from Public Health about bacterial meningitis.

Students who have been exposed may receive antibiotics at the Student Health Center. Vaccinations may also be obtained at Student Health Center.

Bacterial meningitis is a serious and rare matter. Health District and local medical staff including physicians at the Student Health Center led the immediate response and follow-up. They have done an excellent job and will remain vigilant.

This is a remarkable time of the year. In the last two weeks, we have hosted many significant events.

On April 2nd, former President F. W. de Klerk of South Africa presented a powerful lecture promoting peace through reconciliation and forgiveness. He was the president of South Africa when that country ended its policy of racial apartheid.

On April 4, the author of the book *Three Cups of Tea* and Greg Mortensen, who is the subject of book, delivered presentations to more than two thousand people. It is a powerful story of Greg Mortensen's effort to bring peace to Pakistan by building schools one village at a time. This book reached number one on the New York Times Best Sellers list on the day of their presentations at the University of Idaho. More than \$30,000 was raised to help build a school.

On April 5th and 6th, an inspiring conference called Finding the Center promoted peaceful solutions to socially divisive issues took place on campus.

On April 6th, the local Relay for Life event took place in the Kibbie Dome to raise money to find a cure for cancer. More than \$60,000 was raised by local and student groups.

This weekend, Elton John was in concert in Pullman. Those in the audience who had received mail from AARP knew more of the words than did the college students. I think the college students were a little shocked at the behavior of their elders.....shocked that the older group still had some moves.

Moms' Weekend will be the focus of much activity this coming weekend. Activities will begin with the Honors Convocation on Friday afternoon; our Student Leadership Awards Ceremony will be held later in the evening. Saturday will be filled with food, fun and quality time at the Mall. Perhaps there will be some matching tattoos or piercing...wait until Mom gets home and tries to explain what happened!

Mr. Ken Starr who was the Special Prosecutor in the Whitewater Investigation will give a lecture on April 21st at a convocation sponsored by the College of Law.

Amid all this activity, the semester moves towards rapid conclusion. This week, students will be registering for fall semester classes. Registration fees will increase 5% next year so that the in-state fee will be \$2316 per semester. The third round of tests has been taken and end of the semester projects are looming on the near horizon.

Have a good week....it snowed again this afternoon. The cold weather improves focus on academic work.

Sincerely,

Bruce Pitman  
Vice Provost for Student Affairs/Dean of Students