

President Chuck Staben  
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## 2016 State of the University Address

### Welcome

Thank you all for coming today, whether you're a student, faculty or staff member, alumni, or friend and supporter of the university.

Thank you also to those of you who are watching over the live stream.

We gather together to talk about the state of our university.

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. I want to explore what that means for people who may be new to the university.

For those of us who have been here a while, I want us to remember who we are, 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.

All of you help accomplish that important work ... and it gets noticed.

The Princeton Review's new "Best 381 Colleges: 2017 Edition" includes UI alongside the best colleges and universities in the country, based on academic excellence. We are also one of their "Best Western" schools and one of the "Colleges That Pay You Back," based on graduate success and return on investment.

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. *It is not even particularly close.* 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.

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.

I'm trying to spread the word about this tool every chance I get, and I hope you will join me in that effort. The College Scorecard is easy to understand, and the averages don't lie - UI is a great value for an outstanding academic experience that is affordable and that leads to a great job. Period.

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. This figure still needs to be confirmed with the National Science Foundation, but it is 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.

Thanks very much to CLASS Dean Andy Kersten, Torrey Lawrence, and to Vern and Vanessa Seilert for spearheading this change.

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.*

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, and am proud of our football program.

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.

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.

We have two years to make the transition to FCS football. I encourage you to come support our team at their games. We've had an exciting home game versus Montana State, and a great crowd for our Homecoming this past weekend against Troy.

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. It lays out ambitious goals and metrics by which to gauge our progress.

I want to thank Provost and Executive Vice President John Wiencek for engaging our entire university in developing what I think is a great strategy for moving our university forward. John, please stand.

And, would members of the Strategic Planning committee please stand and be recognized? Thank you for your hard work.

University Communications and Marketing did a fantastic job managing the content, design and production of the strategic plan, so I want to thank the UCM team for their hard work pulling it together. I hope that each of you will take a copy of the plan with you today.

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. Enrolling more students means adding more faculty members, who will enhance our research productivity.

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.

Again, R1 is not an end in and of itself, but it will be a significant milestone that represents the successful commingling of the research and teaching mission.

Our work - your work - has made great impact this past year. We have two recipients of the National Science Foundation’s most prestigious award for early career scholars, the Faculty Early Career Development or “CAREER” awards.

Congratulations to Tara Hudiburg, assistant professor of forest science in our College of Natural Resources, and Craig McGowan, assistant professor of biological sciences in the UI College of Science, for receiving this honor.

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.

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.

We were looking for interdisciplinary projects that could have national impact, to invest in projects that leap beyond the traditional boundaries of academia to create new knowledge, advance groundbreaking ideas, and provide tangible benefits to our students, state, and world.

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.

UI will follow with robust communication and with a new iteration of our statewide "Enroll Idaho" campaign, outreach in every county.

There are too many qualified Idaho students who do not go on to college, and this program offers a practical route to higher education and a statement of belief in the abilities of these young women and men. We want to send a strong message that *we believe in the ability and bright future of every qualified prospective Idaho student.*

Thanks especially to the Enrollment Marketing and Financial Aid teams who contributed to our progress this year.

Thank you also to our recruiters and to our Admissions team for helping make this project work.

I'll speak later to some of our specific gains in enrollment growth, but I want to thank two of our councils - the Latino Advisory Council and the Tribal Advisory Council, who I think have enabled some very important progress for retention and recruitment of our underserved populations.

Yolanda Bisbee, especially, deserves thanks. Yolanda has been with the University for a long time, and was recently named our Chief Diversity Officer, as well as remaining our Director for Tribal Relations.

Our work is making a difference for our enrollment, as I will explain. And it is getting noticed - I was very pleased, in recognition of our Latino Advisory Council's team efforts, to have been named the Amigo del Año or "Friend of the Year" by our state's Hispanic Commission.

I want to give you a sneak peak of this year's iteration of our Vandal Ideas Project. We'll build off Goal Two for a VIP: Engage program.

I ask that faculty, staff, and students engage their creativity to enhance the Go-on rate. We will again provide resources and coordinate team approaches. 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 your ideas.

As we engage, of course I ask that you remember a key aspect of engagement is to LISTEN to the needs of our constituents and design programs that meet those needs. 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](http://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.

I want to update you on some of our key initiatives and progress, as well.

The first step is to get students here. For Fall 2016, UI has *eliminated its application fee of \$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 the hurdles.

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 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 have seen retention increases in the last year, but this is another area in which we can all contribute. Faculty members can provide formative feedback to students as early as possible, and engage student services and advising to help ensure student success.

I congratulate a few of our Excellence in Teaching award winners: Daniel Stelck in the Chemistry department; Jennifer Ladino, director of undergraduate studies for the English department; and Erin Chapman in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. Kerri Vierling, professor in the department of Fish and Wildlife Sciences, won a faculty excellence in advising award.

I appreciate your dedication to the success of our students.

I would also like to mention our Open Education Resources initiative run by the Library - making textbooks more affordable and therefore more uniformly available ... and laud especially our Statistics faculty who have saved our students over \$40,000 in the last year by adopting an open resource text. We have access to more than 30 open texts covering many introductory 100- and some 200-level courses - please consider adoption in your classes.

Thank you for helping keep that door of access to higher education open to our students - it makes a difference in their experience here and in their future as Vandal graduates.

### GOAL THREE: TRANSFORM

We are making progress in getting more students to attend the best university in the state of Idaho.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> day numbers provide a snapshot of our success in building a larger class of new and transfer students.

Our numbers will be official in the middle of October, so you might see some variance with these numbers, but probably not too much.

You will see a decline in overall enrollment - this is because we have had smaller entering classes and larger graduating classes over the past few years.

Future total enrollment numbers depend on steady class-size growth and in maintaining and enhancing our retention efforts.

We are turning the corner with incoming students.

We are seeing an increase in new first-year freshmen which we think is linked to our strategic enrollment marketing efforts and Direct Admit implementation.

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

Community college transfer students are typically well-prepared to succeed at a four-year university, and we want to do everything possible to hold the door open for them.

I'm also very glad that we are making gains among underrepresented groups, including multiracial Hispanic and Native American students - up 14 percent.

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. I am grateful for their hard work - it is bearing fruit as we cultivate an inclusive and vibrant campus that better reflects the diversity of our state and beyond.

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, today I really want to talk about *US* as a community. About how and why we can feel good about the important work that we do together.

The Institutional Performance and Effectiveness committee is an important part of how we will cultivate a valued and diverse community; this committee will monitor our progress on a broad range of metrics. We announced this committee and its charge earlier this fall, and refined that in a recent memo.

One metric we haven't talked about before is the Great Colleges survey.

I wanted to learn more about how we compare to institutions we want to compare ourselves with. We launched this survey last spring, and we have our baseline results.

We chose the Great Colleges survey because it is run annually, it has low cost, and it surveys all employee types and disaggregates the data so that we can see which employee types are more or less impacted by the university working environment. It is nationally recognized, nimble, and responsive.

Thank you to everyone who participated and gave honest feedback. This survey shows me that faculty and staff have many concerns about UI and those concerns distract us from our mission. But I want us to face that head-on, and that's why I'm sharing this with you instead of stuffing it in a drawer or burying it on a website.

If you find this slide hard to see, we're scoring fairly low compared to similar institutions in our Carnegie class.

There are some brighter spots - supervisors and department chairs, for example - but overall it looks like we have a significant amount of work to do together to improve the way we feel about our work.



This is a baseline. The first step to solving a problem is recognizing that there is a problem.

In response, we are going to form a task force focused on developing an action plan to address the concerns raised here. I am asking the Provost to work with Faculty Senate, Staff Council, deans and vice presidents to identify the group and the approach for this.

We will use these insights to improve the institution for all faculty and staff.

As we cultivate a better institution - as we build our team, right away it's clear that adopting a market-based compensation philosophy will help us. I want to thank Brian Foisy, Vice President for Finance, and Wes Matthews, Executive Director of Human Resources, for their work in shaping our approach as we go forward.

More transparent processes, like the University Budget and Finance Committee, will help give employees a sense of empowerment and autonomy. We evaluated and implemented many UBFC initiatives this summer and will use this representative committee heavily again this year.

A great place to work is not just about compensation. We have a shared responsibility to be excited by our mission and about where we work.

Let's have a growth mindset. As we turn the corner on enrollment, continue our progress in research, teaching, and engagement with the state, we'll get a better sense of achievement, excellence, and mission.

We will be inspired by our progress. We will all feel better about the work that we do as we move forward.

## 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. But the remodel is more than skin deep - thanks to Dean of Students Blaine Eckles

and our residence hall staff, we also are using a new interaction model to enhance student life in the residence halls.

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 - 49<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### 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.

The Arena will provide an exciting place to play sports, but it is also essential to recruiting even more successful teams and providing a place for them to practice and to decompress our other facilities - for intercollegiate sports, intramurals, and classes.

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, and I want to thank Rob for his persistence.

I also want to thank ASUI and Max Cowan, last year's president, who saw the need for this project, and stepped up with a new fee, which will support \$5 million of the Arena cost.

And, we all need to thank Vice President for Advancement Mary Kay McFadden and her team for securing the lead donations that give me the confidence to commit to this project. In addition to the \$5 million from our students, we have support at this point, prior to our public announcement, of about half the total projected cost.

Let me tell you a little bit more about the project itself. 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.

The Arena will be a milestone accomplishment for our residential campus.

We can and will get this done together.

#### OUR STRATEGIC VISION

I'd like to end by showing you a video we will use to communicate some of what I have told you today about our vision for the University of Idaho. Special thanks to Kyle Howerton and all our video team team for their work on this video and many of the outstanding videos you see from UI.

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

*Each of you play a role in that success.*

I thank you for your work and dedication. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have. I will also defer to cabinet members for questions as necessary.