

Argonaut

THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO
FOR, OF AND BY THE STUDENTS SINCE 1898

A Street construction impacts residents



Construction on A Street near intersection with Peterson Drive Oct. 21.

Kim Stager | Argonaut

Project improves conditions in area

Teren Kowatsch
ARGONAUT

Construction on A Street has been ongoing since early summer. Having the heavily traversed street unavailable for most of 2020 has inconvenienced residents of A Street and the rest of Moscow alike. Those who don't live on the street may wonder why such extensive constructive was necessary.

"It was a combination of many factors, (including) road condition, road width, intersection improvements and traffic flow optimization," Tyler Palmer, the Moscow public works and services deputy city supervisor, said.

Andrew Ward, a resident of A Street, validated these concerns. Ward said, "A Street was falling apart," citing how one day, a retaining rock wall fell over spontaneously and how similar the old power lines looked to rotting flesh.

Some A Street residents have reservations about the construction, despite its necessity.

"It starts at 7:30 a.m., sometimes 6:30 a.m. and the heavy machinery shakes the very foundation of my building until three in the afternoon. Even headphones can't help," Ward said. "The consistency of the yelling and the noise early in the morning has been the most difficult thing. I'm an early riser, but I haven't been able to wake up peacefully except on weekends."

Ward said he got a parking ticket during the early days of the construction because some residents have changed where they parked. Ward appreciates the construction despite the negative consequences. The new power poles are a significant improvement over the old ones and there is more space on the street, he said.

There is no clear end date for the construction.

"All I was told was it would be done before it snows," Ward said.

The first snowfall of the year is expected to be Oct. 23.

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COVID-19

Investigating the transmission of COVID-19

A glance at how the virus spreads between animals and humans - and how to block it

Anteia McCollum
ARGONAUT

The National Science Foundation awarded University of Idaho researchers nearly \$200,000 to investigate whether animals can transmit COVID-19 and how to block the spread from animals to humans.

Paul Rowley, a virologist and assistant professor at UI, said the research examines the gateways to cells, called receptors, in animals to see which ones react to a viral agent similar to SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, in a way which could potentially transmit the virus to humans.

Rowley said there is strong evidence that the coronaviruses which have resulted in epidemics or pandemics originated in bats. But not all of them were passed directly from bats to humans, instead using another animal as a middleman.

"That's, of course, where the interest is," Rowley said. "It seems to play a huge part in the emergence of these various coronaviruses. (The virus) would be spilled over from animal reservoirs to human populations."

An example of COVID-19 passing

between humans and animals occurred in mink farms in Utah, where the virus broke out among the animals shortly after many of the employees tested positive, according to reporting from Cable News Network.

Similar situations have been reported in Michigan, the Netherlands and Denmark as well. Domestic cats and ferrets have also tested positive for COVID-19, though it hasn't been confirmed if the virus has been transmitted from these animals back to humans.

Viruses, which are bundles of genetic material, cannot replicate themselves without using a cell as a host. After a virus, like SARS-CoV-2, takes over a cell, it is able to spread and make the infected person or animal sick.

The three phases of the UI research project include compiling genealogical sequences containing a protein called ACE2, sorting through the sequences to find which animals have proteins which can "dock" with the virus and testing this shortened list of sequences in the lab to see if the virus can be transmitted to humans from the animal.

James Van Leuven, a research assistant professor at UI, gathers and organizes various animals' genome sequences. The virus can take over the cell by docking, or connecting, with ACE2 and destroy it in the process of spreading. However, not all ACE2 proteins are able to link with COVID-

19. Van Leuven said there are around 600 sequences compiled so far.

With so many sequences available, shortening the list and finding the species of animals with the protein best able to connect with the virus is an important step before testing in the lab, Rowley said. Jagdish Patel, a UI assistant professor and molecular modeling specialist, is leading the effort to narrow it down.

Patel said the team is using a process called homology modeling, which uses the human version of ACE2 as a reference to build 3D models of each animal's receptor.

"Imagine it being like a lock and a key," Rowley said. "Not every key will fit the lock, and we know why the key won't fit the lock because there's tiny changes in the shape of the key, and that's obviously reciprocated by the lock. So, imagine that, as a model in your mind, as to why certain receptors don't bind to (SARS-CoV-2). There's minute changes in the receptor which prevent that lock and key interaction."

This research, and research like it on how viruses transmit between animals and humans, will help scientists better understand how to block receptors like ACE2 to prevent future epidemics and pandemics.

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ASUI

Free menstrual products come to campus

Product give away accompanies ASUI bill pushing for free disposal products in bathrooms

Carter Kolpitcke
ARGONAUT

Menstrual products are about to be much more accessible across campus. A company named OrganiCup produces a reusable menstrual cup created from 100% medical grade silicone. It hosts CampusCup, a program which offers their product for free on college campuses while supplies last.

"Periods produce a ton of waste," Addie White, the ASUI director of sustainability, said. "They estimate that a university of our size uses over two million pads and tampons a year, which is a ton of waste. And usually, (period products) contain microplastics, which are really hard to decompose."

OrganiCup claims its product can last for up to two years of periods, the equivalent of roughly 528 tampons.

Students have until Oct. 26 to scan the QR code found on posters around campus or click on an emailed link to sign up to receive a cup. Cups can be picked up from the Department of Student Involvement (DSI) Office after they are shipped to campus.

Students who miss the sign-up deadline are offered a promotional code, IDAHO30, which takes 30% off the \$28 product. From White's understanding, the campaign for the free menstrual cup is a one-time promotional event, but the discount code should be available for the foreseeable future.

The OrganiCup project spawned off a work-in-progress bill written by ASUI Senator Dylanie Frazier. She plans to implement free menstrual products in women's restrooms campus-wide. Varying product prices, poorly allocated funding to on-campus menstrual product dispensers and the presence of outdated and expired products, which could result in infections, inspired her bill.

Frazier is working with Director of DSI Shawn O'Neal and other UI advisors to partner with the company Aunt Flow, which creates "eco-friendly feminine hygiene products and (has) revolutionized campuses across the nation."

Frazier is organizing a presentation to advocate her project to other ASUI senators and UI faculty. She hopes to give this presentation in the first or second week of November. If all goes according to plan, new dispensers operating through coin deposits will need to be implemented, which may take until early 2021.

"I would like to get menstrual products into all women's, gender neutral and men's restrooms in order to be accommodating to our LGBTQA+ community," Frazier said. "I'm working with Senator Will Jansen Van Beek on creating more gender-neutral bathrooms and the first initiative we are going to start with is getting those products into those gender-neutral bathrooms... This is a program that we want to expand for inclusion and diversity."

Prior to these projects, free menstrual products have been informally available at the Women's Center on campus. It has a basket full of disposable products, so students could take what they need.

"I personally think this would be a very, very worthwhile thing to get established on our campus," Lysa Salsbury, director of the Women's Center, said. "Because disposable products are very expensive, and students are managing life on a very limited budget, I think that these products should be available. For people who menstruate, they are every bit essential as toilet paper."

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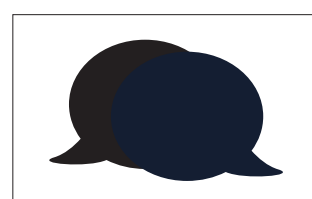
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Overall UI enrollment falls by 9.5%

Dip attributed to fewer dual-credit and non-degree seeking students

Alexis Van Horn
ARGONAUT

In Fall 2019, 11,926 students were enrolled at the University of Idaho. This semester, that number is down 9.5%, with 10,791 students enrolled.

An email from UI President C. Scott Green Tuesday morning attributed the decline to a dip in high school dual-credit students and non-degree seeking students. The email did, however, note a “significant increase in higher-margin (Western Undergraduate Exchange) students.”

Last year’s 0.71% increase in overall enrollment came from first-time freshmen, non-degree seeking students and graduate students, according to past reporting from The Argonaut.

“(Non-degree seeking students) are not full tuition-paying students, so while there is a decrease, it is not a substantial hit to our budget,” the email stated. “We will, however, need to work harder to get these students into the college-bound pipeline.”

UI outperformed expectations for Fiscal Year 2020, the email stated. While there are risks to the university’s financial health, it should be able to stay within its budget if UI stays open for live instruction and there are no further COVID-19-related government holdbacks, the email stated.

“Considering waiver savings, higher-margin WUE enrollment and the smaller financial impact of dual-credit and non-degree enrollment shortfalls, we do not anticipate the need to make additional reductions in the FY21 budget,” the

email stated.

There are 6,830 undergraduate students involved, 1,429 of which are first-time undergraduate students. This reflects a 3.77% decline in first-time undergraduate enrollment.

While there is a 21% increase in students participating in WUE, a program which allows students from 16 western states to pay less than out-of-state tuition, there is a 27% decline in enrollment for out-of-state students not participating in WUE. International student enrollment is down 29% because “most new (international) students were not able to attend this fall” due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

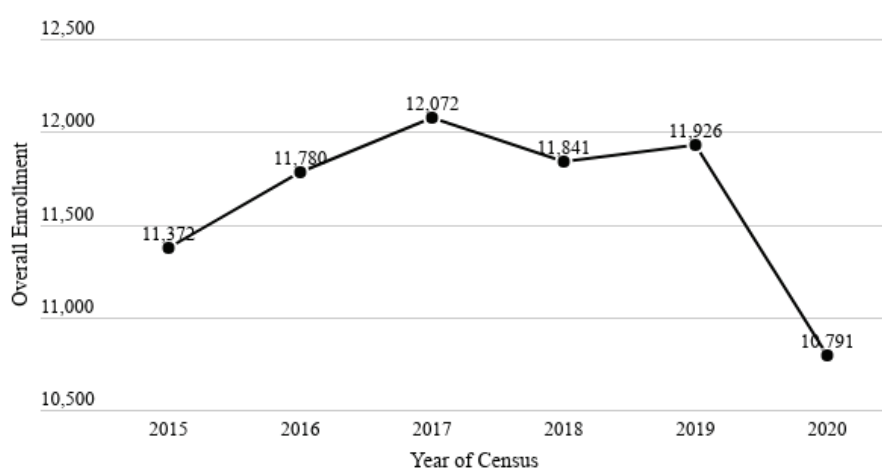
New graduate student enrollment is on an upward trend. In Fall 2019, graduate student enrollment increased by 2.6%. This semester, graduate student enrollment is up by 4%. When Boise’s Concordia Law School went defunct, 110 students transferred to UI, which resulted in a significant increase in College of Law enrollment.

Enrollment is up by 8% for Native American students (eight students), 27% for Native Hawaiian students (10 students) and 14% for multi-race students (50 students).

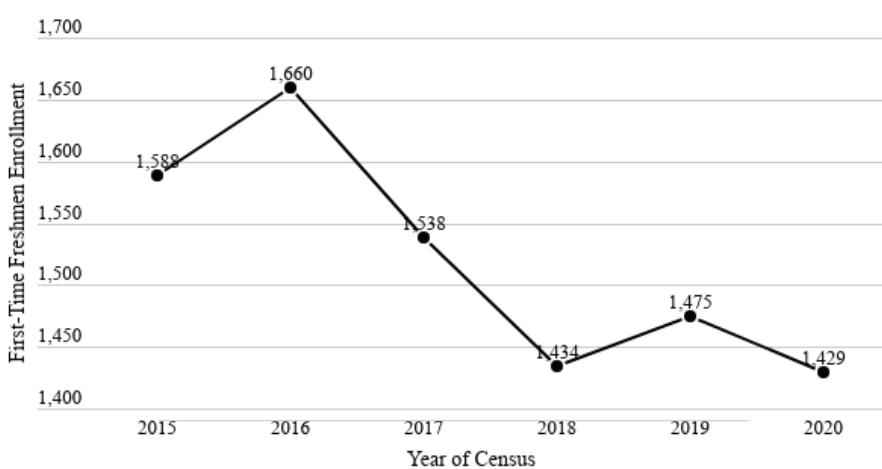
Retention is 77% for Fall 2020, around the same as Fall 2019. The graduating class for Spring 2020 was the largest of the past six years, which means UI must “bring in even more first-time students to fill the gap created by successful completion of degrees,” the email stated.

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University of Idaho Overall Enrollment

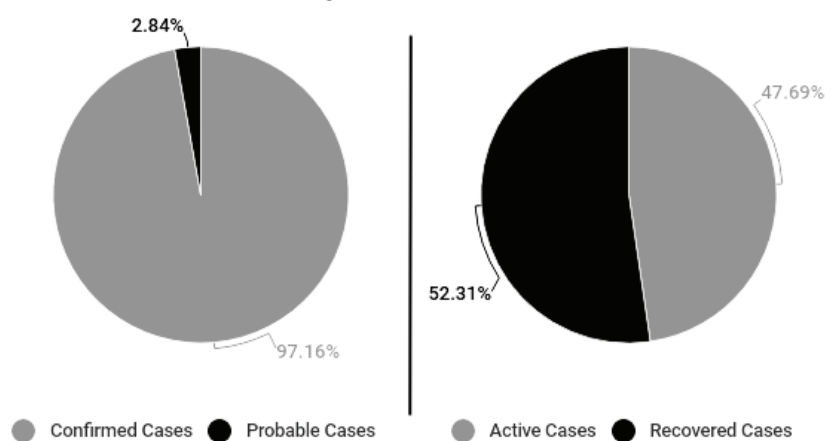


University of Idaho First-Time Freshmen Enrollment



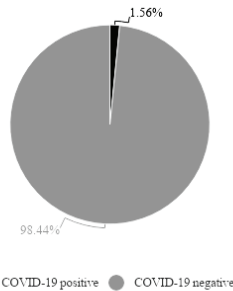
COVID-19 testing graphics

Latah County Total COVID-19 Cases

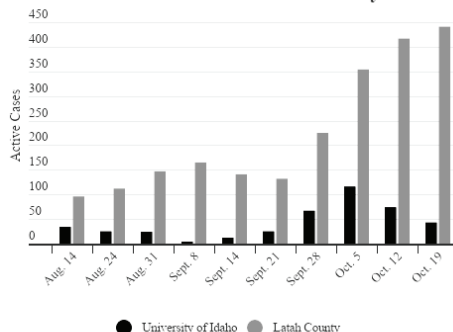


University of Idaho data is accurate as of Oct. 16. Latah County data is accurate as of Oct. 21.

COVID-19 test results from UI's test site (Oct. 10 to Oct. 16)



Active COVID-19 cases at University of Idaho and in Latah County



ADMINISTRATION

University budget likely to see surplus

Possible \$4.7 million could buffer losses

Cody Roberts
ARGONAUT

The University of Idaho will have a large surplus this year to help the institution through enrollment losses, state funding holds and other budget cuts, according to statements from the university budget and planning staff during a Tuesday Faculty Senate meeting.

Earlier the same day, President C. Scott Green released an email detailing the university’s Fall 2020 enrollment numbers. A decrease in dual-credit and non-degree seeking students contributed to a decline in overall enrollment.

These lower enrollment numbers caused a \$2.6 million shortfall in the budget, but underspending in waivers for students was large, Trina Mahoney, assistant vice president for University Budget and Planning, said.

Waivers are “policy granted authority to not collect some or all tuition that we charge,” Brian Foisy, vice president for Finance and Administration, said. Waivers are different from scholarships, where tuition is still paid by someone else.

Waivers predominantly come from students participating in the Western Undergraduate Exchange programs, which significantly decrease tuition for non-resident students, Mahoney said.

The other gain in this year’s budget comes from preplanning and contingency plans as the university transitions further into the WUE program, Mahoney said.

“We knew we would see two revenue drops... as a result of this transition to WUE,” Foisy said.

Both Foisy and Mahoney said this year’s budget was “conservative” because all expenses were calculated at the maximum amounts of what previous years recorded. This makes it likely there will be at least a \$4.7 million surplus, if not more, Foisy said.

However, according to Foisy and Mahoney’s summarized data, the budget office has a list of issues unaddressed in this fiscal year that will total to \$4.6 million in funding loss and expenses. If it were not for this \$4.7 million surplus, Green’s earlier email would have focused on \$4.6 million needing to be cut from this year’s budget, Foisy said.

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DIVERSITY

Browsing stacks from New York to Moscow

Exploring life with UI librarian
Rochelle Smith

Emily Pearce
ARGONAUT

Stepping into the New York Public Library, the bold lion statues standing guard outside, Rochelle Smith earned her first paycheck and fell in love with libraries.

Smith now works as a reference librarian at the University of Idaho. She decided to pursue her career while working in Washington, D.C., as a grant writer.

“One year of my life that I didn’t work in a library, I really missed it,” Smith said. “I sort of looked at them longingly... I kind of thought, well maybe this is something that should actually be my job.”

Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, Smith spent part of her childhood in New Jersey and adulthood in the Mid-Atlantic Northeast.

When Smith was a child, her grandmother told her folk tales her own great grandmother had told. Smith fell in love with reading and discovering new stories. She became an avid reader.

Smith volunteered at the local library and high school and worked in her college library. She pursued her

undergraduate education at Rutgers University. She also received a master’s in library information science from the University of Pittsburgh and an MFA in creative writing and poetry from UI.

After hearing some of her colleagues were moving to the Palouse, Smith visited and “completely fell in love with Moscow.”

She lived in Moscow for two years before moving away for library school. Smith came back to get her MFA after seven years. She started working at the UI library and has been here for the past 15 years.

Off shift, Smith will walk around and browse the literature, pulling books off the shelves as she peruses the stacks.

“I love the way the books smell,” Smith said. “I’m just kind of one of those people.”

Smith enjoys receiving questions through email. The library receives questions from individuals across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Her job has even led to making a German pen pal.

The UI Library keeps materials from the past as well as more current literature.

“Because we’re a research library, it’s our job to keep materials that people

might want in 100 years, in 300 years,” Smith said. “...Libraries are a huge part of that and keeping that knowledge.”

Smith writes and works on crafts in her free time.

“I’m a knitter, a spinner and a quilter, and I just genuinely believe I’m a mender,” Smith said.

In one of her recent published works, she wrote about crafts. She publishes personal essays, poetry and peer review writing as well.

Her research includes investigating the “National Endowment for the Humanities Created Equal Grant” and academic articles, including “Opening up the ivory tower: public programming at an academic library.”

Smith participated in a game of Jeopardy in 2012, receiving second place, as previously reported by The Argonaut.

“Many librarians are like this,” Smith said. “We tend to be interested in so many things that we sort of hold on to so many factors having that makes you good at trivia, which makes you good at Jeopardy.”

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Rochelle Smith

ADMINISTRATION

Sharing a residential campus digitally

UI's marketing moves majority of recruitment online

Anteia McCollum
ARGONAUT

University of Idaho has put more efforts toward marketing online since the COVID-19 pandemic hit earlier this year.

John Barnhart, the interim director of marketing at UI, said the team's focus has been on telling students' stories. What's different this year is the amount of new content online, such as the online UI Bound, YouTube videos and a viewbook which gives a more personalized look at UI.

UI connects with potential students by spreading the stories of current students through vignettes featuring the college experiences of current students and alumni.

"What we're hoping is when we tell (a student's) story, that it resonates with prospective students, and they say 'I want to be a part of that,'" Barnhart said. "We don't want to tell a story that doesn't exist on this campus. We're pretty proud of what we have to offer."

Using online methods for recruiting and retention allows for a much faster, more personalized experience for the students compared to getting a postcard in the mail, and videos play a large role in that.

In March, UI's marketing team created 17 videos in one week after COVID-19 became more serious in Idaho, according to Bob Johnson's blog on Higher Education Marketing.

The UI marketing department also uses text messaging, phone calls, emails and social media to get their messages out to the public. Director of Enrollment Marketing Adam Stoltz said his team recorded over 51,000 outbound calls made from the call center, 193,000 text messages and over two million emails last year.

"We pivoted essentially just about a week after COVID-19 was a real big thing," Stoltz said. "So, that's the way

our team has been operating, and we'll continue to do as much as we can in person and personalize as much as we can. I think that is the big thing that we're trying to put our focus on."

Stoltz said marketing is hard, but marketing in the middle of a pandemic is even harder. He said the lack of in-person events has made it difficult to get people on campus to see the university, and Idaho, for themselves.

The department's solution was to boost the 360 virtual tour on the UI website, where students can get a feel for what campus looks like. Stoltz said the virtual tour has had more than 11,000 visitors who spend an average of nearly eight minutes on the webpage.

According to Tony Haile, chief executive officer of Chartbeat, people typically spend about 15 seconds on a webpage before leaving.

"To have a student or future student or family member checking (the university) out online, getting interested in us and spending that amount of time to check us out, that's really huge," Stoltz said.

After going through the virtual tour, potential students can decide to take the plunge to visit campus in person for a Envision Idaho session, one of UI's few still-scheduled in-person recruitment events.

"I'm proud of the work we're doing, so I'd put us up against what everybody else is doing and say 'Try to match it,'" Barnhart said. "It's pretty fantastic, not because we are marketing geniuses, but because we have these great stories to tell."

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POLITICS

Tom Lamar Q&A



Incumbent Latah County Commission candidate Tom Lamar speaks during Q&A Tuesday night.

Angela Palermo | Argonaut

First Q&A session with Latah County commission candidates

Carter Kolpitzke
ARGONAUT

Voters received another glimpse of the Democratic District 2 Latah County commissioner candidate in a virtual Q&A session Wednesday with incumbent Tom Lamar.

His opponent, Gabriel Rench, appeared in a separate session Wednesday. Both events were organized by the Associated Students University of Idaho and the UI Economics Club.

A moderator from ASUI took questions from the public via Zoom's chatroom and posed them to Lamar, who sat candidly in front of his computer screen at home. Behind him, a pair of blue and red "Lamar for Latah" face masks hung on the wall. The masks symbolize a polarized commissioner race, characterized by the candidates' differing stances on the City of Moscow's mask mandate.

Rench has long been critical of the city's response to COVID-19 and says the public health emergency order mandating face coverings and social distancing is unconstitutional. Lamar disagrees.

"It's important to acknowledge that nobody likes to wear a mask," Lamar said. "It's not that much fun. But it is very helpful to slowing the spread of this virus."

As of Oct. 21, Latah County has tallied 821 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since April 1, according to Public Health – Idaho North Central District.

To date, the county has no COVID-19 related deaths, which Lamar says is evidence the mandate is working.

Back in March, localities across the state were forced to confront the threat of COVID-19 in their communities. Latah County recognized the problem early on, declaring a state of emergency and limiting gatherings.

"We all need to take mask breaks, I totally understand that," Lamar said. "We also need to make sure we're doing what we need to do in order to keep our neighbors healthy and safe."

Lamar has served as commissioner for six years and is executive director of the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute. As one of three commissioners, Lamar helps set the county's budget and works with the state and federal government on a variety of issues, including taxes. "We have seen a very sharp rise in property values over the past few years now," Lamar said. "As property values increase, it creates a higher (property tax) rate, a higher amount of money that the rates are based on."

Lamar also discussed his work on environmental issues. As an avid cyclist and outdoorsman, Lamar said he's seen the city government take huge strides in reducing its carbon footprint.

Lamar said he wants to continue building relationships between businesses and the local government to see how they can all work together.

"I love the work that I'm doing and would love to continue to be one of your three county commissioners," Lamar said.

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COVID-19

University of Idaho's surveillance testing approach

University and public health officials communicating results to those who test positive

Haadiya Tariq
ARGONAUT

University of Idaho aims to continuously test students for COVID-19 throughout this semester. To continue monitoring cases after initial testing, students have been subjected to random surveillance testing.

"The general surveillance testing will happen between now and Thanksgiving break," Special Assistant to the President Toni Broyles said. "Those asked to test each week were randomly selected, and it will be a different group each time."

The random testing is divided between those employees and students living on Greek row, in the residence halls and off campus.

Randomly selected groups receive an email with instructions on how to participate in the testing.

Dean of Students Blaine Eckles has been working with students and watching test results come in.

The Dean of Student's Office receives information three times a day pertaining to student test results. Students who receive positive tests will receive word from either Public Health – Idaho North

Central District (PH-INCD) or the university, according to Eckles.

Previously, students were often contacted by healthcare practitioners.

"The numbers have reached a point where (PH-INCD) has given us guidance to go ahead and call once we have that information so we can identify those individuals and get them relocated," Eckles said.

Students living on campus are moved to an isolation unit. A registration form collects basic information, like food preferences, to better accommodate students.

UI arranges for students to be picked up from their living space to their designated quarantine location.

COVID-19 tests are done at the Student Recreation Center. According to Broyles, testing is no different for staff.

"Same as students, there is not a different process for employees," Broyles said.

According to Broyles, most swabbing will be done at the Student Recreation Center on Wednesdays and Thursdays. If those days do not work, people can get scheduled for drive-thru testing instead.

COVID-19 Project Manager Seth Vieux will work with employees or students to schedule drive-thru testing at Gritman's Martin Wellness Center.

Questions about surveillance testing can be sent to covid19questions@uidaho.edu.



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Shani Sullivan gets randomly tested for COVID-19 at the University of Idaho Rec Center on Sep. 30.

Saydee Brass | Argonaut



**Treat yourself at
the VandalStore
Starbucks!**

VandalStore
The official store of the University of Idaho



THE ARGONAUT

Life

LIFESTYLES, INTERESTS, FEATURES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Life Hacks



Things to do on the Palouse this week

Emily Pearce
ARGONAUT

In honor of KUOI's 75th anniversary, this is dedicated to their station and years of great work. View their special lineup to celebrate with extra shows. Tune into 89.3, sit back and listen to the show.

Spooky Science Walk

Time: 3-9:30 p.m.

Date: Oct. 22-Oct. 24

Place: Palouse Discovery Science Center

Price: Free for members \$6 and \$7.50 for non-members

Spooky Science walk isn't just for kids, it's available to all ages and thriller enthusiasts. Trek through Sticks and Tricks' nature loop, and peek into laboratories. The walk will be outdoors, and all proceeds benefit the Palouse Discovery Science Center and their programs.

Purchase tickets online.

Around the World Trivia Night

Time: 9-11 p.m.

Date: Oct. 22

Place: Zeppoz

Price: Various purchasing

Compete and show off geography skills at Around the World Trivia Night for a chance to win prizes. Learn more about India from competing teams and test yourself through the night. The winning team can take home a \$100 Zeppoz gift card along with other prizes.

"In One Ear and Out the Other"—

Diane Worthey

Time: 1 p.m.

Date: Oct. 23-Oct. 24

Place: Online event

Price: Various purchasing

Chat with author Diane Worthey about her book release "In One Ear and Out the Other." The book is a child's non-fiction about a conductor. Worthey writes in Pullman, performs in the Washington-Idaho Symphony and teaches at the University of Idaho Preparatory Program. At 11 a.m. this Saturday, she will hold a socially distanced author autographing at BookPeople of Moscow.

RSVP for the event by sending an email to bookpeople@moscow.com.

"The Revolutionists"

Time: 6 p.m.

Date: Oct. 23-Oct. 24

Place: Online event

Price: Free to students and \$5 per non-student patron

Support the UI Department of Theater Arts and view their upcoming performance "The Revolutionists." The performance, a dark comedy about how we change the world, will be viewed over a livestream performance via Zoom.

Purchase tickets at online.

5th Annal Pumpkin Hunt

Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Date: Oct. 24-Oct. 25

Place: Spring Valley Family Tree Farm

Price: Various purchasing

October wouldn't feel right without annual pumpkin hunting and hayrides—and it's not too late to grab a jack-o'-lantern. Over at the Spring Valley Family Tree Farm, they have a perfect selection of pumpkins, Christmas trees and treats. While enjoying hayrides, face painting and straw bale mazes are available, keep an eye out for golden gourds to win prizes.

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DIVERSITY

Celebrating Indigenous People's Day



Students at the hybrid viewing of "Gather," a documentary and discussion of food sovereignty in Indigenous communities, held in person and through zoom.

Richard Lasiw | Argonaut

Honoring and celebrating Indigenous communities through art and film

Katarina Hockema
ARGONAUT

The Native American Student Center organized a keynote address and a film screening to celebrate Indigenous People's Day on Oct. 12 and 13.

The first event featured was a keynote address from Nez Perce artist Kellen Trenal Lewis titled "Exploration into Identity and Cultural Survival" held on Oct. 12. Lewis owns and operates Trenal Original, his own business that focuses on underrepresented communities in modern culture, focusing on the visual arts.

As well as owning his own business, Lewis has worked for the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure the representation of underrepresented communities in the 2010 Census through organizing meetings, educational seminars and city-wide informational events. He has also served as the Native American student recruitment coordinator for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at the University of Notre Dame.

During his keynote, Lewis discussed incorporating his intersectional identities as both an Indigenous and Black man into his art and his work, aiming to bring the topics of identity, tradition, innovation and culture into the contemporary art scene.

"I aim to increase visibility for Native American and African American people," Lewis said. "I take the conjunction of my identities and let the world know, I am here. We are here."

The second event held on Oct. 13 was a film screening of "Gather," organized by the Native American Student Center and the Center for Volunteerism and Social Action. The film was followed by a virtual Q&A panel featuring Indigenous representatives to discuss the film and answer any audience questions.

The film explored the "growing movement amongst Indigenous

Americans to reclaim their spiritual and cultural identities through obtaining sovereignty over their ancestral food systems," according to the Indigenous People's Events page on the University of Idaho website.

"This is a story that is so familiar to so many of our tribes throughout the United States," Leanne Campbell, the practitioner of Coeur D'Alene Tribal History and Culture and a member of the Cultural Tourism Program, said. "This issue touches us all—the issue of food sovereignty."

The Q&A panel included Leanne Campbell, Dr. Philip Stevens, an assistant professor of anthropology and the director of American Indian studies at UI and Lucinda Simpson, an enrolled member of the Nez Perce tribe and a graduate of the Idaho Police Officer Standard Training Academy. AC Sanchez, the Food Distribution Coordinator for the Coeur D'Alene Tribe was present in addition to Ciarra Greene, a member of the Nez Perce Tribe General Council Resolutions Committee and Nicholas Kager, a deputy travel Historical Preservation Officer for the Coeur D'Alene Tribe.

The panel discussed the film's main themes of food sovereignty, the connection between Indigenous communities and natural lands and food sources and the importance of educating Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals alike on the history and traditions of the Tribes around them to preserve the unique culture.

"For all of us that continue with our traditional knowledge and our way of life, this is a conscious decision for us to learn, and to deepen our own knowledge," Campbell said. "We have a responsibility to learn everything that we can and try to teach what we know so that the culture can continue."

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BUSINESS

Delivering kombucha like the milkman

How Love's Kombucha makes their signature drinks

Emily Pearce
ARGONAUT

Sitting in their booth at the Moscow Farmers Market, the first time they had ever sold their kombucha, Renee and Emmett Love launched their local, alumni business, Love's Kombucha. Spending the winter experimenting with flavors, they started out doing home delivery.

"The first farmers market was the first time we ever sold our kombucha, and that first summer we actually only sold at the farmers market, and then by the end of that summer, we were trying to get into local businesses," Renee said. "There is a little bit of lag time in there, so we ended up doing this home delivery service where it was kind of like the milkman or milkwoman, and they put out clean empty bottles on their porch and we picked them up and we replaced them with full bottles of kombucha every single week."

Renee and Emmett started their business in Moscow but learned about kombucha for the first time living in Houston, Texas. While in Texas for four years, they took their first sip of kombucha and went home with a culture. They started getting into making kombucha, and when they moved back to Moscow, they decided to make a side hustle out of it.

Renee and Emmett run their business on the side of full-time jobs. Renee is an instructor of the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Idaho, according to UI's website. She is also running for the Idaho House of Representatives. Emmett builds houses with his brother, Renee said.

Started in 2016, the business has grown to 20 different locations around the Palouse before scaling back after COVID-19.

Thinking fast through the pandemic, Love's Kombucha introduced canning their drink, which was a big step. Their locations can be found on their website.

Renee and Emmett ferment their kombucha in their own home, in a commercial kitchen.

"We started our business, so we had to build a dedicated brewing facility at our house, actually," Renee said. "And so, it's a commercial kitchen with a dedicated fermentation room and cooler. And that actually gets checked by the health department at least once a year."

Renee said that it's challenging because kombucha is one food that needs a commercial kitchen rather than a regular one.

They use 25-gallon containers to brew a small batch and focus on flavoring their kombucha with spices and herbs, rather than using juice to mask the true flavors of the drink.

Kombucha is easy to make and can be a hobby taken up in quarantine.

The main ingredients in kombucha are tea, sugar or honey, water and a culture. After letting sit for two weeks in a sterile container, it can be taken out and put in the fridge to drink, Renee said—the hardest thing is brewing consistent, good kombucha.

Renee gives classes on how to make kombucha that is available to the community to learn about the process.

For those who first try kombucha, Renee recommends mellow flavors like white rose and calm-bucha. During the seasons, they make kombucha with cinnamon, clove, orange and lemon peel which are popular.

For those wanting to start a business, Renee sees potential in starting small.

"I think you know our business model of starting out small, and then growing as we get bigger has been really valuable and it's really helped us through this time when small businesses," Renee said. "I think that the farmers market is a great incubator for businesses, I think that was really good for letting us speak to customers see the reaction when they tried it see if they liked it we got to see what our top flavors were and then keep those flavors."

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DIVERSITY

Take Back the Night vigil honors survivors

Survivors and allies help to shed light on interpersonal violence

Katarina Hockema
ARGONAUT

The Women's Center and other campus entities held a candlelight vigil on the Tower Lawn for this year's Take Back the Night event on Oct. 8.

The event was originally scheduled to take place on Sept. 17, directly following Tai Simpson's keynote address, but was rescheduled due to poor air quality conditions on campus from regional wildfires.

The vigil was open to all. Attendees stood socially distant across the lawn, facing each other. Each spot was indicated by an electric tealight to be held by the attendee, and individuals were encouraged to remain silent throughout the event to respect the survivors and honor the vigil.

"This is a great way to shine the light on a lot of victims from sexual assault and domestic violence as well," Briseida Soto-Rodriguez, a volunteer at the Women's Center and elementary education major, said.

Jackie Sedano, the program coordinator of the Women's Center, and Alyda Jaegerman from Alternatives to Violence on the Palouse guided the event, informing the participants on statistics relating to interpersonal violence, as well as the history and message of Take Back the Night.

"One in four women and one in seven men worldwide will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes," Sedano said. "With this comes the fact that less than 50% of these crimes will be reported by survivors. This vigil is to bring light to a topic that is often shoved in the dark...every story matters no matter the circumstance, and we are all behind you."

Take Back the Night events in the past have included a rally and marching procession to Katy Benoit's memorial bench at the Hello Walk to honor her memory during Campus Safety Awareness Month, as well as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. However, due to COVID-19 safety protocols, a socially distant vigil was chosen with participants encouraged to visit the bench on their own time.

"I think the vigil is completely appropriate considering everything that's going on," Lauren Carlsen, ASUI president and environmental science major, said. "The march is incredible, but it's not quite conducive for social distancing. I totally understand why they did this, and I think this is just as impactful."

A 'Speak Out' meeting was hosted by Jaegerman in the Trout Room of the LLCs after the vigil. The meeting provided a safe, confidential space for both survivors and allies to share personal stories and experiences relating to domestic violence and sexual assault. All who attended the vigil were welcomed to the meeting except for mandatory reporters to respect confidentiality.

"My hope is that the support you feel and see tonight shows no bounds," Jaegerman said. "In this moment and beyond you are not alone. We see you. We believe you."

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ART

Prichard Art Gallery displays the pros and trains the young



Students of the ASAP show off their sketches

Paige Fiske | Argonaut

Walking into the gallery you wouldn't think to look beyond the exhibits

Paige Fiske
ARGONAUT

When walking into the Prichard Art Gallery, patrons first notice the giant art exhibit hanging from the ceiling. The Kaleb Bass creation is an extravagant mixture of fabric, string, wood and video projection all combined to form "Connected by Water."

Continuing to walk around, patrons will find canvases hanging from the rest of the gallery walls displaying the collections of two more artists, Theresa Rushing and Dongming Zhao.

Four unique artists are displayed inside the gallery and included a slideshow projection of abstract portraits in a small viewing room on the second floor. This exhibit was made by Robbie Mann and is entitled "Men of Power."

This MFA Exhibit, "In-Between Places," is a makeup presentation for the four seniors' culminating capstone projects that would have been displayed before their commencement last spring.

Gallery Director Roger Rowley said he offered the gallery for this event because he wanted them to have their

senior experience.

"A lot of places just went to all online so their students never had a physical presentation of their work," Rowley said. "We're somewhat unusual in the fact that we actually did get to do the whole exhibition."

On the main level of the gallery, a half-open door reveals three young boys sketching away while looking at a collection of random objects.

"It's good for capturing the essence of the drawing when you're just looking at the object without looking at the paper and your hand makes the movements, and after you can look at it and see where you could be more defined, which I see a lot of," Linus, one of the boys, said.

These children are a part of the small group of Moscow Elementary students who get to attend the After School Art Program (ASAP) at the Prichard Gallery on Thursdays from 3:45-5 p.m.

The Docent Program, typically run by volunteers from the community, is field trip classes that patrons can take to visit the gallery, tour the exhibit and then take part in a hands-on art lesson.

Rowley explained the gallery receives a grant from the Idaho Commission For Art to help pay for arts education, which helps the Prichard Gallery maintain these beloved children's programs.

On a typical year, upwards of 1,200 students visit the gallery, but because of

the pandemic guests are limited and the 12 person class has decreased to five kids.

Instructor Jennifer Rod has been teaching these classes for three to four years and still manages to plan unique themes for each new semester.

"One time we did rock paper scissors," Rod said. "Some of the classes (we did) had to do with rocks. Whether it was painting on rocks or drawing rocks...the paper ones, we of course drew on paper. We did some paper sculptures and then scissors; we did cut out things. So it just helps me to make a theme to plan lessons for."

The class's current theme is contour drawing, which is the drawing technique that was explained by Linus.

Each of the students sat at their table with a collection of figurines in front of them and multiple drafts sprawled across the table.

Silas, Bruno and Linus all explained the concept of contour drawings in similar terms, capturing the essence of the figurines and letting their hand movements follow.

Maybe one day Bruno, Linus and Silas' work will be hanging in the main room at their MFA Exhibition in about 13 years.

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Sports

BASKETBALL

UI women's basketball finish first practice

Team back on the court for first time since March

Armin Mesinovic
ARGONAUT

The University of Idaho women's basketball team completed its first official practice of the 2020-21 season on Oct. 14. The Vandals officially started their preseason as they have until Nov. 25 to finish 30 practices before the regular season is set to start.

Last season, the Vandals were set to face-off for the Big Sky Conference (BSC) title against Montana State, but COVID-19 prevented them from getting the chance. The Vandals look to return to last season's intensity. They ended the 2019-2020 regular season with a record of 22-9 (15-5 BSC), dominating defensively as they finished with the best defense in the BSC. UI looks to maintain a strong defensive front along with bringing in more offensive weapons with their four new faces to replace UI graduates Lizzy Klinker and Isabelle Hadden.

"We are going to have a lot more depth this year," Jon Newlee, head coach of UI women's basketball, said. "I love our two transfers Gabi and Rylee. I also love our two freshmen. I think everyone will love watching them play. They can both score and defend well. I think we will be a much more physical basketball team this year, but a much quicker



Head Coach Jon Newlee explaining a drill to the team during practice.

Vandal Athletics | Courtesy

team as well."

With the new recruits, chemistry is a key for a team to be successful, and it has proved to be a challenge for teammates to get accustomed to each other because of COVID-19 precautions.

"We haven't been able to use the locker room or go on a team retreat, and that's how the team usually bonds," Newlee said. "It will be a slower process because the new people coming in will play a key role for us... It's been a juggling act for me to get everyone together and really clicking off the floor and then translating it onto the floor."

The Vandals have 10 players returning from last season, including Big Sky All-Conference selections, junior guard Gina Marxen and

sophomore forward Beyonce Bea. Marxen led the Vandals in scoring with 412 points, and she led the BSC in three-pointers making 89. Even with the unpredictable season, Marxen is glad to be back on the court.

"It feels great to be back," Marxen said. "We didn't have our postseason workouts like normal last season but being back here and being able to practice together and find that chemistry again is really exciting."

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Senior guard Allison Kirby shoots a three-pointer during practice Vandal Athletics | Courtesy



Junior center Jack Wilson goes up for the layup during practice

Vandal Athletics | Courtesy

BASKETBALL

Vandals hopeful after first practice

Coach Claus praises Athletic Training Department for their COVID-19 response

Richard Lasiw
ARGONAUT

Idaho Vandal's men's basketball Head Coach Zac Claus, senior forward Scott Blakney and senior guard Damen Thacker's leadership looks promising for the 2020-21 season after their first practice on Oct. 14.

For his first official season in charge, Claus is very happy with his team and his staff, praising Chris Walsh, the head athletic trainer, for his role in monitoring the team's health during COVID-19.

"(Walsh) has been fabulous in terms of leading our department, making sure that we are doing everything as safe and healthy as humanly possible," Claus said.

He is also pleased with the rest of his staff this season, claiming "they are who I lean on every single day. I'm very lucky to have such a wonderful staff."

Claus took over in July 2019 as the interim head coach, after a long career in basketball. Claus spent four seasons as an assistant coach at UI, 10 seasons as an assistant coach at the University of Nevada, six years as director of Basketball Operations at Nevada, three seasons as an assistant coach at Sacramento State, two years at Portland State as director of Basketball Operations and assistant coach and began his career at Nebraska Wesleyan, where he spent one season as the assistant varsity and head junior varsity coach.

The 2020-21 season will look different than most seasons, as COVID-19 restrictions limit the entire community. That does not seem to affect the basketball team's morale, despite players having to be tested three times per week, per NCAA guidelines. Following months of not being able to get into a gym or a court due to closures, the team is allowed 30 practices

over a 42-day span before the season officially starts in December. Blakney describes his first time on the court since around March as "super exciting and a lot of fun to finally be able to get on the court for an extended period of time."

After former guard Trevon Allen's graduation last year, leadership roles on the team are open. Blakney and Thacker are promising candidates to fill the gap, who take the responsibility of guiding the incoming freshman very seriously. Blakney, a business economics major, earned recognition as a member of the 2019-20 National Association of Basketball Coaches Honors Court as well as Big Sky All-Academic honors last year.

"We've been doing all we can to help the new guys come into the program and learn the ropes," Blakney said.

Blakney, who earned a 4.0 last year, also earned 8.2 points and 4.4 rebounds per game for the 2019-20 season.

Thacker led Walla Walla Community College to the Northwest Athletic Conference Championship, finishing out the series with a record of 13-3 prior to his first season as a Vandal in 2019-2020. His career high of 24 points was scored against Walla Walla and averaged 6.0 points, 2.5 rebounds and 1.2 assists for the season. The leadership role "comes from everybody" Thacker said.

"Coach talks about our character all the time and it's evident in the things we do on a daily basis, whether it be on or off the court," Thacker said.

Vandal men's basketball are scheduled to begin their season at Sacramento State on Dec. 3. The Vandal's full 20 game conference schedule can be found online.

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Opinion

POLITICS

We need Election Day as a holiday

There is no reason we don't already have a federal holiday for election day



Carter Kolpitcke
ARGONAUT

The pervasiveness of ordinary tasks and responsibility calls for the creation of a national election holiday.

With just under two weeks until this exhausting presidential election comes to a close, many are getting their affairs in order to cast their vote. Whether it is an absentee ballot sent through the mail or dredging through a COVID-19 wasteland for in-person voting, one common theme perpetuates through this election cycle — it's hard.

ASUI has spent a good part of this early academic year pushing for a school-wide holiday on Nov. 3 to encourage students, faculty and staff to vote, however they decide to do it. The motion was deemed undoable by University of Idaho administrators.

Now, students must find time in between class and work schedules to spend at their polling site to vote. Or, plan

enough in advance to request a mail-in ballot and submit with ample time before the deadline. I'm not saying this is an insanely hard task to do—it's been done for centuries. But why?

Election Day in the U.S., which is always the first Tuesday of November (permitted it's not Nov. 1), is not a federal holiday. Considerably, this is one of—if not the—most important day in the American way of life. The election of our representatives determines the domestic and foreign success of our nation. Though voting is a citizen's civic duty, why not make it easier?

Several states, including Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, West Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey and New York, have implemented an "Election Day holiday." It is only 11 states out of 50. Barely 20% of the country have the time actually set aside to do their civic duty.

A federal Election Day holiday has been proposed many times throughout the years, most recently in early 2019. House Democrats introduced the bill to create a federal holiday for Election Day in January 2019 and it was met with Republican disapproval, as reported by CNBC.

Mitch McConnell, Senate majority leader, had this to say, "Just what America needs, another paid holiday and a bunch of government workers being paid to go out

and work, I assume [for] our colleagues on the other side — on their campaigns," stated in a CNBC article.

Despite two-thirds of citizens in support of the idea, per a Pew Research Survey, the issue remains partially contentious among party lines. As someone who is firm in opinion and clearly on one side politically, I'll be the first to say that not everything has to be a party issue.

This doesn't help any party more than the other. All an Election Day holiday would do is give equal opportunity for citizens to be heard and listened to. Isn't that what America is all about? Equal opportunity?

We all deserve to have a fair chance to cast our votes—now more than ever. It's too late for this election cycle, but this is an easy measure to take in order to encourage more citizens to vote.

May I not mention other federal holidays? Do you know what Labor Day celebrates without having to Google it? Or is it your three-day party getaway weekend every September? There's no hate for the latter, but let us all recognize the severity of Election Day in comparison.

Keep it in your consideration. And, most importantly, don't forget to vote.

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ENVIRONMENT

The world during quarantine

When humans stay inside, does nature really rebound?



Beth Hoots
ARGONAUT

We all remember toward the beginning of quarantine in the U.S. when the viral photos of dolphins and swans in a crystal-clear Venetian canal gained attraction on the Internet, right? The caption declared that humans are the real virus and without us "nature is healing."

Your tree-hugging Facebook friends weren't the only ones fooled by the post either, several news sites reported on the pictures before it was revealed that the inspirational animal recovery was fake news.

National Geographic reports that while the waters of Venice's canals were clearing up due to reduced boat traffic during the pandemic, the swans and dolphins were photographed in other parts of Italy where their presence was normal before COVID-19 shut down the nation.

It's not hard to understand how the misinformation spread, and who wouldn't want to believe it was true? I think we want to believe something good will come from the hard times we're living through, that there's a cosmic reason for this virus and when it's over the world will be a better place. It has been eight months of consistently bad news across the board and it's natural to crave a silver lining.

Whether that silver lining can come from the natural world is up for debate. While national parks and wildlife refuges around the world have seen decreased traffic, giving the wildlife some much-needed rest, the loss of tourism revenue threatens the status of future conservation funding.

The New York Times stated in June that elephant survival has increased in Thailand's Khao Yai National Park now that they no longer have to tread dangerous routes through the jungle to avoid encountering tourists. A separate New York Times article from April, however, revealed that a spike in poaching attempts has been a dark consequence of cutbacks in the tourist economy of South African national parks.

The pandemic has started an important conversation about our role in nature and the ways we can alter our habits to live more sustainably, if and when, things go back to normal. If COVID-19 can be traced back to an animal-infected patient zero, we might consider ways to prevent future diseases spread between animals and humans by preserving more habitat and limiting human development in wildland-urban interface areas.

Anthropocene Magazine published an article describing the increased efficiency of solar power grids in Delhi, India, as air pollution plummeted during lockdown, prompting conversations about what a world with clean air might look like and how to achieve it.

For political conservation movements, COVID-19 has almost certainly had a net-negative impact. Rural Indigenous communities across the Americas have been especially vulnerable to the virus, and we have lost too many unsung champions of environmental activism this year. Legal cases concerning environmental law have been drawn out due to lock-down procedures, but logging projects, both legal and illegal, have continued almost unimpeded in many areas. And, in regions without reliable Internet access, activists and environmental stakeholders have been forced to choose between foregoing scheduled meetings or risking their lives by gathering.

The pandemic and resulting quarantine have unmistakably affected our natural world. Some places have seen evidence of natural systems on the rebound, while other ecosystems would be better off with a return to the status quo. COVID-19 isn't doing us any favors. If we really want to see nature heal, it will take intentional action and cultural shifts across the globe.

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HEALTH

Drug use prevention

Dropping drug use numbers, helping with recovery



Zachary Gokey
GUEST VOICE

Drug use interfering with daily life is something we have all heard of, or maybe even experienced ourselves. You might even know of someone who has been negatively affected by drug use, whether they are celebrity, a family member, a friend or ourselves. It can be incredibly difficult to handle, to care for and to experience.

At the University of Idaho, we are not exempt from drug use and its effects. There are preventative measures students can take advantage of here on campus such as a variety of events and resources that can help provide the needed support.

The National College Health Assessment surveyed 18,764 college students on a variety of health topics, including drug use. From this, we see that

drug use dropped nearly 6% from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 — that means we went from 26.3% to 20.9%. While this is a significant drop, the percent of college students using drugs remains high.

In addition, we may have students on campus that are still struggling because of their drug use and may want to begin recovery. How can we drop this number even more? An important part of recovery, whether if it's from drug use or mental health issues, is social support. A strong social support network is where we all can do our part to help one another.

Social support for recovery can be like antibiotics for an infection and it can make a massive difference for students who identify as recovering. But, unlike antibiotics, social support is often overlooked to help those struggling. Social support has been shown to improve health and provide emotional relief.

Why is this important when considering drug use? People in recovery can often experience intense negative emotions, or maybe they just need something to take their mind off what drug they typically use.

What can you do to provide support? Staying in touch, reciprocating invitations and letting people know you care are all

ways that can help you stay connected. Additionally, when your friends succeed, be happy instead of jealous. Be a good listener, and if they are open about trying to recover, you might consider asking them how that is going to provide additional support. These can help deepen a relationship. In case you cannot always be there, UI has programs and events to help support students.

Programs, events and clubs on campus provide students with resources and information about nutrition, sleep, relationships and substance use. For substance use, Vandal Health Education has Coffee Hours for students who identify as being in recovery and are interested in being part of a sober community. It takes place every Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. in the ISUB Panorama. For people who like their privacy, there is the Counseling and Testing Center that offers free and confidential counseling to students located in Mary Forney Hall Room 306 on Blake Avenue.

There are many more recovery options out there and a good place to find information on them is at uidaho.edu/vandalhealth which can help you find events and programs. Good luck out there and stay safe Vandals.

Micayla Dougherty | Argonaut



WEATHER

Let it snow, I'll stay inside

Winter is nearly as terrible as the pandemic, but we can overcome it



Anteia McCollum

ARGONAUT

Snow is massively overrated. The beautiful photos of snowcapped mountains leave me inspired and in awe, wanting to go visit those types of places for myself. Until I remembered snow is one of the most troublesome nuisances of my existence, especially in 2020.

The National Weather Service predicts a 60-70% chance of snow here in Moscow on Friday night, with a slight chance of snow continuing into Saturday. While I doubt the flying frosty flakes will be here for long because of the sunny days forecasted to follow, I'm still dreading the thought of the weather getting cold enough for snow already.

With the pandemic still running rampant, the cold weather is providing less and less opportunity to get outside

and be active. I can no longer hike to the peaks I love so much because they will be transformed into those pretty photographs, leaving me longing for summer.

The gear I would need to buy in order to hike safely during the winter months costs an incredible amount of money I have already spent on basic survival, like groceries and rent, during the course of the year.

Winter is coming to Moscow much faster than I, and many others, are ready for. This year has flown by, leaving flashes of all the insane events that have happened so far. Winter is just one more obstacle and, unfortunately, it won't be the way movies and photos portray it.

All of the cutesy Christmas movies with ice skaters on frozen ponds, snowball fights with hardly any competition, big snowflakes carrying magical wishes and whatever else comes with the Hollywood magic of snow are great. However, trying these things out in real life have, for me at least, proven to be rather miserable.

If I'm going to go ice skating, I would rather go to an ice rink where I know the ice is stable and smooth enough for my inexperience with the sport. Idaho has few easily accessible natural bodies of water

where the ice is thick enough and smooth enough to skate on for fun. Ice fishing is the more dominant sport here.

I've never had a snowball fight end without someone getting a bit too competitive, eventually ending the brawl because getting too competitive results in either an ice ball to the face or wounded pride.

Even if these things were enjoyable for me, the circumstances of this year's social scene have made the large clusters of ice skaters and wrestling snowball throwers impossible. Social distancing is going to be the hardest obstacle to overcome this winter, even with how much I despise cold weather.

With summer activities like swimming in the river or going on long strolls through the local forests being canceled by crappy weather, I've been racking my brain for things to do when the snow comes. Taking a walk during the winter months isn't worth the frozen feet, spilled coffee and bruised tailbone.

Some of my favorite winter activities are parties, especially with the amount of holidays there are. In-person parties are out of the question this year, so Zoom parties will be my go-to for the pumpkin

carving gathering and Christmas Eve movie night.

When there aren't any holidays to celebrate, the duo of baking and exercising seem to work fairly well. Baking provides a way to heat up the house and eat some yummy sweets, while the exercise counteracts the weight I would gain and keeps me from moping on the couch.

Reading is another one of my favorite activities for being stuck indoors. There is so much flexibility behind it. You can listen to an audiobook while you do dishes, read a book over Zoom with your family or friends to make it a group event or you can simply curl up with a cozy blanket and a cup of cocoa to enjoy.

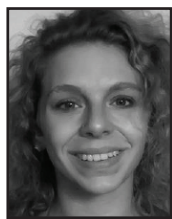
While my favorite outdoor activities will be nearly nonexistent this winter, there are plenty of creative ways to keep my mind active and occupied while I'm home. Maybe I could even teach myself to love the snow a little more.

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COMMUNITY

Masked Kindness

Customer service to the "Karens" and flat earthers of 2020



Rebecca Pratt

ARGONAUT

I love my job. I love helping people, even if it is just helping people find a sweater and jeans they feel like they can kill it in. I am not an essential worker during these crazy times, and I feel a little ridiculous and out of place when I have a bad day at my job that I know I am lucky to have.

In this war-time-like period, I am just a retail worker at a local boutique, far from the front lines in our hospitals and safely distanced from the virus infected halls of our nursing homes.

But pandemic related issues are everywhere including the little shop I spend half my week in. Enter stage left the uneducated, immoral boycotting of local businesses all over my community. About the time Northern Idaho began reopening, Panhandle Health District began implementing mask mandates as the district infection rates continued to rise. Along with that came the push back from the capital "K" Karens and the Bill Nye haters who, like a good portion of our country's citizens, decided masks just weren't quite up there with toilet paper when it came to COVID-19 survival kits.

Community members threw their concerns for reopening local economies and supporting the little man out the window and began attacking local business owners for whether they required masks in their privately-owned place of business. Online threats to rally boycott troops were sent to owners online and over the phone until it exploded on local Facebook channels.

Now enter stage right. Community

politics have infiltrated how personal and professional health can be observed in the workplace across the community. My workplace guidelines for business survival rely on the staff members not triggering any of our trigger-happy customers.

I should also clarify that I am the only one at my work who regularly wears a mask while on the clock. This being the case, the Trumpers and Karen's other cousins got a mixed message the days I work. The mask to face ratio is about 50/50 in our shop when they walk in, so the confusion and anxiety is apparent on their entitled, reality unchecked maskless faces. If I had a dollar for every customer that came into the store with mask in hand waving it around like it were a farewell handkerchief asking if they "have to wear it?" I would make three times my two weeks' pay in a day.

When I am asked that question, all I am able to say is "up to you" because I cannot and will not be the reason my boss's lifelong goal of owning and running her own business becomes unachievable. For that reason, I work with a mask covering my uncomfortable and irritated customer service smile. Because the adult children must have their temper-tantrum and not cover their mouth and nose, I must shut my mouth all together.

So no, I am not on the frontlines of this pandemic. I am so very lucky to have a job, let alone one I love. But I am still surrounded by people who claim to love shopping local to support the community. These people are the same ones holding local businesses and the health of their employees for ransom to make their lives feel a little bit more in their control.

All the same, I'll give you service with a smile and I'll check to see if we have that sweater in your size.

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POLITICS

Trump v. Biden: town hall edition

Trump and Biden go head to head for primetime dominance



Ben Kendall

ARGONAUT

Last week President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden participated in competing town halls. In one corner you have Biden, a 77-year-old man who is the physical embodiment of the phrase "that reminds me of a story..." In the other, Trump, a man who talks about policy like a husband caught in bed with someone named "Stormy."

These events were held mostly for the benefit of undecided voters. But how is this event going to change things? Are we expecting someone watching Trump's town hall to go, "wait... Trump's crazy? I didn't see that coming." That just doesn't sound likely. All it ended up being was a chance for Biden to feverishly explain he wants to help, and for an undecided voter to compliment Trump's "handsome" smile.

Biden's town hall took place at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, and was hosted by George Stephanopoulos. Usually in a town hall the questions are supposed to challenge the candidate, but in a unique twist it was Biden's answers that challenged the audience's attention span. He clearly has a lot of information to share, but "we have to move on to the next question Mr. Vice President" was a phrase used often during the event.

The Biden town hall was boring in a good way. It gave the American people a chance to actually hear what Biden is

planning to do if he becomes president. The 15.1 million people that tuned in are a testament to the idea that America yearns to be bored by politics again.

Trump's town hall was in Miami, and the vibe was hostile from the start. Trump's hackles were raised and moderator Savannah Guthrie had pepper spray on hand. Guthrie started the town hall with some hard hitting questions of her own. She asked about Trump's recent retweet of a conspiracy theory that claimed Bin Laden was still alive. If that scenario sounds made up, you clearly haven't paid attention much the past four years.

This wasn't supposed to be a debate and apparently Trump didn't get the memo. Any question that Trump received triggered a rant about everything except whatever the question was about. Trump still won't encourage people to wear masks, which is disappointing but expected, and he complimented QANON for being anti-pedophilia. That's technically true but not remotely the point.

This event was a major disappointment for long time viewers of Trump. It came off more as a clip show of the greatest excuses of the past four years. All of us who were hoping for some new content were very disappointed.

The night ended with Biden walking away as confident as ever, and with Trump slicking back to the triage unit we used to call the White House. An obvious cliffhanger if I ever saw one. So be sure to tune in this Thursday at 6 p.m. for Trump v. Biden Part 3: The Final Chapter. And make sure to get out and vote. Whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, you won't be able to contribute to your party unless you let your voice be heard.

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