

Weekly update: Week of May 18

We have all been living in anxious times. This can wear on us as we try to plan for something so unpredictable. So much of our attention has and will continue to be on planning and responding to the worldwide pandemic. Our primary goal is on planning for the safe return to the in-person education which is our strength. This includes planning for all that goes into a liberal arts education – so much of which goes beyond the classroom. It will certainly be a new normal, with new practices and procedures. Our success in pulling it off safely will be most dependent on a new social compact. For this to work, it truly needs to be a collaborative effort. This is a time when our responsibilities to each other and our community must supersede our individual rights. There will be many inconveniences, and some may even be hardships, but we are not the first, nor will we be the last, in needing to give up some things and make sacrifices to get to a better place. We can do this and it will take all of us working together. One of the “gifts” of COVID-19 is it has taught us the phrase “we are all in this together” is true, has always been and always will be.

We will be sharing many more details soon, so plan for regular updates from us. For now, we want to shift focus to gratitude and optimism. We are learning lessons as we always should, but this is especially true in times of crisis and upheaval. College is about getting out of one’s comfort zone. While this is not the way any of us would have chosen to do that, we must learn, grow, and change from this historic moment in time.

So, what are we grateful for and what must we preserve going forward?

We are grateful for our students. We are reminded of their resilience, their adaptability, their optimism in the face of adversity, and we are in awe of what they can and will do when empowered to do so. Their attitudes and wisdom have been awesome. Less than a week after two-time, first-team All-American senior Talon Pinckney and his team had their season abruptly ended while on a 25-game win streak and ranked number one in the nation, he expressed that “community is a huge thing here and I felt that love since I’ve been here. I feel like I have 20 extra moms and dads and that’s super cool.” His advice to incoming and current students is “don’t be afraid to meet new people because that is going to allow you to have help if you’re struggling academically or socially.” To his teammates, he said “put in the work no matter what it is. On the court, in the classroom, have a work ethic and anything is possible.”

Community and diversity are of high importance at The College of Idaho. They provide our students with the opportunity of experiencing different countries and cultures. Kaiti Walton, a freshman from Idaho Falls, said, “I love The College of Idaho because I feel like I am involved with so many different countries at the exact same time but yet I have to remind myself we’re still in Caldwell, Idaho. If I hadn’t gone to The College of Idaho I would have never had the opportunity to meet such a diverse group of people. Not only diversity from countries but diversity in beliefs and ways of living life really.”

On top of pivoting to moving off-campus and finishing the school year online, students have taken on new responsibilities. With help from our small but mighty marketing & communications team, they have led and mostly produced our “A Coyote a Day” videos, reminding us of the strength of our community, even when we are apart. They have worked hard to plan our virtual commencement that will be live-streamed on Saturday, May 23rd at 10 a.m. MST [at this link](#), which will be a unique and creative sendoff. In collaboration with faculty and a big assist from IT, they pulled off a fabulous virtual Student Research Conference last Saturday, once again leaving us in awe of the incredible undergraduate research which

takes place on this campus. If COVID-19 has not made us aware of the importance of the type of collaborative scientific research which continues as a hallmark of this college, then we must have been living in a cave. What we do here is critically important now and in the future. And if those previous items weren't enough, students worked hard with Alumni Relations to pull off a wonderful Senior Toast via video conference this week too.

We are grateful to our faculty and staff. Their commitment to the best possible student experience has been inspiring. One finds out what kind of a team they are a part of in challenging times and we are so grateful to be a part of this team. They have gone above and beyond across the board to do everything they can to make the most out of the cards we have all been dealt. One example is Carolyn Dadabay. Dr. Dadabay is a successful ambassador for the role of science in society, and the integration of scientific research into the liberal arts. She teaches not only conventional chemistry courses, but also such courses as "Chemistry of Cooking" to make her abstract material relevant to the widest possible range of students. Many such reported their experience in these courses made them not only better scientists, but better chefs! She also goes to great lengths to support her students' learning. When the College was obliged to shift to online courses this spring, she arranged to have Amazon deliver supplies to students' homes so that they could complete their lab assignments. Academia often gets criticized for moving at glacial speed. We have demonstrated that we can turn on a dime. That flexibility will be necessary as we move forward. As Jim Collins taught us in the book "Good to Great" we must become more skilled in "preserving the core while stimulating change." Faculty and staff were also amazing in their support of Give Day and the results were stunning.

On that note, we are grateful to all parents, alumni, friends, and donors. For those who are parents, thank you for sending us not just amazing students, but great human beings. Thanks for your support, counsel, and words of encouragement. They mean more than you will ever know. One parent wrote, "First of all I would like to thank you and all the College staff – professors, administrative, IT team and campus employees for your dedication and efforts proved not only during this unusual time, but throughout the whole academic year. A great THANK YOU for all the updated information, warm words of comfort and ample mails ... Many thanks for all the donors and corporate friends of the College who have decided, so generously, to sustain the international students during this atypical summer of 2020. I truly believe that all parents feel the same and are grateful for your permanent support. Good luck to all the seniors, graduates of 2020, as well as to their families, and in the spirit of The College of Idaho. I would like to add: KEEP ON GO(ING) YOTES!"

Due to COVID-19 we were nervous about Give Day. We had great momentum after a hugely successful Gala at the end of February, and then the pandemic changed things. The economy and stock market have been struggling. Many have lost jobs. The needs are great. We weren't sure how the rescheduled Give Day was going to go. We were blown away by your generosity and kindness. We are up about 90-percent over last year and we are humbled by this. Hats off to Boone Fund Director Lauren Schilli who led this effort. Two years ago, we raised \$114,000 on Give Day with two people working full time in the Boone Fund. Now it is just Lauren, but she has a great ability to pull together a team including students, faculty, staff, and alumni who work year-round to grow the Boone Fund. They really come out on Give Day. We are happy to share that 581 donors (consisting of faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the College) contributed to this year's Give Day and the College raised \$287,301. The number speaks for itself and we are extremely grateful for your support.

One donor shared that her daughter learned of The College of Idaho from a postcard we sent and she was amazed mainly with our acceptance rate into medical school. When they visited, her daughter fell in love with the school and is now a business major and loves everything about the department. The donor said she has been amazed and happy with how the professors have conducted online classes and her daughter is still learning much from them. The College has helped her daughter become more confident in herself and her abilities. It has also helped her become more social and find her best friends. The donor has been so pleased with all communication about COVID and the work all staff and faculty are doing to try and make this whole process as seamless as possible.

One other highlight of Give Day was Bedtime Stories with Professor Steve Maughan and Jasper LiCalzi. Bedtime stories is a tradition on campus. Lauren Schilli and Alan Price were able to make it happen via Microsoft Teams and include not only the students, but alumni and donors as well. We had over 100 attendees from all over the country. Thanks to Steve and Jasper's amazing storytelling, they were able to bring in over 70 gifts! Having the event online and live allowed them to recognize alumni and donors in the moment, which made Give Day even more interactive than before. Jasper might be retiring, but he definitely has not been coasting on his work or his love for the College! Jasper is retiring this week, but as always, he is all-in and showing his love for and commitment to our students and The College of Idaho in his final days of legendary service.

There are silver linings. This has been and will continue to be tough. Tragically, lives will continue to be lost. Science will get us out of this. Our collective behaviors will also play a big role. We will come out better and more united as human beings and as Yotes.

Thanks for inspiring us every day and for giving us reasons to be grateful, even in these challenging times. To the Class of 2020, thanks for the wonderful memories and for all of the moments of joy you have brought.

Our (poetic) toast to the Class of 2020 -

Dear Class of 2020

Challenges you've faced plenty

Presidents, there've been four

No previous class had more

This COVID-19

Has been nasty and mean

It pushed us online

But we handled it just fine

You're resilient and strong

You'll write your own song

You're the class of Boone

Best dog under the moon

You've made us proud

We've often been wowed

You've mastered Teams meetings well

But face-to-face is still where we excel

We been in the same boats

You've stood tall as Yotes

You welcomed in our biggest class ever

You showed them we are Yotes together and forever

You've inspired us in class and the lab, in sports and on stage

You are well prepared to turn the page

We will miss you all

So please text or call

You'll always be in the heart and the mind

Stay curious, bold and please always be kind

We toast the class of 2020 and the way you have led

We know that the best for you still lies ahead!

Doug and Jim