



TO: University of Idaho Parents and Families
FROM: Blaine Eckles, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
DATE: August 10, 2020
SUBJECT: 2020 Fall Plans

The next few weeks will be busy for you, your student and the Vandal Family as we prepare to start the Fall semester on Monday, Aug. 24. As you look to spend the last few weeks of summer at home with your student, I want to share some of the things we have been working on to prepare for your student's arrival.

If you are sending your student off to the university for the first time, I encourage you to visit the [Vandal Welcome](#) website where you can review the new student orientation schedule and learn more about living options and plans within each to mitigate COVID-19. We also have a virtual orientation specifically designed for parents and family members!

Students choosing to join a fraternity or sorority can learn more about the individual plan each chapter has to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Check out the [Fraternity and Sorority Life Recruitment](#) page for additional information.

Students moving into [Housing and Residence Life](#) will be able to do so over a period of five days, starting Wednesday, Aug. 19. Students must [reserve a time](#) to move into the residence halls.

Typically, we enjoy having parents and family members remain on campus for the first couple of days after your student arrives. In another effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we encourage you to help your student move in and then head home as soon as you are ready to do so. This is where your student's experience as a college student begins. The time has come for you to step back so that your student can step forward into her/his Vandal future.

We highly recommend your student remain at the university until Thanksgiving Break. I recognize this is a long period of time and can be difficult for students (and their family members!), but traveling during a pandemic, sometimes to places with higher infectious rates of COVID-19, may mean unnecessary risk. By remaining here, those attending classes in Moscow help to create a "bubble" whereby we all may be successful. We can help any students who experience home sickness. I mention later in this communication a great resource that can help them with that.

You are invited to participate in a Student and Parent and Family Town Hall from 6-7 p.m. Pacific time Thursday, Aug. 13. This session will provide an overview of institutional plans for Fall 2020 and allow for questions of a panel.

You must [register in advance](#) for this webinar.

Please [submit online any questions in advance](#).

Healthy Vandals Campaign

To help prepare and educate your student on ways they can mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the university created the [Healthy Vandals Campaign](#). This campaign underscores the efforts the institution is taking to create as safe and successful fall semester as possible for your student.

The On-Campus Experience

Everyone is required to wear a face covering while in any of our university buildings. This is true for classrooms, the Library, the Student Recreation Center, residence halls, and all other buildings. I recommend your student arrive with at least ***two face coverings***. While we will be providing every student with a cloth face cover, having additional ones will allow for regular washing. We will have hand sanitizer stations in our buildings in addition to daily cleaning of all buildings and classroom spaces. I encourage your student to bring hand sanitizer with them when engaging around campus. Using hand sanitizer, as well as washing hands regularly and wearing face coverings when around others, are proven ways in which we can all make a difference.

The [Healthy Vandal Pledge](#) requires all members of the campus community, including your student, to acknowledge steps that can be taken to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and the responsibility we all share in creating a healthy, successful campus.

Check out the [Vandals Have It Covered](#) educational video that

student leaders have created to help educate one another.

Classroom Experience

We are a destination, residential campus and students expect and deserve an in-person learning experience whenever possible. We do plan to deliver in-person learning in the fall for most classes. In most cases, classes will have an in-person maximum of 50 percent classroom capacity. Many of our classes have both an in-person and online option, known as Hyflex, where your student will spend part of their week in class, and other parts online. Other classes may be all in-person or all online. We are also moving some classes into large event spaces to decrease density. Face coverings are required for the entire class session, and any student not wearing one will not be allowed in in-person classes and should instead engage in online options. We have also moved many classes into our large event spaces, such as the International Ballroom and Vandal Ballroom, for increased space among students.

Information Technology Services (ITS) 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 students to ensure all are informed of necessary details about attendance schedules, online tools, course resources, etc.

More frequent cleaning of all public areas, including classrooms, will be a priority. Classrooms will be cleaned daily, and high-use classrooms will be cleaned more often than that. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will be provided in every classroom, and students will be encouraged to use them regularly.

Schedule Change After Thanksgiving

We know that most students travel away from university locations during Thanksgiving break. Knowing this travel occurs, possibly to areas with higher instances of COVID-19, we will end in-person class delivery on Friday, Nov. 20. Classes will resume on Monday, Nov. 30, using online/remote delivery exclusively. Fall semester final exams will be given online/remotely.

Once students leave, we are encouraging them to remain away from the university until the start of Spring 2021 semester.

We do not intend to close any U of I locations and recognize that some students need to return to finish the semester. Students wishing to return to the Moscow campus after the break to ensure the best academic outcomes may do so. Students residing in a fraternity or sorority chapter facility will receive guidance from their organization about post-Thanksgiving living options.

It is our intent to test students for COVID-19 again in January 2021 when they return for the spring semester. Additional information about this will be shared with your student later in the fall semester.

The Holiday [Break Bus](#) program will continue this year, assisting students traveling to/from campus during the Fall Break and Spring Break. It will operate at reduced seating capacity and is a great, affordable way to get students from the Moscow campus to Southern & South Eastern Idaho and over to Portland.

Unfortunately, remaining remote/online after Thanksgiving means we have canceled Winter 2020 Commencement, which was 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.

Testing Information and Where to Ask Your COVID-19 Questions

We will test Moscow-based students for COVID-19 at no charge as they return in August. The university is working with Gritman Medical Center to administer the tests. Details about testing procedures have already been emailed to your student.

Students are encouraged to sign up for testing as soon as they are able and are encouraged to do so on arrival to Moscow.

More information about the testing process is available on the [U of I COVID-19 website](#).

Questions about the testing process, or any COVID-19 related question, can be emailed to: covid19questions@uidaho.edu.

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

Students who attend classes at U of I locations outside of Moscow should contact their local healthcare provider for testing options. The Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP) covers COVID-19 testing. For additional health insurance questions, please contact the [Student Health Insurance office](#).

Temperature Scanning

Prior to accessing some high-traffic areas on the Moscow campus (such as dining locations), your student may have their temperature checked by walking through a thermal scanning device. This is to help identify individuals who have an elevated temperature.

Reporting Positive COVID-19 Cases

Communication about the health of our campus community is important. If an individual on campus contracts COVID-19, we want to hear about it. You or your student can let us know by filing a [VandalCARE report](#). These reports allow us to connect with your student to provide additional support (such as how to communicate with a faculty member about an absence from class).

It is important that you know we will contact parents of a student only in an emergency. While contracting COVID-19 is serious and concerning, we will look to your student to share their diagnosis with you unless they are in an extreme medical emergency. This privacy for your student is required by federal law. Rest assured, we will reach out to your student to help them, part of which will be encouraging them communicate with you.

Campus personnel have been trained by Idaho Public Health to provide support and response to those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. If someone is shown, through contact tracing, to have been exposed and is at risk of developing COVID-19, they will be contacted by Idaho Public Health or a member of the U of I contact tracing team and be given guidance on next steps.

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. Information Technology Services (ITS) provides recommended specifications for personally owned devices. ITS also has a limited number of devices available for checkout to students through the [Student Technology Center](#).

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 visit the [ITS support portal](#) for more information.

Athletic Events

Fall is a prime time for sports at our university. The Big Sky announced that football conference games will move to spring. More details about athletics will be released as they are finalized.

Coping During Stressful Times

These are challenging, stressful times for many. Your student has access to outstanding mental health services through the [Counseling & Testing Center](#). In addition, through the [Dean of Students Office](#), we have Student Support Case Managers that follow-up on received CARE reports, which allows us to directly reach out and connect with a student of concern. If you are worried about your student and are unsure of what to do, please file a [VandalCARE report](#).

Website Resources

For more information on what the university is doing in response

to COVID-19, please visit the U of I [Coronavirus website](#) and review the FAQs. We update this resource regularly and post all our COVID-19-related communications to students, faculty and staff. All questions regarding our COVID-19 response should be sent to covid19questions@uidaho.edu.

Staff and faculty have been working hard over the past few months to create an opportunity for your student to be successful this fall. But it will take the efforts of your student, too, for the university to be successful. Please encourage them to do their part and know that while your student may be leaving home and your family, they are coming to campus as part of the larger Vandal Family. It is our collective responsibility to look out for one another and do our part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

I suggest you set aside time over the next few weeks to create lasting family memories with your student before she/he starts the Fall semester. These experiences will sustain your student until they return home at Thanksgiving break.

I look forward to seeing many of you and your student(s) on campus in a few short weeks. Until then, my best to you and as always,

Go Vandals!

Blaine Eckles

Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

deanofstudents@uidaho.edu

uidaho.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students

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