



# University of Idaho

**TO:** University of Idaho Parents and Families  
**FROM:** Blaine Eckles, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students  
**DATE:** April 10, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Parent & Family Update

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## Parents and Families —

It has been two weeks since I last reached out to you, informing you of various changes at the University of Idaho. Since that time, the university has transitioned to all classes being conducted completely remote for the remainder of the semester, cancelled all campus events (sadly, including Commencement), closed all buildings to the public, and almost all employees are working remotely as a result of the State of Idaho's "Stay at Home" directive by Governor Brad Little.

While I don't think any of the things that have occurred are a surprise given the current environment, I thought I would provide some additional information for you to have in the event your student has questions. I recently reached out to students in another email, outlining several important things for them to remember and I share this same information with you so you can best assist your student moving forward.

### **Student Survey**

The university emailed students this week a brief survey to complete, to gather information on their student experience. Students who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing where ten students will receive a \$50 gift card to the VandalStore. Please encourage your student to read their email and complete the survey.

## 2020 Census

For your student, and even for your family, it may not seem all that important to participate right now in the 2020 Census, which began April 1. But it is very important as the census has a significant impact on funding for our communities and the University of Idaho. The Census occurs once every 10-years and provides important information with impact for a decade.

According to the Census Bureau, your student should be counted where she/he lives most of the year. Guidance states: **College students should be counted as though they were still attending the university in person, even if they are home early because of the COVID-19 situation.**

Please make sure to fill your census form out accurately and have your student fill theirs out accurately as well. If you have questions about how to fill out your census form, please visit [Who to Count](#). In addition, [here is a short informative Youtube video](#) that also provides good explanation for the importance of the census and filling it out correctly for college students.

### **The Importance of Social Distancing**

As of this communication, six University of Idaho students have been diagnosed with COVID-19. While all are recovering, these young adults are examples that we must all do our part to protect not only ourselves, but one another. Please continue self-isolating and minimizing interactions/contact in person with others that are not absolutely necessary and please encourage your student to do the same.

[Here is a brief video](#) which shows how easily spreading a germ/virus can occur and why proper hygiene is important. I suggest you watch this with your student ....it is informative, and fun, and will make you think about things in a different way.

### **Access to IT Support**

During this time, your student may be struggling with adequate resources (WiFi, technology, etc.). The [Student Technology](#)

[Center](#) still has Chromebooks and iPads available for students to check out.

For students remaining in Moscow, [drive-in WiFi options](#) are available as computer labs are closed. This allows your student to tap into the institution's WiFi network from the safety of a vehicle, so that they can upload/download needed work assignments.

Regardless of where your student lives, she/he may be able to connect into the WiFi of another institution of higher learning at no cost. This can assist with delivery of class materials/videos, etc. Regional institutions participate in **Eduroam**, a collaboration between many colleges and universities that makes wireless access available at many college campuses around the world. Your student can access these resources using their student U of I username and password. It is that simple. If your student finds a wireless network named "Eduroam", they should be able to get wireless access. A [full map of Eduroam](#) access (worldwide!) is available so your student can find places to connect.

Your student can also connect to a computer in a Student Computing Lab and **use the software on that computer via any internet-connected computer**. Some students utilize specific programs for their studies and these programs are often provided at no expense to students in computer labs. If your student needs to access a specific program, they should visit [How do I access student lab computers remotely?](#) for more information.

Your student should contact the [Student Technology Center](#) at 208-885-4357 with questions about any of the technology resources outlined above.

### **PASS/FAIL Option & Complete Withdrawal Option**

We understand that moving to online/remote delivery is a difficult transition for some students. As a result, your student has options for grading criteria this semester. The university is allowing students to choose, **until May 1**, whether they would

like to complete courses as pass/fail for the semester or perform a full withdrawal for the semester.

Students should keep in mind the following as it pertains to pass/fail:

- Students may opt-in to pass/fail grading for ANY course and these courses will count toward general education and major course requirements;
- Students may opt in on a course-by-course basis;
- Courses taken as pass/fail in Spring 2020 will NOT count against limits for the number of course that can be taken as pass/fail or the number of courses you can withdraw from;
- A **pass** (P) will not affect a student GPA, but a **fail** (F) will;
- If your student is a student athlete, in ROTC, or thinks they may transfer or attend medical school, they will want to carefully consider whether pass/fail will work for them.
- Encourage your student to consult/visit with an academic advisor for guidance. Students can connect with an academic advisor by visiting [VandalStar](#).

You can find additional information about pass/fail by visiting the student FAQ section of the [U of I Coronavirus website](#).

## **How to Get Assistance**

The last few weeks have been difficult for many and I see the impact on students in a variety of ways. While campus buildings are closed, the university is still open, and services are available to assist your student.

If your student is struggling and not sure where to turn to for assistance, let us know by filing a [CARE report](#). A team of dedicated professionals is ready to assist your student connecting with campus resources and help them problem solve their situation. In addition, the emails and contact information on campus websites still work and thus have your student reach out to any office for assistance.

## **Here's How you can help Vandal Students**

Many students are impacted in significant financial ways as a result of loss of income due to a position that has been eliminated. I'd appreciate your consideration in making a contribution to the **Bruce and Kathy Pitman Fund for Student Emergencies**. We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone. If you are able, please make your contribution by visiting the [Vandal Community Relief](#) donation page. Every contribution goes directly to students to help them during this challenge time.

We are all in this together. The success of your student is important to us, like I know it is important to you. I am hopeful that you and your family remain safe and healthy during this challenging time.

Keep Calm and Vandal On.

*Blaine Eckles*

*Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*

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PS: To meet policies of our mass mailing service, we are asking parents and family members to opt in to future communications like this. This list will not be shared with specific colleges or used for general fundraising efforts. To sign up, [visit our website](#). You can unsubscribe at any point.

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