



University of Idaho

TO: University of Idaho Students, Faculty and Staff

FROM: Scott Green, President
Torrey Lawrence, Provost and Executive Vice President

DATE: Nov. 22, 2021

SUBJECT: County Data Will Drive Mask Mandates

Happy Thanksgiving! We have much to be thankful for as we head into Fall Break, and we sincerely hope each of you enjoys some downtime and can reflect on the amazing way our Vandal Family has come together and succeeded in the past year.

The end of the semester is a few weeks away and we want to head into finals and Winter Commencement healthy. The metrics in Latah County are headed in the right direction, with hospitalizations down and the positivity rate declining. But discussions with Gritman Medical Center and Public Health reveal that our positivity rate is still high enough that masks will be required upon your return after Thanksgiving. However, we will not wait three weeks to reevaluate the policy and instead will evaluate weekly.

We recognize our state is large and every county is different. So, while the mask requirement applies to Moscow and offices in Latah County, we are empowering our center executive officers, research center administrators and Extension leads across the state to determine whether masks are still required in their work

areas. We expect these decisions will be data driven and, as such, expect most counties are not in a position to discontinue the practice.

Two students headed into the break with good news. They received the final tuition credit incentives drawn last week from the pool of 4,405 students who submitted proof of vaccination. Nicholas Wells, a senior civil engineering major from Nampa, won \$1,000, and Noah Lucé, a graduate student in theater arts from Santa Cruz, California, won the \$5,000 credit. Noah called it a “game changer” for him. Thank you to these students and to all of you who have worked so hard to keep our university healthy.

Vault tests remain available free of charge on the Moscow campus. Beginning Monday, Nov. 29, the tests can be picked up noon to 2 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center.

We do not have any further information about either the federal vaccination mandate or the state’s legal challenge of the mandate. The courts have agreed to a hearing in early December on the challenge to the federal contractor mandate and we expect more information and guidance at that time. As such, we have not imposed a vaccination mandate. But, if implemented, the federal mandate requires the second dose of Moderna or Pfizer be administered on or before Jan. 4 — and the proof submitted. Johnson & Johnson is one dose, and therefore could be administered Jan. 4, but it can be more difficult to find. All vaccines are free and [many pharmacies administer them](#). We continue to hold vaccine clinics weekly [on the Moscow campus](#). If the mandate is imposed, the university will have a process for religious and medical exemptions. Students who are not also employees would not be impacted by this vaccine mandate.

Thank you for your patience and for doing your part in helping us

navigate the pandemic. We are truly grateful for each of you this Thanksgiving.

Keep Calm and Vandal On.

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