



University of Idaho

TO: University of Idaho Students, Faculty and Staff
FROM: Scott Green, President
DATE: July 16, 2020
SUBJECT: Fall Plans to Deliver Classes, Including Schedule Change after Thanksgiving

While COVID-19 continues to dominate how we go about our day-to-day activities, I am pleased at the progress we have made in shaping our plans for fall semester at the University of Idaho.

We will be delivering excellent in-person education beginning Aug. 24. It will look a bit different, of course, and will require flexibility and agility by each of us. We are in uncharted territory with COVID-19, and we need to do everything we can to both prevent spread and to have an immediate response should spread of the virus take place in our community.

We each have an obligation to make our university as safe as possible. That is why we are requiring all faculty, staff and students to acknowledge the [Healthy Vandal Pledge](#). When you log in to [VandalWeb](#), you will be prompted to read and acknowledge that you understand our safety protocols set forth in the pledge. All faculty, staff, students and visitors are expected to follow these protocols.

We are aware of rising COVID-19 cases in our state and will continue to monitor the situation closely. We will continue to rely on data and the advice of our public health officials as we navigate delivery this fall. Everyone should be prepared for the unfortunate possibility that we may need to transition quickly to

online/remote delivery should the data and advice from our public health officials change.

Schedule Change After Thanksgiving/No Winter Commencement

The most recent decision in our COVID-19 response involves instruction after Thanksgiving. Because comprehensive testing of all students is not realistic after Fall Break, and knowing many people leave during this break to visit other areas, possibly with higher instances of outbreak, we will end in-person class delivery on Friday, Nov. 20. Classes will resume on Monday, Nov. 30, using online/remote delivery exclusively. We do not intend to close any U of I location. Students wishing to return to the Moscow campus after the break to ensure the best academic outcomes may do so, and campus offices will remain open. Students residing in a fraternity or sorority chapter facility will receive guidance from their organization as to what post-Thanksgiving living options will look like. Students likely will be tested again in January for COVID-19 when returning for spring semester.

Fall semester final exams will be given online/remotely.

Unfortunately, this also means we will cancel Winter Commencement, scheduled for Dec. 12. In its place, we are planning a large commencement celebration for May 15, 2021, to honor all the students who have earned their degrees during the pandemic.

Working Remotely

All staff and faculty are expected to return to their regular work location by Aug. 1, unless they have an approved flexplace plan. Employees can work with Human Resources to request any change to regular work locations for Fall 2020 due to prior medical conditions, higher risk factors or other approved reasons. [Filling out the online form](#) will begin this process.

Classes

We are planning to deliver in-person learning in the fall for most classes. We are a destination campus, and students expect and

deserve an in-person learning experience whenever possible. Enrollments are down across the country as students evaluate whether to sit out a semester or a year. The primary determination is whether there will be live instruction at their institution. Our preference is to provide direct student/instructor interaction and the interactions that come from being together on campus, even in unique ways.

In most cases, classes will have an in-person maximum of 50 percent classroom capacity. We ask that classrooms not be rearranged. It is not feasible to maintain 6 feet of distance in the classroom and meet our classroom demand, so masks are required in the classroom during the entire class session.

Information Technology Services (ITS) has equipped an additional 147 classrooms (220 total) with Zoom-capable technology. Providing class content in as many ways as possible is important to providing the education delivery students expect. Instructors will communicate with their students to ensure all are informed of necessary details about attendance schedules, online tools, course resources, etc. Students should communicate with their instructors if they are sick and unable to attend class.

Cleaning

More frequent cleaning of all public areas, including classrooms, will be a priority. But staffing and supply constraints won't allow cleaning between every class. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will be provided in every classroom, and you are encouraged to use them.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are required in all university buildings statewide. One cloth face covering will be provided to each faculty, staff and student upon return in the fall. [Face coverings](#) include cloth masks, bandanas, scarves or any other material that covers the nose and mouth.

All faculty, staff, students and visitors across all U of I locations must use face coverings whenever in any U of I buildings, with

[limited delineated exceptions](#) or an approved accommodation from Human Resources or the Center for Disability Access and Resources.

Individuals who choose not to wear a face covering while in a campus building or in a class will be asked to don a face covering or exit the facility. Face coverings are required on campus in outdoor settings where 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Faculty members must wear a face covering or face shield while teaching. Six feet of distancing should be maintained while wearing a shield. Shields for faculty can be [requested online](#).

Testing

We will test Moscow-based students for COVID-19 as they return in August. The university is working with Gritman Medical Center to administer tests. Details about testing procedures will be sent in early August.

Students who test positive and live on campus will be isolated on campus in a facility away from other students and monitored by Idaho Public Health. Students living off campus are expected to quarantine in their own residence.

Staff and faculty, particularly those who have traveled outside our community, can ask to be tested, preferably before the testing of incoming students begins. More details will be available soon. Any staff or faculty member who tests positive is expected to quarantine according to CDC guidelines.

Faculty, staff, and students who work at U of I locations outside of Moscow should contact their local healthcare provider for testing options. U of I insurance through Blue Cross of Idaho covers COVID-19 testing as does the [Student Health Insurance Program \(SHIP\)](#).

Temperature Scanning

Prior to accessing some high-traffic buildings on the Moscow campus, you may be asked to have your temperature checked by walking through a thermal scanning device. Protocols for

these machines are being developed, and more information will be communicated soon.

Reporting Positive COVID-19 Cases

If a fellow employee or student reveals to you a possible COVID-19 exposure or positive test results outside of our university testing, you should immediately [file a VandalCARE report](#). These reports are monitored and distributed to the proper offices for follow-up and supportive response. Campus personnel have been trained by Idaho Public Health to provide support and response to those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Supervisors cannot share medical information with other employees. If someone is shown, through contact tracing, to have been exposed, those individuals will be contacted by Idaho Public Health or a member of the U of I contact tracing team.

Student Technology

A modern computing device is essential for completing online course components and finishing the semester while we are online-only after Fall Break. ITS provides [recommended specifications for personally-owned devices](#). ITS also has a limited number of devices available for checkout to students. More information on checking out devices can be found on the [ITS support portal](#).

Student computer labs will be open for the fall semester with appropriate social distancing in place. Specialty software is also available [online](#) for those unable to visit a physical lab. Please see [the ITS support portal](#) for more information.

Centers, Research Sites and Extension

Our statewide presence presents unique challenges as COVID-19 affects different areas of the state in different ways. Please work with your center executive or supervisor to ensure you are following local protocols.

Athletic Events

Fall is a prime time for sports at our university. Most of our fall-sport athletes are back on campus and are training, although with much different protocols. We are working with the NCAA and the Big Sky Conference to determine how fall sports will be administered and what the impact may be on spectators. More information will be released when it is known.

Coping During a Pandemic

I know these are challenging times, and we are all feeling pressure. Please remember mental health services are available if you are feeling overwhelmed. Faculty and staff can use the free and confidential [EAP resources](#). Students are encouraged to contact the [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 208-885-6716. If you are worried about a student or co-worker and are unsure of what to do, please file a [VandalCARE](#) report.

Website Resources

For more information, please visit the [U of I Coronavirus website](#) and review the FAQs. We continue to update this resource regularly. If your question is still unanswered, talk to your supervisor or [file a VandalCare report](#). A comprehensive U of I re-opening plan will be available soon.

The task in front of us will be difficult at times, but I am confident that by coming together as a Vandal Family, looking out for one another and doing our part to deliver the stellar, in-person education we are known for, we can and will navigate through this together.

Keep Calm and Vandal On.

Scott Green

President

president@uidaho.edu

uidaho.edu/president

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