

August 21, 2017

Letter from the President

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the first day of classes in what will be a great semester at our fine university. Whether you are a new member of our family or an experienced Vandal, in Moscow or around the state, I am proud to start this academic year with you. We are greeted this morning by a total eclipse of the sun — an auspicious sign to begin the year.

As we prepare for the year ahead, I want to take a moment to reflect on recent successes: UI is hard at work on enrollment initiatives, laying the groundwork for international growth with a new [Global Student Success Program](#), and launching a series of VIP: Engage grant projects that will impact college-going rates in Idaho. We're focusing on delivering academic excellence in new ways by growing our online programming and offering new programs around the state, such as the first- and second-year programs in our College of Art and Architecture and our first class of first-year law students in Boise; as well as a new degree in [film and television studies](#) in our College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences that will lead to careers in an expanding field.

We are heading into this semester with great momentum in research and scholarship. This summer, physics Associate Professor Marty Ytreberg in the College of Science and his team won a [\\$6 million EPSCOR grant](#) from the National Science Foundation to study amino acids. Soil scientist Jodi Johnson-Maynard in our College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is leading a [\\$3.4 million USDA-funded project](#) to help wheat farmers adapt to changing conditions. And a team of researchers led by IBEST Director Eva Top published a paper in the journal Nature investigating the causes of antibiotic resistance.

We're also focused on making sure all of our students have a successful experience. That's why this year you'll see the rollout of the Student Success Initiative, a new approach to academic advising, student support and Career Services, with a home-base in the Vandal Success Center on the third floor of the Idaho Commons. I encourage every student to take full advantage of these resources to get the most out of your Vandal experience.

We're focused on employee development, too. The new [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#) in the College of Education provides a centralized location for UI teachers to explore new technology, build skills and collaborate.

This fall, you'll also notice some practical facility changes, some of which are ongoing. UI is working on more than \$41 million in improvement projects statewide. That includes finishing the remodel of our historic Administration Building, improving our classrooms and building access, and creating a new student lounge in the Idaho Commons. You can also enjoy The Hub in the Wallace Residence Center, which was remodeled into a comfortable, flexible space for grabbing freshly prepared food, studying and meeting friends. We are committed to providing students with the state-of-the-art facilities they need. We appreciate the patience and understanding from our campus community during construction.

There's a lot of positive momentum to take into the new year. For those of us in Moscow, let's come together with that energy this Friday for the Kibbie Kickoff as our Vandal soccer team takes on Boise State in the Dome. [Visit the Fan Zone](#) before the game for family-friendly food and fun. Employees and community members who visit the Fan Zone also can pick up free tickets to the Aug. 31 home football game versus Sacramento State! We're also looking forward to welcoming College of Education alumna and Olympic gold medalist [Kristin Armstrong Savola](#) to Moscow on Sept. 9 as we dedicate a bike path in her honor.

A successful year takes a united effort. This is a divided time in the United States, and that strife spills over onto college campuses from Missouri to Charlottesville. We can certainly disagree, but we can also remain united in our Vandal values, including diversity, inclusion and respect, as we continue to be a safe and welcoming campus.

I hope you will connect with me or my administrative team if you have

questions or want more information. [You can even find me on Facebook](#). And for our students I extend an invitation for you to [join me on the racquetball court](#) – you might win a free lunch!

To everyone, thank you for being enthusiastic about what we can achieve this year. Get involved – we need all hands on deck. I look forward to seeing you on campus, in Moscow or across the state.

Go Vandals!

Chuck Staben
President



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