



Dear University of Idaho Parents and Families,

This spring has been challenging for all of us, and all of us at the University of Idaho are grateful for the patience and grace shown by our amazing students. Thank you for trusting us to continue to educate your student as we all navigate the uncertainty brought on by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

We are a destination campus, one that was designed by the world-famous Olmstead brothers (who designed Central Park and the Washington Mall in Washington, D.C.), to create a world-class educational experience for the students who pass through it. We are proud of our beautiful campus. But this spring, the university and the Moscow community were just not the same. The pandemic required we move to an online teaching format and remain learning and working from home. We missed our students and we know that they missed their friends and the educational experiences offered here.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, U.S. News and World Report still ranks the University of Idaho in the top 6% of all public universities and colleges in the country and a best value. That has not changed. Our faculty and staff remained dedicated to delivering the best education possible. That has not changed either.

We plan to open this fall and operate to the fullest extent possible with in-class learning. Planning for this is a massive undertaking but one we know is important to all of us. We are guided foremost by our priorities of safety and care. Our Fall 2020 planning focuses on providing a safe environment for all to work and study. We expect social distancing requirements to be in place until a vaccine is available, so we are adapting all campus operations to follow CDC recommendations. We continue to work with Idaho Public Health and other health experts. Safety is our top priority as we work to educate

students, conduct research and provide outreach to our state. To accomplish these goals, we are taking actions to mitigate the likely return of COVID-19.

That is why I am pleased to tell you about our relationship with Gritman Medical Center, our local hospital in Moscow. Our close working relationship plays strongly into how we move forward. Not only does Gritman operate the Vandal Health Clinic on our Moscow campus, the leadership of the hospital has been with us every step of the way as we transitioned to remote learning, closed most of campus this last Spring, tested and treated students in our residence halls and as we investigate setting up our own COVID-19 testing facility for this upcoming Fall semester. Such a lab would allow us to test more people and return results faster.

Classes

We plan to offer live, in-class learning experiences starting Monday, Aug. 24. Most classes will resume as face-to-face; however, some adaptations to the course schedule are necessary to follow social distancing standards. Some class sizes may be reduced. Others may be moved to larger spaces. Certain courses will put students in a rotation between in-person and online experiences, a format called hybrid flexible — or HyFlex. As a last resort, a few classes may be offered in online formats where no other method for safe learning can be used due to class size. Our IT staff is adding technology to classrooms to adjust to this variety of formats. Colleges are working to adapt their course offerings to meet these unique safety requirements.

Safety Protocols

A key component of successfully re-opening is for our university community to embrace the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of face coverings. This will include offices, classrooms and other campus spaces. We are planning to supply PPE to all of our faculty, staff and students this fall and its use will be expected, along with social distancing, until health professionals advise us otherwise. Use of hand sanitizer, washing hands regularly, and regular cleaning of public areas will also be important. Along with the possibility of testing, we are researching and working to procure

thermal scanners for high-traffic areas and gatherings to identify those students or employees who may be infected.

Residential and Campus Experience

Housing and Residence Life, as well as Greek chapter facilities, will reduce density to mitigate the spread of the virus. Each area is making plans to provide students with the best possible residential experience that includes social distancing. Vandals Dining will continue to provide food in a safe, responsible way in both The HUB and through food court locations. Your student will see changes to some facilities and offices as we adapt to social distancing protocols, including plexiglass protection and limited seating.

Athletics and Campus Events

There are many challenges to our student-athletes competing this fall. While the details are not yet worked out, the Big Sky Conference intends to allow competition, perhaps under modified schedules. This will have an obvious impact on when and how our athletes safely participate. For parents and fans, there will be new protocols when entering our facilities that may include reducing the number of spectators for football, particularly in the suites. We appreciate your patience as we work through all the logistics.

If you have concerns about your student's personal health risks associated with being on campus, email askjoe@uidaho.edu to connect with the Dean of Students. A New Student Town Hall will be held via Zoom on Thursday, June 4. Your new student should be receiving information via email soon. Returning students and parents are encouraged to join Dean of Students Blaine Eckles on [Facebook Live](#) Monday, June 8. Other forums will be held throughout the summer.

We can be proud of how our Vandal Family responded to the pandemic, but the work is far from over. Leadership is working diligently to finalize plans for Fall 2020. We miss our students, and we can not wait to be back together this fall. In the interim, we have much to prepare. We will provide further updates throughout the summer as we learn more about the virus and adapt our strategies accordingly.

Scott Green
President

president@uidaho.edu

uidaho.edu/president

P.S.: A note from Gritman Medical Center

As a parent of two girls, I have an appreciation for the anxiety that comes with sending your child away from home. But as a graduate of the University of Idaho and now CEO of Gritman Medical Center in Moscow, I can assure you that our university and community work together to support the success and safety of students. As the hospital and primary care clinic system for our region, Gritman was early in adapting our safety procedures and emergency operations to help protect our patients and staff during COVID-19.

Your student will be in good hands should they require healthcare while on campus. Latah County has been very fortunate to have a low number of confirmed positive cases and we have evolved what we do to keep everyone as safe as possible — including students at the Vandal Health Clinic. Gritman Medical Center and our compassionate team have the advanced skills and technology to care for most every healthcare need. I invite you to learn more about us and how we are responding to the COVID-19 emergency by visiting our resource page at gritman.org/coronavirus.

Thank you and Go Vandals!

Kara Besst, President and CEO
Gritman Medical Center

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