

February 6, 2007

Vandal Parents Newsletter

Spring semester is in full swing and the first round of exams has begun. We are experiencing one of our colder winters in several years as the snow has continuously covered campus for many weeks. A little sunshine would be a welcome guest to the Palouse.

February is heavily scheduled with significant and varied educational opportunities.

- Last night, Martin Luther King III inspired a large audience last night with a message about social justice, peace and civility.
- The actress Patty Duke is in residence at the University of Idaho for the next two weeks. She is giving 6 performances in the Hartung Theater of "Billion Dollar Baby".
- On February 21st-24th, the UI Jazz Festival will fill the University of Idaho and many downtown venues with great jazz. This would be a great year for you to come to Moscow if you love jazz.
- On February 28th, we will host an etiquette dinner for students seeking to sharpen their social skills. It is a great evening of food, fun, and useful information. You may want to encourage your daughter or son to take advantage of this opportunity. More information and reservations can be made through the Office of Career and Professional Planning at 208-885-6121 or by email at capp@uidaho.edu.

Parents in the Anchorage area are invited to a Vandal Parents reception on Sunday, February 11, 2007. We will meet at 7:30 pm at the Captain Cook Hotel. Bring goodies and cards to make a Valentine's Day gift bag for your Vandal. We will bring the gift bags to campus and make sure that your Vandal receives some unexpected love from you on Valentine's Day. The following evening, we are hosting a Vandal Vision program for prospective students and their parents. This presentation will take place on February 12th at 7:00pm at the Captain Cook Hotel. Encourage potential Vandals to join us!

You have nurtured great kids! More than a 100 students want to dedicate their spring break to helping others. They will travel to the New Orleans and Mississippi to help people put their lives together in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This group will include 15 law students who will provide free legal advice to those who could not afford professional services. A small group of UI students will also travel to Tennessee to work on a Habitat for Humanity project. They will help others and will be changed by the experience.

The Alternative Spring Break service opportunity is a campus-wide initiative. Many units are making substantial commitments to make this experience possible. We are also grateful to parent Randy Smith of Boise who is helping support this trip. He is contributing a many essential materials such as tools, face masks, gloves, tool belts and

eye protection. Randy's daughter took part in the Waveland Mississippi trip last year. Thank you, Randy!

Here is a campus life observation and I admit that I am an outsider on this issue. I am not a member of the "digital generation". I don't have an I Pod and I don't have a place of Facebook or MySpace. I do have a cell phone but I use it sparingly. My laptop and e-mail are essential tools and I am grateful for the technology.

So here are a few observations.....as an outsider. There seems to be decreasing levels of relationship, face-to face interaction and increases in social isolation. A majority of students who walk through the Commons are talking to someone else on cell phones or listening to music on their I Pods. There are fewer "hellos" and fewer face-to-face conversations. Students create their own digital world with cell phones, I Pods and laptops.

A couple years ago, two roommates were having a furious disagreement and the RA was asked to mediate. He learned that the entire dispute had been taking place via e-mail. The roommates were not talking to each other even though they shared the same 120 square feet. We needed to help our young people to develop confidence to talk to one another....

The nature of relationships and expected communication is changing. We are encountering growing challenges equipping students with interpersonal communication skills and comfort with social relationships. Certainly these trends are not limited to college campuses.

We have had a pretty successful fall and winter break bus program which has provided safe and affordable transportation for student to south and southeastern Idaho and, beginning this year, to the Portland area via the Tri-Cities. There will also be a break bus to south and southeastern Idaho for spring break which departs on Saturday, March 10th. For more information, go to Holiday Break Bus from our website at <http://www.students.uidaho.edu/dos>.

The UI men's indoor track team is ranked 16th in the nation. Russ Winger leads the team being among the top two shot putters in the USA!

Sincerely,

Bruce M. Pitman
Vice Provost for Student Affairs