



University
of Idaho

The University of Idaho has a mission and obligation to serve the people of Idaho to improve our state's economy and people's lives. This has been our mission for 132 years. We take our charge seriously and make decisions thoughtfully and with our guiding principles in mind.

The Idaho Freedom Foundation recently released a report attempting to show our university is engaged in a "social justice agenda." We take exception to their definition of the term "social justice" and do not define the exchange of ideas as an "agenda." Much effort was taken to pin a label on our university – our university that has produced successful graduates who contribute greatly to the economy since before Idaho was a state. While much of the report is an esoteric view of what the group claims is happening on public university campuses, it also contains a number of errors of fact about the University of Idaho.

IFF Executive Summary: "And nearly all universities, including University of Idaho, have adopted social justice ideology and have therefore changed their mission."

This is simply not true. At least eight generations of Vandals have learned under and benefitted from the same mission of education of Idaho's students to the benefit of Idaho's industry and economy.

IFF Conclusion: "Experiential learning courses drop all pretenses that teachers and students are engaged in the search for knowledge and instead prepare students for a career in progressive and social justice activism.

Experiential learning is hands-on experiences – in research, outreach, service, internships and co-ops that – students self-select and that contribute to their success as graduates. These experiential learning opportunities produce graduates who are both leaders of industry and leaders in their communities.

IFF Conclusion: The University of Idaho emphasizes diversity in recruitment and retention (stated as a negative.)

Industries across Idaho demand a diverse workforce and expect Idaho's universities to build that pipeline of qualified employees. Recruiting students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and bringing them together to grow and learn produces the graduates that industry wants and needs to compete in a global market.

As a public university, it is our duty to:

1. Teach students to think critically – and expect this from our entire community.
2. Provide opportunities for students to explore ideas, opinions and beliefs and discuss those in a civil, productive environment.
3. Provide learning environments where everyone is welcome and can participate fully in their education without the reality or perception of bias, discrimination or other social barriers to success.
4. Produce the next generation of industry leaders with the soft skills industry is telling us they need.

March 5, 2021

(Our Guiding Principles) The University of Idaho:

- Welcomes and respects all people;
- Supports the free and open exchange of ideas and civil discourse;
- Believes in the unfettered pursuit of knowledge;
- Provides the tools and practice to think critically;
- Affirms democracy and our basic commitments to its fundamental principles;
- Encourages civility in the resolution of conflict, supports peaceful demonstration and condemns violence as a means of expressing beliefs;
- Nurtures an environment for all Vandals to succeed.

Additional facts supporting how U of I is meeting its mission:

- 71% of students are from Idaho, representing every corner, many from rural communities. They care deeply about issues and engage through civil discussion. No one can tell them what to believe.
- The University of Idaho has extension offices in 42 of Idaho's 44 counties, research facilities in every corner of the state, and campuses in Moscow, Boise, Idaho Falls, Coeur d'Alene, and McCall, delivering on our commitment and mission to serving the entire state.
- All prospective undergraduate students who meet our admissions criteria are admitted. Admitting one person does not take away an undergraduate admissions spot from any other student.
- Self-reported student data shows:
 - Undergraduates: 75% are white. 11% Hispanic. 4% two or more race. 2% Asian. 1% each Black and Native American.
 - Graduate students: 70% are white. 6% Hispanic, 4% two or more races, 2% each Asian and Native American. 1% Black.
- As a public institution, we support freedom of speech and have regularly welcomed and hosted groups from a variety of viewpoints. Like all public institutions, our community represents many academic and political perspectives with whom our students can engage in civil discourse.
- Core to our mission, we have been home to ROTC since our inception, a program with a proud history on our campus. We have 132 students enrolled in ROTC representing the Army, Navy and Air Force. We also have 202 veterans enrolled on our campus and 135 dependents of veterans (sons, daughters, spouses). We have a recruiter and other support opportunities focused on our veterans. Importantly, by serving our veterans and Idaho students who are interested in serving our country through military service after their college graduation, we increase opportunities for all Idahoans and Idaho students, and do not take away opportunities for non-veterans on our campus.
- We have a strong relationship with our Moscow Police Department. We value the security and protection MPD helps provide to campus, and the relationships MPD officers form with Idaho students. We have students who become officers with MPD, and former MPD officers who become University of Idaho students and employees, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and experience benefitting our campus community.
- The University of Idaho has the support of industry. We produce students who work hard, have relevant experience and a solid education. Industry responds to this not just by paying our graduates the highest average wage in the state, but also by investing in our research that benefits employers, our students and the State of Idaho.
- More than 200 clubs are recognized by the university. Any student wanting to start a club is able to and, at a minimum, must keep an up-to-date registration with the Department of Student Involvement. Clubs that seek recognition by the Associate Students of the University of Idaho are eligible for support from ASUI. These clubs fall into a variety of categories including academic, cultural, faith-based, sports, professional and recreational.