



University of Idaho

Office of the President

TO: University of Idaho Faculty, Staff and Students

FROM: Chuck Staben, President

DATE: April 3, 2018

SUBJECT: We hear you. We must do better. We will.

Our students need to feel safe, supported and heard – especially when the circumstances involve assault and sexually inappropriate behavior.

During the past few weeks, we have had many conversations with members of our Vandal community about how we handled sexual assault cases in 2012 and 2013, what we've done since, additional changes that need to be made, and how we will move forward to ensure we have the trust of current, future and former students.

This is important to me, to our faculty and staff and, possibly most of all, to our students. Because of this, the University of Idaho will contract with an outside entity to review what happened in 2012 and 2013, as well as what has been done since regarding sexual assault reporting and what we can improve in the future.

To aid in accomplishing an objective and thorough review, I have put Athletic Director Rob Spear on administrative leave for

60 days, effective immediately. This was not an easy decision to make, but it is in the best interest of our university community. This decision comes as part of a broader effort to better understand the situation within the athletic department and our university at the time of the incidents. Our intention is to evaluate every aspect of the serious issues brought to light to ensure we do not repeat them.

During this period of examination, we will address our future with specific attention to the absolute importance of student safety and the united mission we have to care for our Vandal family. The areas of focus include:

- Continuing an internal review and engaging an external investigator regarding behaviors of concern.
- Engaging an external consultant to help us better understand and bolster our training and support for sexual assault prevention, reporting and response. Our goal is to create and maintain an inclusive community where our students feel supported for as long as they call U of I home.
- Hiring additional help to address the workload in our Office of Civil Rights and Investigations. Another position may be hired in the coming months and we will be providing any additional support this team needs in the interim.

During this time, I have asked Pete Isakson, associate athletic director, to serve as acting athletic director to provide continuity in day-to-day operations inside the athletics department, and Brian Foisy, vice president for finance and administration, to work with the athletics business office to manage the finance functions of the department.

At the end of 60 days, we will have more information on next steps.

As a university, we have a commitment to staff, donors, alumni, research partners and others. But there is no greater responsibility than to provide our students with the best college experience possible, which includes offering them support, especially when they need it most.

I take my role as president seriously and believe addressing any issue that threatens to pull our Vandal family apart is ultimately my responsibility. It is our responsibility to provide all services that are required to assist our students who may face difficult challenges. We must hear and consider student concerns and provide services that assist our students in a meaningful way when they experience challenges. Any time the actions of someone at the university are questioned, it is our job to gather facts and use those facts to make the best decisions possible.

We appreciate all members of the Vandal Family who have reached out to make their voices heard as part of this important conversation. I want you to know that we hear you and know that we must do better. I promise you that we will.

Chuck Staben
President