

# BLOT



# Editor's note

It's been 44 years since Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court case in which abortion was ruled legal under the Fourteenth Amendment, and female reproductive rights still remain a hotly contested issue. Tensions surrounding the issue of female reproductive rights, including the right to an abortion, have been rising in the last year.

Earlier this year, President Donald Trump made his first move in shaping the United States' female reproductive health policies by signing an executive order to reinstate the Mexico City policy. The order prohibits providing federal funding to international nongovernmental organizations that offer and advise on family planning and reproductive health options if they include abortion, even if the funds are not specifically used for abortion-related services. In April, Trump also signed a bill that allows states to withhold federal money from organizations that provide abortion services, including Planned Parenthood.

What's largely overlooked in policies, domestic or international, regarding women is that the package of "female reproductive rights" goes beyond abortion — it includes women's access to contraceptives, preventative screening and testing services and reproductive organ procedures, such as hysterectomies. One of the key first steps in making any sort of progress on the issue of female reproductive rights is to actually start talking about woman's reproductive organs — the uterus, the fallopian tubes, the vagina — and how these services help the actual human beings these organs belong to.

Whether an individual is pro-choice or pro-life, we have to understand that we need to start talking about all aspects of female reproductive health, even the aspects that might make us uncomfortable. The heart of any female reproductive rights discussion needs to be about bodies, and the health of bodies. If women's bodies are only treated as taboo — if our uteruses, our vaginas, our breasts are thought of as that which we can't talk about — then we will never truly make progress on any policy that involves the female body.

— CB

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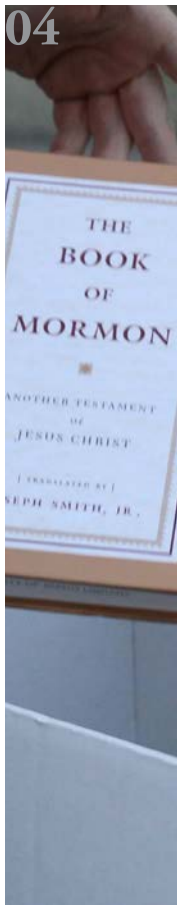


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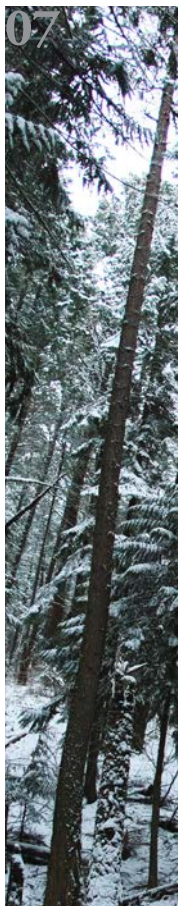
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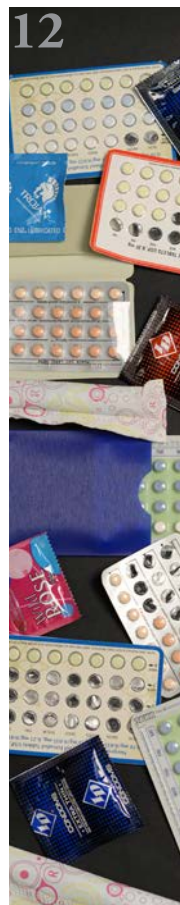
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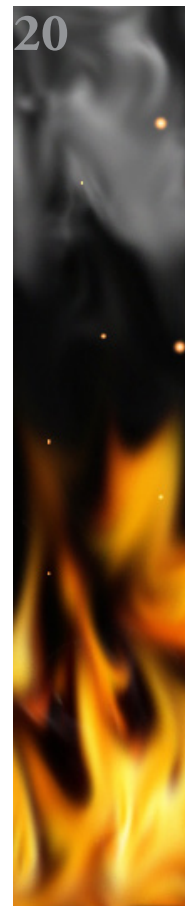
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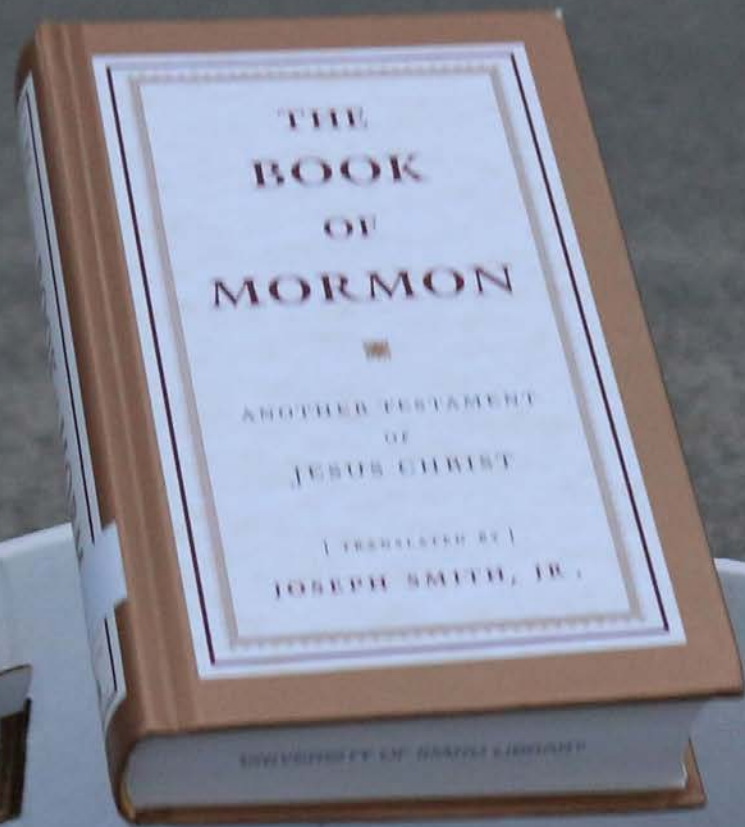
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# Why they left



DONATE

# A glimpse into the complicated lives of those who left the Mormon church

STORY BY Erin Bamer  
PHOTOS BY Leslie Kiebert



Jessica Darney is a contagious disease. So is Zachary Lien. Bret Colt. Falin Wilson. Kirsie Lundholm.

Don't worry, they only infect a specific group of people — the Latter Day Saints.

Darney's father infected multiple people. After raising a family of Mormons for years, he decided they would leave the church when Darney was 14. Darney said he disagreed with the faith's foundation and their views on women and people of different sexual orientations.

When Darney's family left, members of her extended family soon followed suit. She said her father was the spark that ignited the chain reaction. Talking to him made the others realize what they didn't like about the church as well.

And so the disease spread.

Zachary Lien said intellectuals are one of the three main enemies of the Latter Day Saints, along with queers and feminists. He said during Mormon services, words that typically have positive connotations — like “science” and “evidence” — are spoken with venom.

But perhaps it makes sense that intellectuals are seen as a threat to the church. In Lien's case, the knowledge he gained by going to school was a primary reason he abandoned his faith at such a young age.

Before his junior year of high school, Lien said he was the “perfect Mormon boy.” He took seminary classes. He thought the theory of evolution was full of crap. He called a gay student an abomination during class.

Then one day his science teacher explained evolutionary theory to him, and he was surprised to find out how much it made sense. He was exposed to more of the LGBT community and saw they weren't all terrible people. He met strong, independent women who wanted jobs.

Kirsie Lundholm said from a young age, Mormon children are taught not to ask any questions. If you inquired about something like why black men couldn't be bishops at one point in the church's history, other members would look down on you.

Lien asked questions. He conducted research into the formation of the Latter Day Saints, and found information about the founder, Joseph Smith, he never knew before.

“I realized my church didn't exist,” Lien said.

While he researched, his older brother was away on a mission in the Philippines. His brother had a tougher time than Jodi Lewis, a Latter Day

*IMAGE LEFT: The Book of Mormon is tossed into a donation box.*

Saint who also completed her mission in the Philippines.

Although she said it was challenging to learn a new language and culture, Lewis said meeting people who had nothing and showing them the power of her faith was fulfilling.

Lien's older brother did not get the same fulfillment. Lien said he endured several hurricanes and the time he spent there was rough on his body. When his brother returned home, it took him years to fully recover.

But at the time of his mission, Lien's family members were the only people who even had a hint of his brother's misery. The private letters his brother sent home had a different tone than the letters the public received, which waxed poetic about what an amazing time he was having, Lien said.

After finishing his mission, their bishop pressured Lien's older brother to lie to the congregation about his experience and say that the majority of it was positive. Though Lien asked his brother not to lie about his experience in the Philippines, he did it anyway.

"If they can get my brother to lie, what could they make me do?" Lien said.

## ***"If they can get my brother to lie, what could they make me do?"***

Lien's mother was the real devout Mormon of his family compared to his father, Lien said, and it was to her and his brother that he first revealed he would leave the church.

They were playing a board game when it happened. In the weeks beforehand, Lien dropped hints about the doubts he was having about the church, which created tension in the household. When Lien and his mother were teasing his brother, his brother couldn't help but let a comment slip out.

"At least I'm not the one who believes evolution is real."

This led to yet another debate between Lien and his brother. Finally, his mother had to ask, "What future do you see for yourself in the church?"

When Lien responded honestly with, "I don't," there was silence. Lien broke through the quiet to explain his reasoning behind it, and his brother and mother just sat and listened — they didn't argue.

It wasn't until later that the true consequences of Lien's decision were realized. The bonds he had with his family were weakened overnight. At Capital High School, 95 percent of his friends turned their backs on him, he said.

Lundholm and Darney received similar treatment from their "friends" after leaving the church. Ironically, the reason they were even a part of the church was based in social needs, they said.

Lewis said it makes her sad when she hears of people who leave the church, because she gets so much joy out of it herself. She knows the people who leave the church will be incapable of feeling that joy.

Bret Colt said that expression of sadness is a common response from the church, and he laughs at it. It's a contradiction in itself. How can you be sad about something that supposedly makes you so happy?

Not every person who leaves the church comes out in such a straight-forward manner, Lien said. There are three alternatives for people who wish to leave the faith — committing suicide, faking it or coming out. Lien feared if he tried to fake it, he would ultimately end up killing himself. Many people who try to fake it have a hard time repressing their true feelings, Lien said.

Falin Wilson is faking it right now.

His parents still don't know he doesn't consider himself a Mormon anymore, or that he's been trying to leave the church for the past 18 years. Before he came to the University of Idaho, he said his parents asked him to try to attend a service at least once a month.

Wilson went to church once for about 30 minutes in Moscow. It was mostly to get names of people to contact if he ever thought about becoming active again. He has since

forgotten those names and has never returned.

Keeping the secret from his parents is easy with Wilson away at college. He said he strategizes his visits home to Twin Falls to avoid staying on days where he would be required to attend church. So far, his plan has worked.

Wilson said it wasn't the principles of the church that drove him away, like it did for Lien. In fact, he doesn't think the religion itself is that bad — it was the people. He said he thought they were too stuck up, judgmental, controlling.

Sometimes, when Wilson talks about his background to people in Moscow, they will ask, "What's a Mormon?"

"It's nothing," he'll respond. But internally, Wilson will think about how cool it is that some people have never even heard of his parents' faith.

Though Lundholm became a pariah among her old friends in Terreton, Idaho, she said she has multiple Mormon friends in Moscow who are more forward-thinking. They respect her history with the church and don't try to pull her back in.

Her high school's student population was about 80 percent Mormon, and she said she thinks the higher saturation there is of Latter Day Saints in one area, the more judgmental they become.

"In the Book of Mormon, Mormons are said to be the 'salt of the earth,' and salt is good for crops, it helps them grow," Lundholm said. "But if you get too much salt in one place it kind of poisons the ground." ■

To read the full story, visit [blotmagazine.com](http://blotmagazine.com)



STORY BY *Emily Lowe*  
PHOTOS BY *Jordan Finfrock*  
ILLUSTRATION BY *Julianne Bledsoe*

# HOME IN THE GREAT UNKNOWN

*Conservation easement helps family connect with nature*

Helen Stroebel has tirelessly worked for months on a hillside to revive beautiful, native wildflowers that once thrived in Moscow.

The idea bloomed in 2012 as she stared at a four-acre plot of land, one that helps compose the 80 acres of property near Moscow that she co-owns with her mother and brother.

Non-native grasses and weeds previously made the plot unwelcoming. She and hired help spent the first year removing the invasive plants. Yard maintenance workers planted native grasses and wildflowers in their place. For now, red flags mark where the wildflowers will bloom in three years. More flowers will be planted this spring.

Currently, Stroebel is offered no help to continue weeding the

**IMAGE ABOVE:** *Isaiab Rinaldi visited Moscow Mountain this winter.*

four acres, which is roughly the size of four football fields.

She sits out on the hill throughout the spring and summer, weeding plants that have grown in the native flora's space for so long. Before heading out each day, she tells her 83-year-old mother, "I'm going out to play."

Her enthusiasm for nature began early with the help of her parents, Albert and Marjory Stage. Interaction with wildlife kept Stroebel's family constantly outdoors. They've remained on the 80 acres of land since 1962.

Stroebel's preservation of the landscape is all thanks to conservation easements, which are legal agreements made with a land trust on how the land will be conserved. Each agreement is

*The land embraces  
both massive pine trees  
and prairie.  
Rocks and shrubs.  
A garden.  
An old orchard.  
A running trail.  
A two-story house  
and a gazebo.*



flexible to what the landowner hopes to see, and each easement protects land differently. But once these agreements are in place to protect a homeowner's land, it remains in perpetuity — there is no going back or changing it, ever.

The Palouse Land Trust helps landowners in the Palouse region, like Stroebel, purchase conservation easements that will last longer than any lifetime. Landowners who partner with any other land trust across the nation are assisted in creating a conservation plan unique to their aspirations for the land. No matter who the next owner of the land is, the rules for the conservation easement will always be in place, said Amy Trujillo, executive director of the Palouse Land Trust.

For 22 years, the nonprofit organization has assisted landowners in creating easements and performing yearly check-ups on each property to make sure the legal agreement is upheld.

There are 18 landowners in the Palouse with easements. About 4,000 acres of land have been conserved under this system.

Before Stroebel's parents bought the 80 acres of land she co-owns today, they were only renting a portion of the land for their horses in a small pasture. When the landowners wanted to sell the land, the Stages' eagerly purchased it. Eighty acres of land became theirs in 1962.

Forty years passed before Albert and Marjory chose to create a conservation easement. A UI faculty member gave Albert the idea. Marjory remembers it being a fast process. Stroebel, however, said it took many steps over five years. In 2008, the easement was completely finalized. All along the way, the Palouse Land Trust offered guidance.

Easements vary depending on the type of land. The most popular easements are those that protect important natural areas, wildlife habitats, water quality and working farms.

Stroebel's 80 acres is divided up differently, protecting distinctive aspects of nature. In the forest area, the forest service is permitted to log trees to keep the forest healthy. Howard Creek runs along part of the property and is protected. An old cedar grove has historical value, so no trees can be logged there.

The land embraces both massive pine trees and prairie. Rocks and shrubs. A garden. An old orchard. A running trail. A two-story house and a gazebo.

Perhaps the best view of the land is from the gazebo, located about 50 yards beyond the house. A dirt path leads to the tiny pentagon-shaped building. The only thing inside is a bed. The gazebo is off-white from sun exposure. Windows surround the bed, except for on the wall where the head of the bed rests.

Through the windows is where Marjory and Albert spent every night viewing the Palouse's horizon until they were 70.

The idea of conserving land is appealing to many, but most do not decide to partake in easements with a belief that it will be easy.

Physical labor is demanding when there are 80 acres of land to maintain. With the heavy amount of snow last winter, Stroebel struggled to use a snow blower. Pulling weeds is strenuous, but she maintains a garden along with her new four-acre native wildflower project.

She could not imagine giving up the home just because of the work it requires.





Stroebel's parents want the easement to stay in the family. Marjory owns 50 percent of the property and Stroebel and her brother split the other half. Stroebel's children have the choice to take on the home and the easement, too. If ever the family decided they do not want to live on the land, they would sell it to someone. The next owner would continue to follow the easement guidelines, as would the owner who follows them.

Trujillo said the benefits of conservation easements are plentiful for the landowner, but they do impact the development of an area. Once easements are in place, they reduce the value of the land because no more homes can be built on those areas of land. The rural-urban interface grows increasingly popular, but conservation easements take away the opportunity for other people to join. Although developing an area is more profitable than conserving it, these owners don't choose to sign up for an easement for the money. In fact, enacting easements typically cost landowners large sums of money, Trujillo said. Homeowners are expected to pay the different surveys taken of the land as well as pay to fix any environmental hazards or issues a survey finds.

Some landowners receive grants from organizations like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but only if their land benefits the organization's mission. Judy LaLonde, a landowner and easement holder near Moscow, received a grant from the Idaho Department of Lands because they were interested in Big Meadow Creek, which runs through her property. The creek has the potential to become a tributary for steelhead trout to pass through. This helped pay for some of the cost of an easement, but LaLonde said it still costs some several thousand dollars. For Stroebel and her family, the cost of conservation was worth it.

Now, eight years after their easement was finalized, Marjory sits in the two-story house nestled among their 80 acres of land. She is

*IMAGE ABOVE: The University of Idaho Old Arboretum at twilight.*

dressed like she's ready to leave the house, but she sits on a vintage yellow couch, reading an online newspaper. A walker rests directly in front of her and her stark white shoes sit visible between the bars. She faces the big sliding door so she can look at the property. When she recalls stories with the wildlife, she looks outside and smiles, reminiscing.

Marjory is what Stroebel calls an "avid naturalist." Stroebel remembers her mother taking molds of all the animal prints she found on the property.

Once, a bear stood eye-to-eye with her at the kitchen window. He pushed at the window, and she stared wide-eyed back. But she was never afraid. She, as well as the rest of the family, acknowledge they are living in the middle of wildlife and have altered their lifestyle to accommodate to it.

Without the easement, their encounters with wildlife may be fewer. Their property is the only one in the immediate area to have a conservation easement. Though Marjory wishes her neighbors would get easements to further benefit the animals and plants, she has seen her family enjoy nature to the fullest.

When Albert died, his ashes were spread among the trees. His years in forestry management kept him wanting to preserve the forests, and that area of the property quickly became his favorite.

"They are the best looking trees on the property," Marjory said.

Just beyond that patch of forest rests a garden. Marjory and her sister spent hours gardening during her visits to Moscow from Florida. When Marjory's sister died, she asked for her ashes to be spread overlooking the garden.

"Put me with her," Marjory said to her daughter, and they smiled. ■

# AFRICA'S GARDENERS

STORY BY Corrin Bond

ILLUSTRATION BY Julianne Bledsoe

PHOTOS COURTESY OF Paola Stramandinoli Branco

UI graduate student leads project to improve relationship between humans and elephants

While most people think of elephants in terms of their massive size and gentle nature, Paola Stramandinoli Branco likes to think of elephants in three ways — as engineers, architects and gardeners.

“Elephants are a keystone species, which means many other species depend on them, and an unbalanced population of elephants can lead to a dramatic change in the Savanna landscape,” Branco said.

The Brazil native and University of Idaho graduate student researching elephant-human relationships in Mozambique said the lifestyle habits of elephants help shape the landscape.

The animals can walk more than 50 miles per day. As they walk, they clear trees and vegetation from their path, which helps keep the Savanna optimal for grazing animals. In times of drought, Branco said elephants can also remember where water used to be.

“With their trunks and tusks they can dig holes and find water for themselves and other species,” Branco said.

Elephants spend about half of the day eating various fruits, vegetables, leaves and seeds.

“This is why they’re called gardeners,” Branco said. “While they are walking long distances and eating lots of seeds, they poop every 45 minutes — can you imagine how much they are planting?”

Despite the key role elephants play in their ecosystems, their populations continue to decline. The 2016 Great

Elephant Census, the largest continent-wide wildlife survey, found that in 15 of the 18 African countries surveyed, 144,000 elephants were lost to the ivory trade and habitat destruction in less than a decade.

Poaching for ivory is the main threat to elephant populations, but Branco said there are other threats that few are aware of, such as habitat loss and conflicts with humans.

Due to natural habitat loss, most elephant populations are now restricted to national parks and other protected areas of land. Branco said the problem is the land around national parks is often used for agriculture, and elephants don’t recognize the difference between a farmer’s livelihood and a tasty snack.

This problem is at the heart of the research Branco is conducting with elephant populations in Mozambique’s Gorongosa National Park.

“This is the main thing about my research — to find ways to keep elephants inside these protected areas avoiding interactions with the communities, because it’s dangerous for them and it’s dangerous for people,” Branco said.

This is a problem several countries in Africa face, and Branco said each country has developed their own solution.

Branco said in Kenya, local communities build fences lined with beehives around their farms.

“Everyone thinks elephants have very thick skin, but they do have sensitive areas,” Branco said. “The tip of their trunk is very

sensitive. The ears, and the belly too. And as any of us, they don’t like to get stung by bees.”

The fences consist of beehives connected by a wire. If an elephant touches the wire, vibrations shake the hives and aggravate the bees, which deter elephants from moving forward into the farm.

In Tanzania, Branco said a popular method is covering fences in cloth dipped in a mixture of chili powder and engine oil, which produces an unpleasant smell that can agitate an elephant’s nose.

However, methods that work for one country might not work for another. Although beehive fences have been successful in Kenya, Branco said there are concerns that if her research team provides Mozambique community members with wire to build beehive fences, local farmers will instead use the wires to make traps for elephants.

“It’s important to understand the human point of view,” Branco said. “We can’t just go into a different country and try to apply something we think is going to save the elephants. We firstly have to understand the complexity of the whole system in terms of culture, religion, politics and economy.”

One way to better understand the local communities is to document the problems they face. Branco said in August of last year, she enlisted the help of 10 community members.

Every day, these community members



“The reality is we are all humans, we are all people, and we are all living in a world that is connected in such a way that the things happening in other parts of the world are important.”

take reports from local farmers whose farms were raided by elephants. Their reports include the time and date of the incidents, the GPS coordinates and details of the events. In addition to taking community reports and tracking the migration pattern of a select group of elephants, Branco said she and her team brainstorm strategies to better educate local communities about the importance of elephants.

“When working with poor communities this task goes beyond teaching how important elephants are for

*IMAGE LEFT: Gorongosa National Park, a preserved area in the Great Rift Valley of Central Mozambique, is home to lions, hippos and elephants, among other animals.*

the environment and tourism,” Branco said. “While there is lack of food, water, shelter and security, it is almost impossible to make people concerned about elephant conservation, especially if elephants are eating their crops.”

Ryan Long, a UI faculty member and Branco’s graduate adviser, said Branco was approached about leading this project because a mutual colleague believed she would be perfect for the job — and she was.

“Paola is really well-suited for this project,” Long said. “She’s been the perfect person to do it. It’s a master’s level project, but it’s got a lot of complexity associated with it. Not just from a biology standpoint,

*IMAGE ABOVE: Branco’s research specifically focuses on the elephant population of Gorongosa National Park.*

but from a sociological standpoint.”

Long said there is tremendous value in her research — that it’s not only important for the communities surrounding Gorongosa National Park, but it’s also the kind of research that should be shared with the Moscow community.

“The reality is we are all humans, we are all people, and we are all living in a world that is connected in such a way that the things happening in other parts of the world are important,” Long said. “We should care about conserving animals, not just around us, but ones in other parts of the world.” ■



**BOTH SIDES OF  
THE ABORTION  
DEBATE ARE  
REPRESENTED  
ON THE PALOUSE**

*STORY BY Hailey Stewart and Lyndsie Kiebert  
PHOTOS BY Joleen Evans  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY Blake Coker*

# TOEING *life's lines*

In 2013, 664,435 legal abortions were performed in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2015, 1,272 legal abortions occurred in the state of Idaho, according to the state's Health and Welfare Department.

Abortion is a widely debated topic in courts across the world and on the Palouse. With the presence of a Planned Parenthood in a community of diverse views, the Palouse is no different from anywhere else, and members on both sides of the debate call this area home.

These are some of their voices.

## 'I REMEMBER ROE'

Liz Brandt was a college freshman when she heard the news.

The Supreme Court reached a historic ruling in the case of *Roe v. Wade* — the right to legally and safely end a pregnancy through an abortion. The year was 1973.

Now a lawyer and a University of Idaho professor of law, Brandt said the debate surrounding female reproductive rights, especially in relation to abortion, has evolved.

“To me, it was something that was going to help women have choices and eliminate women being taken advantage of,” Brandt said.

Brandt said the argument in the '70s focused on women's safety and health. The increasingly high rate of unauthorized, dangerous abortions initiated the conversation about female reproductive rights, but Brandt said *Roe v. Wade* helped put the issue on the map.

*"If only the woman is forced into that and not the man, then it is gender-based slavery."*

"Women were dying because they were meeting strangers for back-alley abortions and using coat hangers," Brandt said. "It is horrible to think that women died because of the healthcare they couldn't receive."

Within Brandt's social group, no one believed the outcome of *Roe v. Wade* was a bad decision, but still, she always knew that millions took issue with it.

*Roe v. Wade* set a strong legal precedent, but Brandt said abortions have always been linked to phrases like "failure" and "baby killer" — language steeped in moral complexity.

Moscow Right to Life President Sam Paul has his own issue with the morality of abortion.

"I don't think you can separate the legal from the moral. Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's moral," Paul said. "At one time, it was legal in Germany to kill Jews. Does that make it right?"

## 'A SWING AGAINST WOMEN'

Frances Arend never considered the possibility of being pro-choice.

Similar to Paul, the president of the UI Students for Life club said she believes the legality and morality of abortion share a fine line.

"Morally, it is wrong to kill someone, and it is illegal because we view it as immoral," Arend said.

For Arend, abortions do not just affect women — abortions impact all lives involved, including the lives of the unborn.

"When injustice is inflicted on another, because of a rights issue, we have to ask the government to step in and have the government protect the innocent human being," Arend said.

For Brandt, the idea of the government intervening on behalf of choice is rooted in the concept of slavery. Though she said her views may seem "a little out there," she said being forced to bear a child against one's will enslaves the female body.

"If only the woman is forced into that and not the man, then it is gender-based slavery," Brandt said. "Sadly, I've had to become

this radical about it all."

Somewhere in the long history of the reproductive rights discussion, Brandt said the conversation shifted from keeping women safe to keeping women controlled.

She said the tide turned, making women fight for their constitutional rights to bodily independence.

"Attempting to take abortion rights and reproductive rights away is a swing against women — a swing against female independence, a swing against female bodily autonomy, a swing against a female's ability to support herself," Brandt said.

Ramiro Vargas, a UI student and concerned brother and friend, said it is not a man's place to make decisions on topics that directly affect women's bodies.

While reproductive rights can include both males and females, Vargas said he knows women are rarely involved at the legislative level when it comes to their rights.

"It's not really my place, or any man's place to make those decisions for a woman about the things that happen to 'her' body," Vargas said.

Vargas said the reproductive resources available to women before, during and after pregnancy are often sparse because of government interference.

"Women need those resources to take care of their children, but conservative leaders want to diminish those resources to nothing," Vargas said. "You can't have your cake and eat it too."

Vargas said he views his pro-choice stance on abortion rights as a pro-female outlook.

As the only male in a largely female family and someone with a close set of female friends, Vargas said the decision to fight for female reproductive freedoms was an easy one.

"Being pro-choice doesn't mean I want abortions to occur, it just means I want my female friends and sisters to have choices," Vargas said.

Arend also identifies as pro-woman — but in a different sense.

"What about the woman in the womb?" Arend said. "To be a true feminist, you have to care about the rights of women, even if they are not yet born."





## '19 WEEKS. 6 DAYS. 23 HOURS ...'

When Paul works the pro-life booth at the Latah County Fair, he said small children stand before the various models of growing fetuses, point at the earliest stage and shout, “Baby, baby.”

“Children are pro-life,” he said. “It’s not until they are told over and over again that the baby is nothing but a clump of cells, and it’s OK to kill it, that their minds are changed.”

UI freshman Ethan Renshaw identified as pro-choice through his early teen years despite his Catholic upbringing. But, after a while, he said he found his pro-choice stance hard to justify.

“There’s a lot of discussion about the vague concept of choice, but not really discussing what that choice is, and that kind of bothered me,” he said.

Once the details of that “choice” — namely, the details of a late-term abortion — were brought to his attention, Renshaw reevaluated his position. He now considers himself pro-life, and has seen his other views shift to the conservative side as well.

Though Renshaw said he understands the desire to place the abortion limit at, for example, 20 weeks, he doesn’t see logic as the driving force behind those arguments.

“Essentially what you’re saying is that at 19 weeks, 6 days, 23 hours, 59 minutes and 59 seconds, this fetus is not a person, has no rights and there’s really nothing wrong with killing it — but two seconds later it’s precious,” Renshaw said.

Paul echoed Renshaw’s sentiment, noting that conception is the only point where something biologically changes.

“There is nothing that is logically consistent about drawing that line anywhere else,” he said. “The beginning is the beginning is the beginning. That’s personhood.”

Brandt acknowledged that drawing the line at which life begins is no simple task, but said conception does not equal personhood in her worldview.

“I draw mine in saying at least until that embryo is viable and turns into a fetus and develops further, it really isn’t a person in any sense that we would define personhood,” she said.

Though Brandt’s idea of “personhood” happens some time post-conception, she recognizes a fertilized egg might hold a future.

“It is potential life, and we have to be very careful about that,” she said. “I would never encourage someone to get an abortion cavalierly — it’s a life-altering thing.”

UI freshman Mary Alice Taylor grew up with the impression that this life-altering aspect of abortion was inescapable — in fact, she learned “all mothers regret” terminating their pregnancies.

Other rhetoric surrounding abortion in Taylor’s Catholic upbringing included being told Planned Parenthood only did abortion, the fetus always feels pain and everyone believes life begins at conception.

It wasn’t until high school that Taylor was exposed to pro-choice ideas.

“I just realized that I was fed a lot of lies,” she said.

Trips to Planned Parenthood are scattered throughout Taylor’s early adolescent memories — not to access services, but to pray alongside her pro-life grandmother.

Now, as a woman who accesses birth control through Planned Parenthood, Taylor said she can’t imagine being in the shoes of the women who saw her pray.

“You’re just condemning them, and you don’t even know what they’re going there for,” she said. “I could just be going in to refill my birth control, and they just assume I’m going there to get an abortion.”

## 'THE BEST THING FOR ME'

Mia\* can’t tell her parents about her abortion because then they know they won’t see her in their ideal heaven.

Raised in a Mormon household in Idaho Falls, Mia grappled with pro-life and pro-choice views as early as fourth grade. Through conversations with relatives and eventually self-education in her teen years, she came to what she believed to be an informed decision. Mia is pro-choice.

It was a “mental breakdown” caused by the weight of a full course load and other personal struggles that set the UI student onto a course that ultimately led to her own choice.

In fall 2015, she left class, walked home, got in her car, drove back to Idaho Falls, found roommates on Craigslist, a restaurant job and an abusive partner.

When she realized she was pregnant, she had no partner, no parental support and barely enough money to make rent. Despite her use of birth control, several pregnancy tests confirmed conception.

“There was no way that I could have gone through with the

\*At her request, Mia’s name has been changed to protect her identity.

*Let's all work together to make sure that as few people have to get abortions as possible, but not because it's murder – it's because it's tragic and difficult.*

pregnancy, even if I was going to give it up for adoption, and actually sustain my own life,” she said. “It was the best thing for me.”

Mia said there is a clinic unassociated with Planned Parenthood in Twin Falls, just over two hours from Idaho Falls. However, the Twin Falls clinic required an in-person consultation and waiting period prior to the procedure, and she couldn't afford the trip twice.

“Women don't need a week to make a decision, but the government seems to assume you need time to mull over your decision before you can be sure because you're not hysterical or whatever,” she said. “That's sarcasm.”

As a result, Mia traveled to Salt Lake City after a virtual consultation with the area's Planned Parenthood. Three hours of driving, some waiting and 20 minutes later, Mia terminated her pregnancy through the traditional procedure.

Due to the tilted shape of her uterus, she said it took doctors four or five tries to make sure her uterus was entirely vacant, which made the process more painful than in typical instances. Due to that experience, Mia said she wants women to know the procedure is not easy to go through.

“It was actually fairly traumatic and painful. It's not something

that's light. It sucks,” she said. “So yes, let's all work together to make sure that as few people have to get abortions as possible, but it's not because it's murder — it's because it's tragic and difficult.”

After the insertion of a birth control implant — which helped to treat her endometriosis, a painful uterine disorder she has struggled with her entire life — Mia left Planned Parenthood and started making positive life changes.

Mia is back at UI, continuing her education.

“The peace of mind after the leaving (the clinic), and the ability to continue living your life is really, really cool,” she said.

Mia remains adamant that her trip to Planned Parenthood changed her for the better, despite her knowledge that pro-life activists wouldn't support her decision.

“For me it's been, ‘It's my body, and why is that a question?’” she said.

## 'ALONG THE MOSCOW-PULLMAN HIGHWAY ...'

Despite the liberal patch that is the University of Idaho, Eastern Washington and North Idaho remain predominantly conservative



*“I don't want murder to be allowed, that's true. But I also want women to be very well protected and I want them to always have access to the care.”*

on the political spectrum.

Arend said she finds that same sentiment to be true in relation to female reproductive rights on the Palouse.

“On college campuses in general, and especially here at UI, I think people lean more toward the liberal side of allowing women to obtain abortions,” Arend said.

However, she finds the Palouse community to be abundantly pro-life. She said the various pro-life marches she has attended are proof of that.

Paul also sees the community as a supportive group of pro-life advocates, even if those voices are often shadowed by the large presence of the university.

“I think that the silent majority is astoundingly pro-life,” Paul said.

When it comes to community pro-life marches, Paul said the environment only furthers his thoughts about the general population.

“When people drive by, we get nine honks to every flip of the bird,” Paul said.

On the other side of the debate, Vargas said community marches where the pro-choice view is present, like the Women’s March in January, draw crowds that share his outlook.

“Seeing the crowd that gathered at the Women’s March, and seeing all those people that wanted to make change was incredibly impactful,” Vargas said. “With our political climate now, we need that.”

Despite the community’s polarized views, the local Planned Parenthood serves as a reminder of the controversy on either side.

While the terms “pro-choice” and “pro-life” connote a person’s stance on Planned Parenthood, Paul said it comes down to abortion. He noted the abundance of community health centers across the United States, and said they often provide the same contraceptives and other services as Planned Parenthood.

“We don’t need Planned Parenthood, and that’s very, very crippling to the pro-choice crowd,” he said. “(Community health centers) do the same things, they are just not murderers.”

Planned Parenthood in Pullman offers annual exams, birth control and contraceptives, STD testing and treatment and pregnancy testing for the greater Washington and North Idaho area.

However, the facility refers women seeking to terminate their pregnancies to abortion providers in Spokane.

“To me,” Paul said, “that’s just as bad.”

## ‘ACCESS TO CARE’

Brandt remembers a time when women had access to abortions in Moscow. That provider no longer exists, but it served as an ideological battleground while it did.

“It had protesters and picketers outside its door everyday — but at least there was a provider around at the time,” Brandt said. “If anyone had told me back then that we were further behind now than we were then, I would not have ever believed them.”

Brandt said reproductive rights are not just a question of “abortion” or “no abortion.”

“This is a health issue,” she said.

Paul remains an active community voice against abortion, but acknowledges that female reproductive rights encompass more than pregnancy termination.

“I don’t want murder to be allowed, that’s true,” Paul said. “But I also want women to be very well protected and I want them to always have access to the care.”

Today, Paul plans his next pro-life march as Brandt remembers the initial steps of the pro-choice movement.


Today, Renshaw applies a newfound logic while Taylor grapples with a newfound belief.

Today, Vargas defends his sisters while Arend defends sisters not yet born.

And today, Mia carries her abortion in her memory, confident she made the right choice for herself. ■







STORY BY *Austin Maas*  
PHOTOS BY *Sierra Zierler*  
ILLUSTRATION BY *Le Hall*

# A METRONOME OF MENTORSHIP

LGBT FACULTY AND STAFF EXPLORE THE INTRICACIES OF TEACHING

Khaki pants and an oxford shirt. A blazer and short, gelled hair. Suspenders and a bow tie.

This is Rachael, a second-year MA literature candidate, TA English instructor and self-identified butch lesbian at the University of Idaho.

On her first day teaching, Rachael Guenthner remembers arriving 20 minutes early, filled with nerves and wearing a bow tie she borrowed from a friend. For her, the prospect of teaching was filled with the fear that one day her sexuality might place her in the firing line of hate speech.

“I had this vision, thinking about whether or not there was going to be one person at the back of the classroom that said, ‘Big fat ugly dyke, I’m not gonna learn from you,’” Guenthner said. “And, while that’s never happened, it’s still an inherent fear that I have.”

**IMAGE LEFT:** *Rachael Guenthner representing the many identities that lie behind the iconic bow tie.*

That fear is not a concept exclusive to Guenthner. Shea King, a second-year grad student working toward his MFA in directing, is an openly gay man who moved to Idaho from Humboldt County, California. He said at first, he had reservations about moving to an area that was less LGBT-friendly, but he was excited to teach his theater and speech students how to be honest with themselves and address the things they valued when they felt comfortable.

“(My sexuality) is not something that I hide or that I’m shy about, I think I just try to be more aware of how that might come across to my students,” King said. “Moving up here I had to consider my students and what would make them most comfortable, while also making me feel safe.”

Similarly, Guenthner said her sexuality has never been something she felt the need to announce to her class.

“It’s interesting that it even seems to be something that needs to be ‘found out,’” she said.

Rather, she believed her students would draw their own conclusions based on her gender expression.

“I dress more traditionally masculine,” Guenthner said. “That’s the aesthetic I’ve been rocking for the last year-and-a-half, and I’m really enjoying it.”

When she began teaching, she realized her wardrobe was full of feminine dress clothes she never liked wearing. She said masculine clothing was always more comfortable for her, and it

felt like a more honest and professional way to present herself to her students.

“The reality set in when I became a teacher that 20 to 30 people were going to be staring at me for about an hour



three times a week, and I wanted to be comfortable for that,” Guenthner said.

After her first day, when she received positive feedback from her peers about the way she dressed, Guenthner said she immediately purchased more bow ties, and since then they’ve become a personal staple.

“Bow ties set me apart, because not

many professors wear them, and my students really like them,” she said. “They ask me questions about them. It gives them a kind of access point and it gives me an avenue to talk about my choices in my appearance in the way that I portray myself.”

Guenthner said she’s taught her students about the lack of integrity of a clip-on tie. Many of her male students have worn bow ties to honor her during their final presentations. Once, during her second semester teaching, a student went to her office and asked her to teach him how to tie a bow tie.

“It’s definitely one of the more impactful moments in my teaching career to understand that he would be comfortable enough to ask about something like that,” she said.

At a college in Idaho, faculty and staff can often be the first examples of LGBT people that students are exposed to. With this in mind, Guenthner said she hopes that by interacting positively with students, she can have a lasting impact on their perception of the LGBT community.

Julia Keleher, director of the UI LGBTQA Office, works to impact the Moscow community in a similar way. Her work includes campus-wide education, reinforcement of community resources and general guidance for those who are curious about any aspect of the LGBT community.

As a butch-identifying lesbian, Keleher said, her sexuality directly correlates with her job and, in a sense, her job is to be her authentic self.

**“BOW TIES SET ME APART, BECAUSE NOT MANY PROFESSORS WEAR THEM, AND MY STUDENTS REALLY LIKE THEM.”**

## "IT'S NOT NECESSARILY A BLESSING OR A CURSE, IT'S JUST ONE MORE ASPECT OF IDENTITY THAT WE COMMODIFY IN DIFFERENT WAYS IN OUR TEACHING PERSONAS."

"Being in my position has the ultimate freedom for me, because essentially it's my job to be queer," she said. "There has never been a time when I didn't feel like I could express myself fully here, and I know that is a luxury that not a lot of people on campus share."

In her work, Keleher said she has tried to serve as a good role model, and being public about her sexuality is one way that she hopes to empower students. She said her role as a mentor has allowed many students to come out to her, some of whom she's never even learned the name of because they've chosen to remain anonymous.

"Many times, a student will come out to me, and it's a really touching experience, because then I get to see them start to attend LGBT events and make friends and start to get involved in the community," Keleher said. "I think it is, for me, very valuable, because I get to hear people's stories and help them through something that can be very scary on their own."

Keleher said another part of her job is to respond to larger national occurrences that involve the LGBT community.

In King's speech classes, he said his students often present speeches that pose a political opinion that feed off larger national debates. As a gay man, he said he's had to navigate a way to

make sure everyone has a chance to be heard, while also making sure he's not policing the conversation.

"I've had to teach them ways to share their views without being hateful or harmful to others. And I've spent a lot of time discussing how to phrase things in a way that is inclusive," he said. "As opposed to, 'Hey guys,' I recommend, 'Hey everybody,' or, 'Hey everyone.'"

King said he's tried his hardest to eliminate his own biases from his curriculum and, in this way, teaching a speech class during the 2016 presidential election was an exciting and formidable challenge.

"We all have biases, but it's how we use them that determines if they are damaging or not," he said.

Guenther said as a member of faculty and staff, each individual has aspects of their personality and identity they must come to terms with in order to be a successful mentor to their students, and she believes sexuality and gender expression are key parts of that process.

"It's not necessarily a blessing or a curse, it's just one more aspect of identity that we commodify in different ways in our teaching personas," she said. ■

*IMAGE RIGHT: Patrick O'Farrell representing the many identities that lie behind the iconic bow tie.*



# THE BURNING BATTLE

STORY BY Savannah Cardon  
ILLUSTRATION BY Kat Yager

## RECENT STUDY SHOWS HUMANS START 84 PERCENT OF WILDFIRES IN THE U.S.

Dirk Seymore didn't always want to be a firefighter. But, with his desire for an outdoor summer job and a relationship with individuals who worked in fire, it seemed like a good fit.

Now, the University of Idaho senior spends his summers working with wild land fire for the Idaho Department of Lands, and said he plans to continue working with fire for years to come.

The physicality of the job makes working with fire exhausting, Seymore said. The intensity of a fire's heat is like a sunburn. But this doesn't discourage him.

"At the end of the day you can look back up and say, 'Wow, I did something that mattered today,'" Seymore said. "I helped stop something that could have been catastrophic if we hadn't been there."

Ironically enough, humans, like Seymore, who spend their summers suppressing fires, are fighting fires that could have been ignited by other humans.

According to John Abatzoglou, an associate professor of geography in the UI College of Science, humans are responsible for 84 percent of wildfires nationwide and 31 percent of wildfires in Idaho.

Abatzoglou worked with project leaders Bethany Bradley of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Jennifer Balch of the University of Colorado-Boulder to analyze the impact humans have on wildfires.

"The general question we were trying to answer was to understand the pyro-geography of fire across the United States in terms of the timing of fires and whether the fires were human-caused or lightning-caused," Abatzoglou said.

Researchers conducted the study to address how much humans add to the burden, Abatzoglou said. They wanted to find where and when humans add fire to landscape that wouldn't otherwise occur by natural means.

Analyzing more than 1.5 million fire records of wildfires from 1992 to 2012, which required some repression effort, researchers found that nationwide, humans started 84 percent of them.

The study showed that by causing most of the wildfires in the U.S., humans are expanding the fire niche, or the area where fires occur naturally, as they're bringing fire to locations where it wouldn't otherwise occur naturally.

Abatzoglou said researchers saw more area burned in the past 30 years in Idaho than any other state in the

lower 48. Of the fires that required some sort of agency response, only 31 percent were caused by humans, lower than the national percentage of human-caused fires.

Part of the lower percentage in the northwestern states is due to the lower population density.

Abatzoglou said human-caused fires are typically seen more in eastern states, where more than 90 to 95 percent of fires are caused by humans.

“In the west, it just so turns out that you have the apex most amount of lightning on the landscape at the time of the year when the fuels are as dry as they’re going to be,” Abatzoglou said. “So it’s sort of the perfect harmony of the two.”

Lightning combined with low population density causes lightning storms to play a much bigger role in how fires start in the western states, Abatzoglou said.

Fires caused by humans in Idaho tend to be on the smaller side, whereas lightning-caused fires have more impact on a larger scale, Abatzoglou said.

“Generally, people think about fire as being bad, we go to war with it all of the time,” Abatzoglou said. “Probably fire is not necessarily always bad, but human-caused fires may be fires that are not supposed to be there. I think the goal is to identify fires that we can potentially try to limit fire on the landscape,

we don’t want to limit all fire, but human-caused fires — not the greatest.”

Fire has the potential to benefit a landscape, Abatzoglou said. Fires are natural, especially in the interior west, where our forests are meant to burn.

“When they burn, that provides resources to habitat,” Abatzoglou said. “There are some animals that make use of recently cleared forested areas by fire.”

Fire is the natural way in which vegetation and forests dissipate and allow new growth to come in, he said.

The results of human-caused fires in the nation and Northwest were no surprise to Abatzoglou. The

going to get until you get there,” Seymore said.

Despite the difficulty that comes with fighting these fires, Seymore said a lot of the joy of the work comes from the people he meets along the way.

Humans, whether they are fighting human or lightning-caused fires, stick together and form close friendships.

“The single biggest part in fighting wildfires is that it’s a brotherhood and a sisterhood. The crew you work with, they are your family,” Seymore said. “You spend every waking moment with them 14 days in a row, working 16 hours a day or sometimes more.”

Looking at it as more than just

**“AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU CAN LOOK BACK UP AND SAY ‘WOW, I DID SOMETHING THAT MATTERED TODAY.’”**

impact human-caused fires have on the landscape, however, suggest the need to reduce these fires in years to come.

Results like ones found in the study continue to affect Seymore and his summertime job. He said each fire is challenging and unpredictable.

“It’s like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re

a job but a lifetime experience, Seymore said by the end of the season after working on a few fires, the crew becomes a family.

“Honestly, I love my job. It’s the best job I’ve ever had,” Seymore said. “It’s a sense of belonging that you don’t find in a lot of places and a sense of companionship.” ■

# SMALL WORLD, BIG BORDERS

RECENT EFFORTS TO CONTROL U.S. BORDERS HAVE SPARKED CONVERSATION AT UI

Excitement. Outrage. Relief. Fear.

These were the feelings that arose as a result of President Donald Trump's executive orders to secure the United States border. Excitement that a president kept his promise. Outrage the orders targeted minorities and families might be ripped apart. Relief that the U.S. would be safe from acts of terror. Fear that seeing family might be impossible.

These executive orders — one meant to halt travel to and from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia, and another two intended to secure the southern border — have affected students nationwide.

At the University of Idaho, the original executive order, commonly known as the travel ban, caused some international students to panic, said International Programs Director Susan Bender. One student didn't know if he should postpone getting married in his home country until he finished his degree. Another worried her parents might be unable to come from Iran to see her graduation.

Bender said often times, the family, and sometimes extended family, puts in a lot of effort to send a child to school in the U.S.

"To be able to come and attend that graduation and celebrate that accomplishment is really important," she said.

Hanieh Nezakati, an electrical engineering student from

extra \$300 to change the tickets and disrupted preparations her brother made for his business for the time he would be gone.

The revised executive order, halted March 15, would not have impacted current visa holders. At least, not legally.

A greater effect of these orders at UI is a shift of perceived culture, said President Chuck Staben.

"We try to be very welcoming toward international students, but I think that just the fact that a travel ban is out there is sort of off-putting to a lot of our international community," Staben said.

He said even students and faculty who came from countries not listed in the executive order had concerns they were less wanted in the U.S.

Staben issued a statement within three days of the initial executive order to reassure students and faculty that diversity and the international perspective is important at UI.

Staben said some people expressed concern about the statement being political, though most responded favorably.

"I don't see this as a political stance," Staben said. "I see this as providing objective information about events that may affect them, as students or faculty, or may affect us as an academic unit."

Erik Eyre, a mechanical engineering student at the

"WE TRY TO BE VERY WELCOMING TOWARD INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, BUT I THINK THAT JUST THE FACT THAT A TRAVEL BAN IS OUT THERE IS SORT OF OFF-PUTTING TO A LOT OF OUR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

Iran, said the ban would have made it so families would be unable to visit students who might have been away from their home for years. Nezakati planned to have her father and brother visit later this spring, but they had to cancel their tickets when the ban came into effect. It would be the first time she could spend quality time with her father in more than five years.

"My father was emotionally, really, really upset," she said. "Because he had plans for this, you know, for a long time."

Since the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals blocked the original travel ban, students can go through with their plans. Nezakati's family will be able to visit, but she said it cost an

university who supports the executive order, said he believes international students enrich the university.

"If people choose to ostracize other people just because they perceive that they're going to be different instead of taking the time to get to know them ... then that's an absolute loss on their part," Eyre said.

However, he said it is important that the risks of letting dangerous people into the country are addressed.

"If we can't verify who's coming in, and then months into the administration there is a terrorist attack of any size of people who came from these areas, politically, that would have been extremely detrimental to the credibility of the

administration,” he said.

Another executive order the university addressed is one that effectually increases the enforcement of immigration law, especially in regard to immigration from Mexico.

Staben said the main concern for UI students is often about family or friends.

“Hispanic college students are mostly the children of immigrants, and they’re not immigrants themselves,” he said.

Kate Evans, a professor in the College of Law with a focus on immigration law, said the college reached out to help people go through the naturalization process in Boise, Moscow and southern Idaho. She said they have also endeavored to educate students on their constitutional rights



and what they can do to protect themselves.

“The clinic has been working with students, both at WSU and at University of Idaho, regarding some concerns that students have about the risks they face, just by going to school,” she said.

She said Faculty Senate is working on a draft to ensure the university follows proper policy when giving out information about students or letting Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on campus grounds.

The university has also signed on with the American Council of Education both in a letter of support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students and in a letter expressing concern about the initial travel ban, along with around 600 other institutions of higher learning.

“Personally, I feel pretty positive about almost anybody who wants to pursue his or her education,” Staben said. ■

“PERSONALLY, I FEEL  
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