

President Chuck Staben
October 21, 2016

2016 All-Advisory Board Breakfast

Welcome

Thank you Cruz Botello for your remarks. I know we value your leadership and appreciate the way you've stepped up to the role of president.

Thank you all for coming today, I am glad to have the opportunity to welcome you to campus.

I appreciate that you're able to offer your time and talent to make our institution better - for students, for research, and for outreach and engagement.

I want to look at how our institution is doing this year.

How are we succeeding in our mission?

What are the accomplishments we can celebrate over the past year?

I want to share how we are working together to move our university forward, and what the bright future of the University of Idaho looks like for our students, our university community, our state, and our world.

Our National Research University

UI is a unique institution. We are Idaho's premier national research university.

It is important for us to remember what that means - the impact we have, and why our work matters.

First, the University of Idaho is *the best choice* for students who want an unmatched value in higher education - an outstanding academic experience at an affordable price that prepares them for great jobs and bright futures.

That work gets noticed.

This summer Money magazine named UI one of its "Best Colleges," alongside the best colleges and universities in the country, quality of education, affordability and outcomes. For what it's worth, they also named us the Best College in Idaho.

According to the Washington Monthly, UI is again one of America's top 100 national universities (No. 84), based on student success, innovative research, and public service. We're also a "Best Bang for Your Buck" college based on the return on investment a UI degree offers graduates.

And this September PayScale's new 2016-2017 College Salary Report highlighted the success of our graduates, leading among Idaho public institutions in early-career earnings and among all Idaho institutions in mid-career earnings. We also award the highest percentage of STEM degrees in our state - 21 percent.

The federal government's College Scorecard, released in fall 2015, was updated last month.

It offers a way to compare institutions based on measures such as average annual costs, six-year graduation rate, and financial success after college. The data is drawn from those students who received federal financial aid - more than half of our students and a very important population for us to serve.

To show you how this works, I've selected three institutions ... at random.

The black bar in the middle represents the national average. For average annual cost, you want to be below the bar. For graduation rate and salary after attending, you want to be above the bar.

As you can see, UI outperforms the national average in all three cases, and is the best option for each among the three public, four-year universities in Idaho on every measure.

If you read the Friday Letter or saw my recent State of the University address, you know that I'm trying to spread the word about the College Scorecard every chance I get, and I hope you will join me in that effort. It is easy to understand, and the averages don't lie.

We are Idaho's research leader, with double the research expenditures of all other institutions in Idaho. That is not the only way to measure scholarship impact, but it is very telling.

I will talk more about our research, scholarly activity, and creative work in a moment, but for right now, I want to share that this year, for the first time, we have crossed \$100 million in research expenditures, a significant milestone for UI.

We've made some fairly high profile, controversial changes this year in order to improve and clarify why we do some of the important things we do.

For example, we have refocused the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival on the student experience and the teaching and competitive experiences within that.

We will still bring in prominent headliners for the Festival, of course, but we will connect the Festival more closely to our educational mission.

We are looking forward to this year's 50th anniversary celebration of the Jazz Festival, the only National Medal of Arts winner among public universities and a great source of pride and identity for our institution.

CLASS Dean Andy Kersten, Torrey Lawrence, and to Vern and Vanessa Seilert are spearheading this change. I appreciate the role of the Jazz Festival Advisory Board in helping ensure this program remains a vibrant, essential part of our university.

Our plan to move from FBS to FCS football has spurred a lot of conversation among our boosters and nationally.

I want to remind everyone what our options were as we considered this important decision - independence at the FBS level, or affiliation with a stable conference at the FCS level, with the opportunity for regional rivalries, beginning in 2018.

Ultimately, the Big Sky Conference is the most appropriate place for our football program, joining our other very successful sports already in that conference.

Our other sports already enjoy success in the Big Sky. Congratulations to our women's basketball team, women's golf, men's golf, women's soccer, and women's tennis for winning championships last year.

I believe in the value of intercollegiate athletics and in our student-athletes, across all our sports. I attend every home football game and many away games. I am thrilled by our team's success this year.

The decision to make this move is about what's viable in the long-term for the student-athlete experience at UI, for the student experience as part of a dynamic campus, and for our fans and the larger community.

Change is not easy, but this is a move that had to be made, and it had to be made now to ensure a successful transition to being nationally competitive for FCS football championships.

I want to thank Coach Petrino and Athletic Director Rob Spear for their support of this difficult move.

We have two years to make the transition to FCS football. I encourage you to come support our team at their games. The team is fun to watch and they give it their all, so please join Mary Beth and me at the Kibbie Dome. It is also a great opportunity to enjoy our unrivalled Vandal Marching Band, truly the "Sound of Idaho."

Our university is doing well. *How do we build on this success?* The recently completed Strategic Plan is our roadmap for the next nine years, the duration of my presidency. It lays out ambitious goals and metrics by which to gauge our progress.

I want to thank Provost and Executive Vice President John Wiencek and Strategic Planning committee members for engaging our entire university in developing what I think is a great strategy for moving our university forward. John, please stand. Thank you for your hard work.

The fundamental and foundational messaging about this university that we've been using over the last year embodies what UI has done for many years, perhaps since our founding. We used the words transformative education, ideas that matter, and building our team.

These concepts are captured in the framework of our new Strategic Plan. I will use the strategic plan framework in the rest of my presentation, and I hope it provides a common language for our university community as we discuss our mission and progress.

Goal One: Innovate

One of the metrics in the strategic plan is a goal to move UI from Carnegie R2 or “higher research activity” status to R1 “highest research activity.”

We are currently Idaho’s only R2 “higher research activity” university - other in-state four-year universities are R3 “moderate research activity” institutions. There are 81 public universities classified R1 - elite company. This is a multifactorial rating, including measures such as PhD graduates, though expenditures play a large role. For example, the R1 institution with the lowest research expenditures is New Mexico State University, at \$134 million.

Achieving this rating is not, in itself, important. But it is a marker for the excellence and impact we want to have, and it represents an intersection of institutional goals and interests.

Teaching and research are complementary, not competitive, as we think about R1 status. Research is an important draw for prospective students, both graduate and undergraduate - it signals the availability of the kind of robust hands-on and applied learning experiences that are in-demand in the market.

We are pleased to welcome new leadership to our university. One very recent addition is Janet Nelson, our new Vice President for Research and Economic Development ... Please stand and wave so we can see you.

- This position is the ambassador for research in the state of Idaho, given the university’s role as the land-grant research leader.
- Vice President Nelson has extensive experience working with national laboratories - a key priority for her moving forward as we forge closer ties with the Idaho National Laboratory.

I want to share two examples of important research-focused initiatives.

- Rock Creek Ranch, near Sun Valley, allows us to engage with that community on an issue of particular interest to Idaho - use of rangeland for grazing, wildlife, and recreation. Rock Creek is a partnership with the Wood River Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy, and a combined effort of CALS and CNR. Look for a very interesting GPS-wireless fence project next year. I hope we lead the West toward the elimination of cattle fences. Thanks to Kurt Pregitzer, CNR dean, and Michael Parrella, CALS dean, and John Foltz for leading this partnership forward.

We are also moving forward with planning a Dairy/Livestock Center. Twenty years ago, Idaho’s agricultural economy was dominated by crops, especially potatoes. Today, the greatest ag value lies in dairy and livestock. For example, the problems of nutrient management and water use could threaten the sustainability of this industry. UI can play a leadership role in studying these issues as well as efficient production as we face the challenge of providing protein to the world. A special thanks to John Foltz for coordinating this university-wide project.

This year, we established an Undergraduate Research Office - essential to promoting and coordinating undergraduate research; high impact learning possible only at Idaho’s great research university. Thanks to faculty member David Pfeiffer, our first Director.

Last year also saw the successful initiation of the Vandal Ideas Project. We engaged the creativity of the campus very broadly, from biological engineering to art, by seeding five projects with a total of \$300,000 from institutional funds - an investment in our own excellence.

I think we found those projects, and I am looking forward to seeing and sharing the results in the next year.

Goal Two: Engage

Our second strategic plan goal is "Engage." We engage across the state in many ways, but a critical focus is changing Idaho's college-going culture and Go-On rate.

We initiated and led the state's Direct Admit program, which offers college admittance based on qualifications (GPA) for high school seniors. Direct Admit letters have gone out this year as we work with the State Board of Education to improve this program.

Let me share with you just one anecdote, from a State Board survey we just got back. One student respondent, from Boise and Boise High School, wasn't sure he'd be able to go to college. His mom wanted him to, but his high school career had been "up and down," in his words. He said, "there were some times when I definitely thought I'd drop out of high school and wouldn't go on [to college]."

The letter he received informing him that he was admitted to the University of Idaho as part of the Direct Admissions program was the first time he'd imagined our university was a possibility. He didn't think he could get accepted. Just didn't know.

He's now a freshman, and he wrote "I'm super happy at college now. I'm super excited about the next four years. I love my fraternity, I'm having a great time. This wouldn't have happened without my letter. I'm excited for what the future has to hold."

This year we want to again send a strong message that *we believe in the ability and bright future of every qualified prospective Idaho student*. We want more students who didn't realize how "super" college can be.

This year's iteration of our Vandal Ideas Project will build off Goal Two for a VIP: Engage program.

This year's approach asks faculty, staff, and students to engage their creativity to enhance the Go-on rate. I can imagine ideas for dual credit, K12 pathway programs, and student ambassador programs - and others - that could address this challenge. I'm looking forward to seeing great ideas. We will have more details about the roll-out of this program soon.

Last, in January we released an EMSI study that measured UI'S economic impact for Idaho as \$1.1 billion annually. Much of that is driven by the wage differential our Vandal alumni enjoy.

Find that study on my website, uidaho.edu/president. We should be proud of contributions we make toward our state's prosperity, and hope to grow it.

Goal Three: Transform

Our third Strategic Plan goal, Transform, is our key educational area. This is about the impact we have on students - those who are here already, and those who can succeed here if we reach them.

The first step is to get students here. For Fall 2016, UI has *eliminated its application fees (\$60) for Idaho residents*.

For many students, especially first-generation students, the admissions process can present paperwork and financial hurdles. Getting a college degree is like running a race: Students need to cross the finish line, but we can lower some of the hurdles.

That \$60 matters - this fall I talked to at least one Vandal freshman, also from the Boise area, who applied during a time when we'd temporarily waived the application fee. He would not have applied if he'd needed \$60 - just didn't have that cash on hand. He'd be sitting at home right now.

Foregoing that application fee revenue is an investment in the lives of young people and in the future education and prosperity of our state. We can't afford to have more students sitting at home.

We are also promoting the prior-prior year FAFSA changes. Starting October 1, all US citizens can now use "last year's taxes" to determine eligibility for federal financial aid.

We have moved our Financial Aid priority date up to Dec. 1 (from Feb. 1) so that students have their financial aid awards in hand as they select colleges. They and their families can spend the holidays learning more about institutions and making the best choice based on their goals and their financial situations.

We are also focusing on retention. Last year our freshman-to-sophomore retention rate was 80 percent. I want to continue to improve our advising and all aspects of the student experience to keep the students we already have.

As we improve retention, we will also improve graduation rates. They are already the best in the state among public institutions, but we can do even more.

Goal Three: Transform

So: How is it all working? We are turning the corner with incoming students.

We are seeing an increase in new first-year freshmen, especially Idaho freshmen, linked to our strategic enrollment marketing efforts and Direct Admit implementation.

We are seeing an increase in transfer students, including Idaho transfer student, linked to our VandaLink transfer programs - agreements with CWI, CSI, NIC and EITC that provide a more seamless transfer for students.

I'm also very glad that we are making gains among underrepresented groups, including multiracial Hispanic and Native American students. Those groups now account for 23.2 percent of our student body, a significant increase from last year.

Our advisory councils helped us analyze the challenges and implement solutions - the Native American Advisory Council, the Latino Advisory Council, and the President's Diversity Council.

We also rely on our advisory boards to give us guidance and shape our efforts in this critical area. Thank you for your work.

Finally, we are seeing an increase in Idaho resident students - about 7 percent this year. We are the state's land-grant university. We are the *University of Idaho*, and have a special responsibility to educate the citizenry of this state, and we are very proud to fulfill that responsibility.

We have a lot of work to do, but we are gaining ground in our enrollment goals, and I am excited about the impact that has for our institution and for the citizens and state of Idaho.

Goal Four: Cultivate

Although "Cultivate" has a broader meaning in our strategic plan, we are working to improve the university as a community.

I want our institution to feel good about the important work that we do together.

We learned a lot about challenges from a workforce standpoint in our Great Colleges Survey. I shared that survey with our employees at the State of the University because I want to address it head-on.

To address our challenges, we've put together an Institutional Performance and Effectiveness committee to monitor our progress on a broad range of metrics.

We're also working toward more transparency in our budgeting through our University Budget and Finance Committee.

And Vice President Brian Foisy and Human Resources Executive Director Greg Walters have positioned us to implement market-based compensation to attract and retain talented faculty and staff.

Facilities

This is an exciting time on our campus. We have new facilities that add capacity, resources and technology.

Facilities are an important investment we make in achieving a higher level of excellence. They help recruit and retain talented students and sought-after researchers and teachers.

They provide the spaces and the resources for a transformative education and for research and scholarship that matters.

I am anxious to see the IRIC building open in Spring 2017. I've charged Janet Nelson, Vice President for Research to work with Provost Wiencek to use this new building as a catalyst to move our interdisciplinary work forward, and I cannot wait to see the results.

Our College of Education building celebrated its grand opening last Friday. I am happy to welcome Dean Carr-Chelman to campus ... and I know that she and the College will capitalize on the new building to enhance teacher education, and to prepare the next generation of leaders in education and movement sciences.

We're investing in upgrading our living spaces, with our recent remodel of the Wallace Complex. We needed to remodel these spaces to be even more competitive for today's students.

We have the state's largest library on our Moscow campus, a critical resource for education and for scholarship. But, the library is also the heart of campus, and if you have not yet visited the first floor remodel - envisioned by Dean Lynn Baird - and completed this year, I encourage you to do so.

It's great to see students, even on Sunday when Mary Beth and I usually walk through, studying there. Sometimes alone, often together using the new collaborative learning spaces - I just love seeing students working together, preparing themselves for the challenges of tomorrow.

WWAMI has undergone a major increase in student numbers and a major curriculum change. Now, 40 students per year enter the program and spend their first two years on the Palouse. Idaho has a critical doctor shortage - 49th in the nation per capita. To address these challenges, we needed to expand our facilities.

VP for Infrastructure Dan Ewart has worked with Jeff Seegmiller, WWAMI Director, and with Gritman Medical Center to provide the facilities we need - which will be partly in the new Gritman Building and partly in the refurbished Business Technology Incubator Building.

We are devoting \$3 million of UI funds and requesting an additional \$2.4 million from the Permanent Building Fund Advisory Council, our highest capital priority before them.

Strategic Vision

These are big goals, as you can tell.

But we are a brave and bold institution. I want to show you a video that communicates some of what I have told you today about our vision for the University of Idaho.

VIDEO: <https://www.uidaho.edu/news/here-we-have-idaho-magazine/ui-future>

I hope you share that optimism about the direction of our university, what we do, and why it matters so much for our world.

As advisory board members, each of you play a role in that success.

I thank you for your work and dedication.

Idaho Arena

Finally, our highest fundraising priority is the Idaho Arena. This is a critical piece of the future landscape of our university. This is the facility we need to ensure our intercollegiate court sports can flourish. But it will also be a home for other events - from Convocation to rock concerts.

I remember meeting with Rob Spear in January 2014, before I became President, and agreeing that this was a top priority.

This project has been on the drawing boards since 1969 and has had several false starts, but we are announcing today the public phase of this campaign.

This Arena is an investment in our student-athletes, in our students, and in campus environment for our entire Vandal community.

It is an essential investment in Vandal excellence.

Idaho Arena - Continued

The Arena helps our student-athletes succeed. Including a new practice court, office and conference space, the facility will alleviate the space constraints we face with basketball's conflict with football in fall and with the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in spring.

This adaptable, modern facility will help our basketball and volleyball programs compete for Big Sky Conference championships year in and year out.

The Arena will also have a strong impact on recruiting. Picture yourself as a Division I basketball recruit, visiting campus in the fall. You have a few options. You're brought to the Kibbie Dome, still set up for football, and you're asked to use your imagination ... picture a court, and bleachers, and a crowd, all in a facility clearly designed for football. It's a tough sell.

The Cowan Spectrum has done a wonderful job for many years, but let's build a facility that helps us consistently recruit outstanding student-athletes and maintain the Division I excellence we have every right to expect as Vandals.

Our women's basketball team has been to the NCAA conference three of the past four seasons. Our men's team just had their best season in 20 years. Let's use that as a launching pad for the next generation of Vandal Athletics greatness.

I also want to thank ASUI for stepping up with the support through a student fee, and President Cruz Botello for his continued enthusiasm for the project.

I want to thank Vice President for Advancement Mary Kay McFadden and her team, along with Michael Perry, for securing the lead donations that give me the confidence to commit to this project.

Including the student support, as of today we have about 1/2 the total projected cost of \$30 million committed.

We envision a 4,700-seat arena, built at a total project cost of \$30 million. We have been working closely with Idaho's forest products industry and architects, and we plan that the arena will be a project like our very successful Reveley Building at the Pitkin Nursery - an engineered wood structure.

This is a project that can engage students and faculty from our Colleges of Art and Architecture, Engineering, and Natural Resources.

This is an opportunity for us to shine as Idaho's land-grant, research leader, demonstrating what it looks like to build a cutting-edge facility sustainably and efficiently.

The Arena will be a milestone accomplishment; I'm confident that we can and will get this done together.

The Idaho Arena is part of an exciting future for Vandal Athletics.

I hope our entire Vandal community rallies around this project. It is that important to our student-athletes, to our students, and to our brave and bold future as Vandals.