



# University of Idaho

**TO:** University of Idaho Students, Faculty and Staff  
**FROM:** Scott Green, President  
Torrey Lawrence, Provost and Executive Vice President  
**DATE:** Feb. 8, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Idaho Moves to Stage 3, We Must Remain Vigilant

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We are re-evaluating many decisions for spring events at the University of Idaho after last week's announcement by Gov. Brad Little that moved Idaho into [Stage 3](#) of the Idaho Rebounds plan. We are also hearing positive reports from our partners at Gritman Medical Center and Idaho Public Health about administration of vaccines.

Meanwhile, our diligence on the Moscow campus continues to be shown in COVID-19 testing results. Last week we tested 529 people with a positivity rate of 1.13%. We need to remain committed to the [Healthy Vandal Pledge](#). Even if you receive the vaccine or have previously tested positive for the virus, the expectation remains the same, that we look out for each other until the threat has passed.

## **Spring Break**

Following Spring Break, classes will begin again on Monday, March 22, in the method indicated in the course catalog. We will do a complete COVID-19 retest of all students attending class in-person upon return from Spring Break. Those who have previously tested positive or completed vaccination — and have it documented in their student account — will not be required to test. Our efforts at the beginning of this semester to make sure all students attending in person are tested and the related

shutting down of access to university systems for those not following the protocol resulted in a clear and accurate list of those attending in person. Our testing capacity can handle the volume of students returning from Spring Break in a matter of days. We continue to have no cases of COVID-19 traced to a classroom. We are confident this plan can be executed without the need to move to online-only instruction.

We encourage those traveling for Spring Break to remain mindful of the responsibility to each other and maintain healthy habits while away from the university. We also ask for your participation in random surveillance testing when you receive the invitation. We are all weary of testing, but surveillance testing is the most effective tool available to help us identify any hot spots and proactively protect our community from the unchecked spread of the virus. Students are welcome to remain in Moscow and on campus during Spring Break. Residence Halls and most Greek chapter houses will be open and some student activities will be available.

We continue to monitor the spread of the virus and its impact on our community. Should the situation change, we will respond as quickly as possible. This is a team effort that will be successful if we all do our part.

## **Commencement**

It is our goal to have [in-person commencement ceremonies](#) in May. This depends greatly on the protocols of the reopening stage of the state at the time, but we plan to provide multiple ceremonies in Moscow, and at other sites. We want to celebrate this achievement together, with families and friends, but we need to do it safely. More information will be available as decisions are finalized.

## **Vaccine**

We are working with others in Idaho higher education to advocate for front-line faculty and staff to be included in earlier stages of the vaccination rollout. While we recognize the importance of vaccinating those most at risk first and getting as

many people as possible vaccinated in an orderly fashion, there is no doubt that vaccinating those in our classrooms and interacting directly with the public is important to controlling the spread of the virus.

Finally, congratulations to the [students who received \\$100 gift cards](#) to the VandalStore for completing their required Spring semester COVID-19 testing before the first day of classes. While these 50 students won the random drawing, we value each of you in your continued effort to engage in testing and other protocols to keep our community safe. We are all looking forward to a successful semester and celebrating the achievement of our students, faculty and staff. We have some work to do before we can celebrate, but we are on the right path. Thank you for putting us on that path.

Keep Calm and Vandal On.

*Scott Green*

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