

## Weekly Update 4/24/20

We are pleased to say that while no one considers this ideal, our distance learning seems to be going well per the attached survey. A huge shout-out to David Douglass, the faculty, and to our small IT team. Our students have been resilient, collaborative, and are making this work. Learning is taking place and we are pleased with how the Microsoft Teams platform is working for students, faculty, and staff. Support services continue to provide virtual academic mentoring and mental health services. We are planning to record a virtual class soon so that everyone has an example of how that looks. The new skills and programs that we are learning will continue post COVID-19. Having said that, we are all eager for the time we can get back to the face-to-face interactions, conversations in the cafeteria, meetings with professors, brief but profound interactions on the sidewalk, plays, athletic events, musical performances, art shows, and the intimate sense of community that drew us to the College which fills our souls and boosts our spirits.

Even in this time of separation and physical distancing, we continue to be inspired by our community. If you haven't done so, please make it a habit to go to our ["A Coyote a Day"](#) video posted each day around noon. As one example, here's a great [video](#) from Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. As more videos get submitted, we will hopefully share multiple videos per day from students, faculty, and staff which include reflection, music, humor, and remind us that we are all Yotes. Our 185 students who remain on campus have handled this situation with grace, grit, and resilience. Each of the students is on campus because they have no other options. Many are international students subject to travel restrictions and others have either an unstable home or no home to return to. Paul Bennion and the student life team's support has been incredible. Our partners at Bon Appetit have done a great job with providing special order meals which students can pick up in a safe and well-managed process. To maintain physical distancing, all remaining students on campus are in single room dorms and distributed across campus. As the weather gets better, students are seen on the quad with appropriate physical distancing, visiting, studying, and looking more like the campus we know. The campus has remained healthy so far. Most of us are working from home, so it remains a pretty controlled environment. Activities are planned such as a Program Council Scavenger Hunt, Get Fit Couch to 5k Training, and more. We (Doug and Jim) will be conducting our first version of what we called "Pizza with a Purpose" virtually this week.

Currently, we are spending a great deal of time around scenario planning. What does the fall look like? What can we do this summer to stay connected and to connect our freshmen to campus? Will fall sports be possible and if so, what about spectators? Will we need to significantly de-densify dorms, classes, and the cafeteria? Do we look at a later start date and shorter breaks? Do we start the year with distance learning? These are just a few of the things we are considering and we will not make a decision right now, but need to have considered all options prior to doing so. In response to Governor Little's public address and the multi-staged approach [Guidelines for Opening Idaho](#), our view is that we don't anticipate changing our current work environment protocols at this time. While we are all eager to return to our close-knit YoteFam on campus, safety and providing the best possible learning environment continue to be our highest priorities. As we began to determine next steps in this process we will lean on our Board and outside experts for counsel.

We had a fabulous first-ever Virtual Admitted Students Day and it won't be our last. We will return to a live event when we can and we will continue this for those who cannot make it in person. This is an example of a new, best practice coming out of this time of COVID-19. It was a huge success with more

than 133 participants online live and 20 different countries represented. The event lasted about an hour and we have included the [link here](#) for anyone who might have missed it. Since the event on April 18<sup>th</sup>, we have 27 new deposits!

We are planning for our Virtual Commencement on May 23, with students (led by senior Hannah DalSoglio) leading the planning with support from Joe Hughes and his team. There will be a live commencement event at a later date. We are continuing to evaluate when it will be safe to do this.

Ways you can help:

Alumni- Alumni Relations has sent an email inviting you to record and send a short video message to our seniors. Their last months in school and their commencement have been drastically impacted. We would love to have alums record a message of encouragement and welcome the 2020 class to the ranks of the proud College of Idaho alumni family.

Care Packages- We will also have an opportunity for people to sign up to send a letter and a care package to specific students who remain on campus. These students are away from home and from families and we want them to know that we love and care about them. Look for the opportunity to sign up early next week. In anticipation of the care packages, we asked a few students about their thoughts on the project and we wanted to share some of the responses that we received. "It's beautiful that the school is taking care of us. We're all grateful." And also, "Thank you all for the work that you're doing to ensure that this time is bearable for us. I really mean it. I know this time could be a lot harder had you guys not offered your support. May God bless you!"

Doug and Jim