



**TO:** University of Idaho Employees  
**FROM:** Scott Green, President  
**DATE:** Nov. 14, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** University of Phoenix Affiliation Gets Thumbs Up

Last week, the accrediting body for the University of Phoenix (UOPX) approved the continuation of their accreditation under the proposed ownership of Four Three Education, Inc., and thus the affiliation with the University of Idaho. This is great news and a big step closer to finalizing the affiliation.

The Higher Learning Commission has accredited UOPX since 1978 and re-accredited UOPX in 2023 with no findings (for context, U of I had five findings in its last accreditation visit, which is considered a very positive result). We continue to work with our accrediting body, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and will meet with them soon to ensure their support.

A judge recently ruled on the U of I Board of Regents' summary judgment motion to dismiss the Idaho attorney general's (AG) complaint, which claimed a violation of the state's open meeting laws during the board's approval of establishing a non-profit entity to purchase UOPX. The motion was largely successful in that the judge's order dismissed the AG's motion for a continuance, which would have delayed justice. The order also dismissed claims of violations relating to the agenda for the

May 18 board meeting and the lawfulness of the April 25 meeting. He partially found for the Board of Regents for the May 15 meeting, but allowed the case to continue on a technical question of whether the board reasonably believed that competition existed when the meeting was held. The board believes it will prevail on this question as well.

UOPX President Chris Lynne and I traveled to Washington, D.C., recently to meet with the U.S. Department of Education. These conversations were positive, and we believe telling our story to this important agency and receiving their feedback will help us navigate a successful closing and future together in a way that conforms with the department's expectations.

Working groups kicked off their efforts last week. Nominations for participation exceeded our expectations — thank you to all who volunteered or nominated others. Because of the volume of volunteers and the scope of work, not only will there be a general working group focused on academic program and pathway opportunities, but a second working group will focus on student services. The Programs and Pathways group has 24 members representing every college, as well as staff and students. It is chaired by Ben Hunter and Andy Fields. The student services group is chaired by Dean Kahler and Blaine Eckles and will launch after Thanksgiving. The possibilities available through this affiliation are endless and I look forward to seeing what these groups bring forward.

I also see evidence that the competitive landscape of higher education is already changing. You have heard me say before that we have an enrollment cliff coming and we need to seriously consider how we will prepare. This cliff is represented by an emerging trend — out-of-state universities actively recruiting in our state, intent on enticing our students to leave Idaho. While pressure from universities from regional and neighboring states has intensified, we now see universities far from the Pacific Northwest competing for our talent. Recently, the University of Tennessee joined Arizona and Arizona State at an Idaho Falls recruitment event. The competition for a limited number of students is growing and we will feel it. Continuing our

commitment to Idaho's traditional students while expanding our scope and addressing the needs of adult learners has never been more important. Fortifying our position as we enter the enrollment cliff has never been more essential.

As the close of this transaction nears, I find myself more excited each day about the potential of our affiliation to better position our university. I believe that, once again, we will emerge from this next challenge stronger than when we entered it.

Go Vandals!

**Scott Green**

President

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