

Editor's Note

Readers,

In this issue of Blot Magazine you will find an array of stories — some about strong female engineers and others about mental health for athletes. We'll touch on guide dogs, politics and parenting.

However, you will find a large part of our focus this issue shifted to one of the most talked about acts on Earth — sex.

So, let's talk about sex. But more importantly, let's talk about sexual health.

Many young people are given the birds and the bees talk in grade school or at home. Bundled with info about “our changing bodies” and “abstinence is key” pamphlets, the nuances of sex, sexual health and sexuality are often left out of the conversation.

While we may think we know everything there is to know about sex, there's more to it than we often discuss. The nuances are constantly changing.

With a rise in digital connection, sex can be found with the swipe of a thumb.

Only 52 percent of college students report using a condom during vaginal sex, Mediaaccording to the Centers for Disease Control. That same percentage of students — ages 18 to 24 — also represent almost half of all new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) cases in the United States.

Sex is more than condoms and birth control. Sex is emotional, mental, physical and medical.

So, let's talk about sex — with more education, more openness and more care.

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Humans of Moscow

Talan Wilhelm travels the country playing the recorder with his cat, Muffen.

“There are three main reasons people play music: because they are bored, to express themselves — mainly to express themselves — and to create something new. Sometimes I create new things depending on the day, other times it is just the same thing over and over again because I just can't seem to break out of a funk. Then I just turn around and I just put different emotions and feelings to it — and that makes it different.”

-Talan Wilhelm



In this Issue

FINDING
BALANCE

05

DEFYING THE
NUMBERS

07

WHERE CIVILITY
STANDS

11

SEX, TECH
& MODERN
COURTSHIP

13

A GUIDING
PAW

17

THE UNSEEN
OPPOSITION

21



IMAGE BELOW

*Linda Ruiz, 23 years old,
walks with her daughter
Xandera Ruiz, 6 years old,
to class.*

Finding Balance

Students talk parenting while pursuing a college degree

STORY BY | Nicole Etchemendy
PHOTO BY | Nicole Etchemendy
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Pushing Forward

College students often juggle multiple responsibilities outside the classroom, such as jobs, extracurricular activities or sports.

But many have an even greater responsibility than a campus club — being a parent.

Twenty-five percent of college students in the United States have children who depend on them, according to a 2013 study conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Although student parents might not be as evident on the University of Idaho campus, they exist — balancing parenthood and education — such as 23-year-old Linda Ruiz.

Ruiz is pursuing a double major in political science and Spanish, while also seeking a certificate in diversity stratification.

Ruiz gave birth to her daughter, Xandera, while she was in high school. She said being a young mother forced her to make difficult choices to get to where she is today — a semester away from graduating.

“I always had college in mind. But I was with someone who was closed minded and didn't want me to go,” Ruiz said. “I just kind of decided to leave that relationship because it was unhealthy and that wasn't how I wanted my daughter to grow up.”

Ruiz said she spent a majority of her senior year of high school making sure she was financially able to attend college.

During that time, she said she had enough credits that classes ended at noon, and from then on, she would work on scholarships until 3 p.m.

As she made the decision to leave her then partner, she said a sign appeared when she was moving out — her acceptance letter — motivating her toward higher education.

“I decided for myself that I was going to pursue it, and that I could do it on my own because I didn't have someone pulling me back,” Ruiz said. “I relied so much on someone else because my culture and society kind of told me, ‘You rely on a man to take care of you.’”

Once she came to college, Ruiz said she began to realize how unfair that belief was.

Ruiz's parents took care of her daughter during her first year. She said she intended to live in family housing, but was later convinced to leave Xandera with family.

Ruiz said it was difficult to be away from her daughter and visited her as often as she could.

“Honestly, there wasn't a night that I didn't cry,” Ruiz said. “She was just so little.”

Ruiz said she knew her sacrifice and determination was worth it, leading her toward a goal that would benefit both her and her daughter.

Now 6 years old, Xandera is heading into her first year of grade school in Moscow, Ruiz said.

“I know she will put the pieces together. Once she figures it out on her own I hope she appreciates it,” Ruiz said. “I am not the type of parent who will say ‘I did this for you,’ because I feel as if I did this for me.”

She said she is proud to have overcome the prejudice often attached to raising a child at such a young age.

“I have broken so many stereotypes — one being a woman, two being a daughter of Mexican immigrants, three being a teen mom and number four being a single mom,” Ruiz said, “I hope that me coming to college inspires others.”

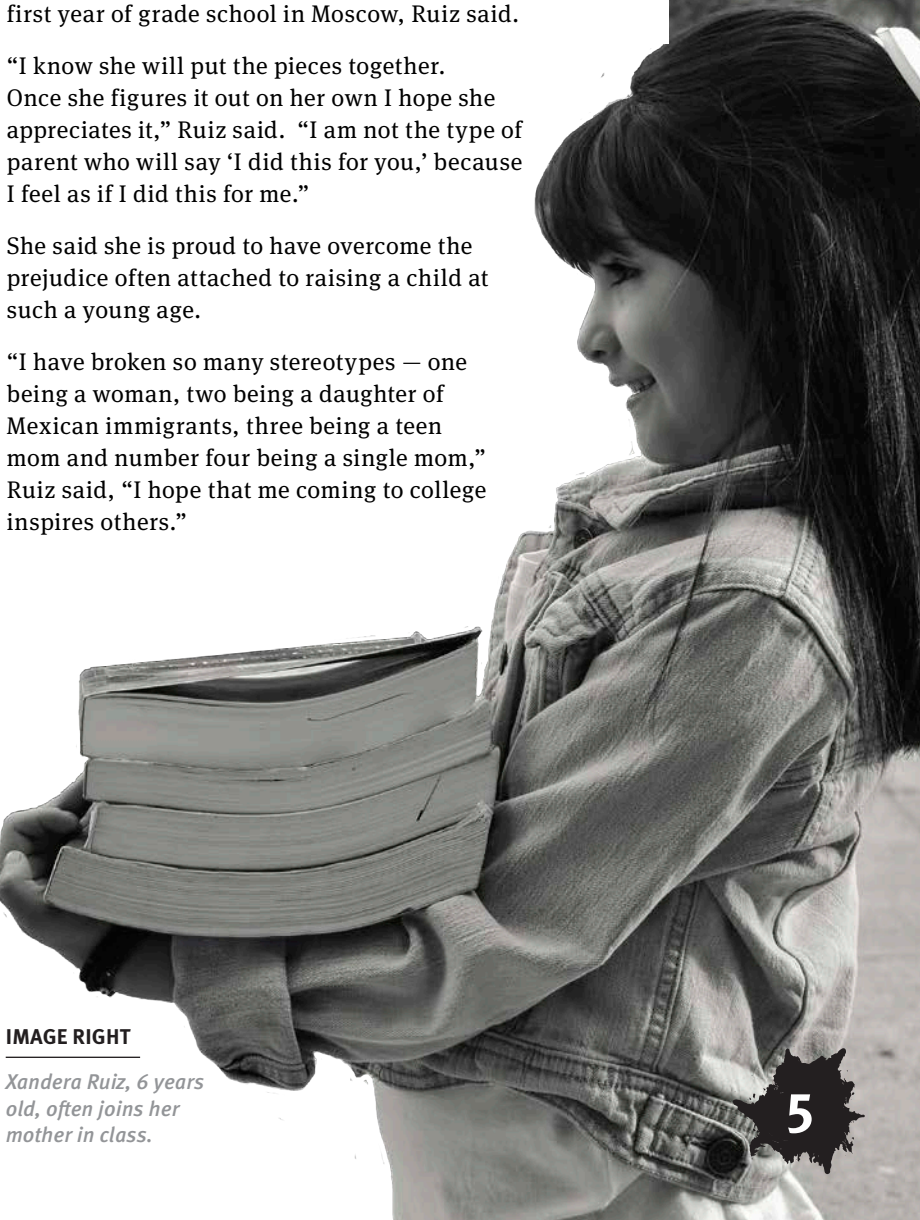


IMAGE RIGHT

Xandera Ruiz, 6 years old, often joins her mother in class.

Coming Back

Ryan Buford's education at UI began in 2003, but after a year of schooling and the birth of his daughter Nadalee, he decided to take a step back, focusing on work.

"I thought I was just taking a summer job, and that job turned into a 14-year career," he said.

His children now grown, Buford said he was ready to return to UI and finish his degree.

"My daughter is going to be finishing high school this year, and that was kind of an eye opener — that here is the potential for my daughter to be going to school at the same time I was," Buford said, "She would be starting college and I would be finishing it, and I wasn't cool with that, so I figured I should probably get it done."

Buford, who is studying English, said he lives on a homestead in Pullman with his children and partner Kari, who pushed him to continue his education after pursuing her own.

"Before we moved down here, the deal was that I would help out at home ... so that she could focus on her degree," Buford said, "Then once her's was finished, I would get mine done."

Buford works in Facilities Services at UI and has a weekly podcast with his 13-year-old son, Colin.

He said the two discuss parenting and preparedness, featuring community

members who also shed light on these topics.

Buford said he felt the podcast was necessary because certain values and concepts he was raised on aren't being taught to youth anymore.

The podcast, titled "The Next Generation," can be found online on Prepper Broadcasting Network and iTunes.

When it comes to balancing his education and being a parent, Buford said he hopes to set a precedent for his children.

"I can't teach them anything except by example at this point. And if I expect them to finish college, it's hard to put that on them if I am not willing to do that myself," he said.

"I thought I was just taking a summer job, and that job turned into a 14-year career."

Student parents not only play a large role in their own education, but in their children's lives, as well.

Although, they aren't always outwardly known, these types of students exist across campus, working hard to better their families' lives.

Overcoming stereotypes, financial roadblocks and the challenge of raising a child can be difficult, but it's all about finding balance.

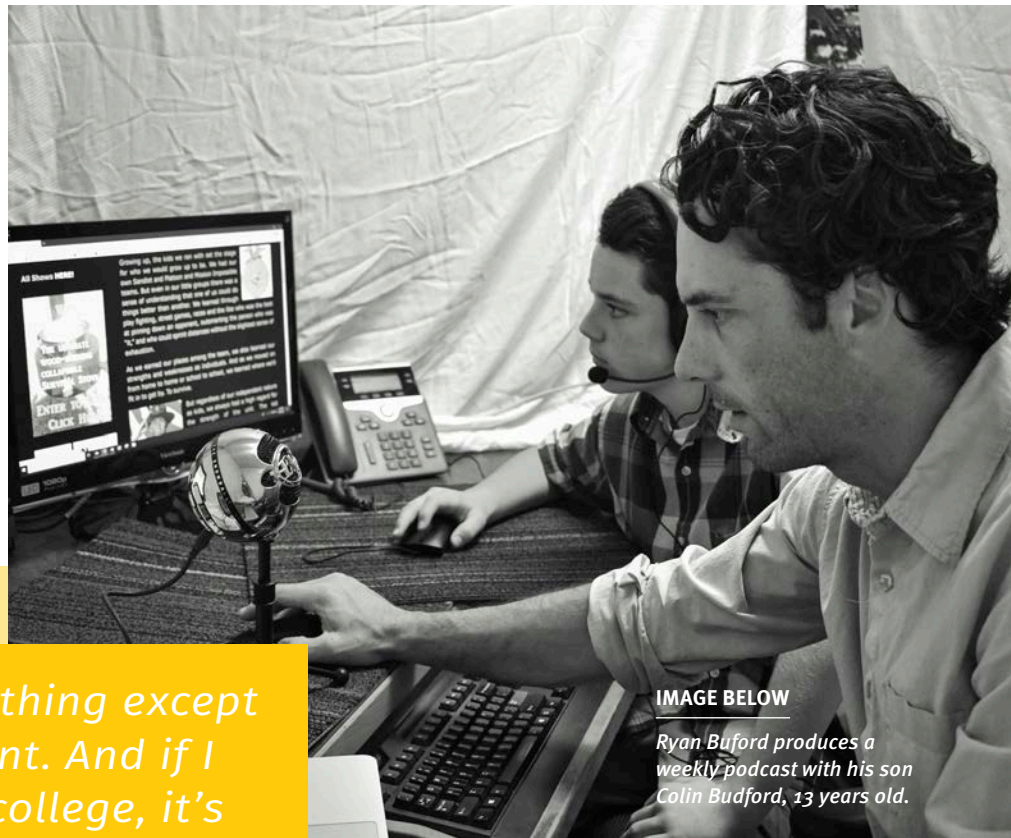
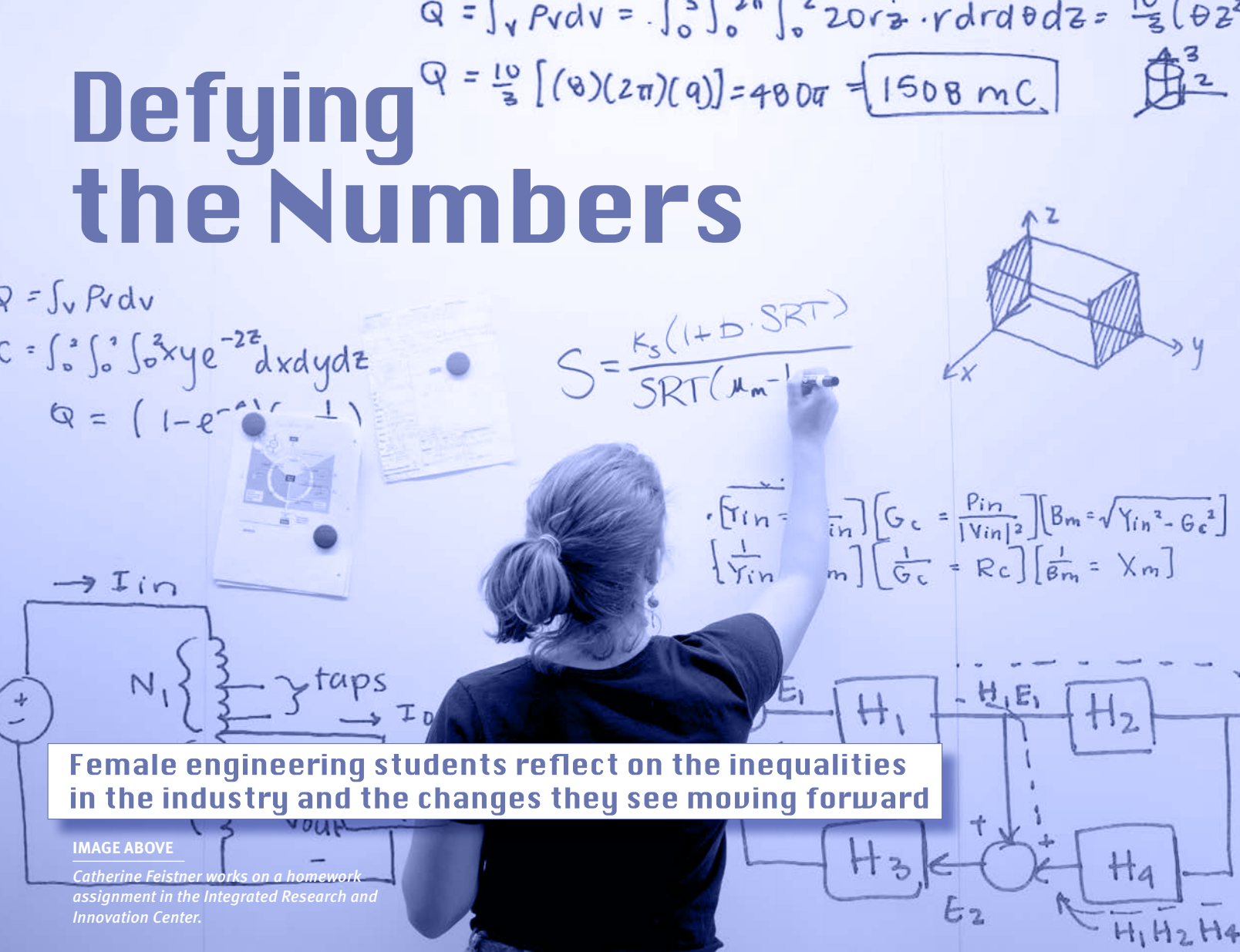


IMAGE BELOW

Ryan Buford produces a weekly podcast with his son Colin Buford, 13 years old.

"I can't teach them anything except by example at this point. And if I expect them to finish college, it's hard to put that on them if I am not willing to do that myself."

Defying the Numbers



Female engineering students reflect on the inequalities in the industry and the changes they see moving forward

IMAGE ABOVE

Catherine Feistner works on a homework assignment in the Integrated Research and Innovation Center.

Delaney Fitzgerald likes to think of her chosen career path as a superpower — a power many other women her age are also working toward.

The University of Idaho third-year computer science and engineering student has had a knack for engineering since grade school.

“I had always really liked computers,” Fitzgerald said. “You could always find me tinkering with them.”

But it wasn’t until Fitzgerald found a mentor in high school who encouraged her passion for computer science that she felt she could seriously pursue the degree.

STORY BY Hailey Stewart
PHOTO BY Joleen Evans
DESIGN BY Ethan Coy

“I was the only girl in my (science and math) classes in high school and that’s always kind of awkward,” she said.

Women largely remain underrepresented in many science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. However, the numbers are often lowest in engineering, according to the National Girls Collaborative Project.

In high school, young women begin to opt out of advanced courses like computer science and engineering, the project reports.

“You don’t generally want to go against the norms when you’re that young and still learning how to be yourself,” Fitzgerald said. “But, that was (computer science for) me.”



IMAGE ABOVE

Senior Allison Ellingson fills a pipet in Gauss-Johnson Engineering Laboratory.

“In the short time I’ve been at UI, the top seniors in our program have been women for each of the last two years.”

By the numbers

Patricia Colberg, chair of the UI civil and environmental engineering department, said the disparity between females and males in engineering often starts with enrollment.

“In the short time I’ve been at UI, the top seniors in our program have been women for each of the last two years,” Colberg said.

While enrollment of female engineering students in the United States averages 21 percent of all engineering majors, Colberg said UI averages around 18 percent female students.

“This number has been flat for some time now,” Colberg said. “That said, at UI, both retention rates and graduation rates by women students are consistently better than for their male peers.”

In 2015, females comprised 10 percent of the State of Idaho’s 534 engineering degrees awarded, according to the national organization Society of Women Engineers.

In UI’s College of Engineering, the numbers are similar to national statistics. Of the college’s 1,369 undergraduate students, 250 students are female.

Reaching higher

When electrical engineering student Allison Ellingson chose her major, she was told to pick big.

Ellingson said her five aunts — all with engineering degrees — gave her this advice.

“Ultimately, they told me to pick the hardest thing I could possibly do and anything after that will automatically be easier,” Ellingson said.

The fourth-year UI student plans to use her engineering degree to enter the neuroscience field after graduating this spring.

“The signals in our brains are basically electrical signals. People with biology backgrounds don’t always get that research early in their career,” Ellingson said. “So, I’m working backward. I’m starting with the hardest part and making everything else easier.”

However, she said her education does not come without the various hurdles many women in her study face.

“Women are raised and socialized to be perfect and men are often raised to be brave,” Ellingson said.

For women, anything less than perfect can feel like a failure, she said. But she knows failure is a large component of learning in any engineering field.

“The biggest thing that makes a good female engineer is being brave,” Ellingson said. “You don’t have to do them right, you can do things poorly the first time or fail and try again. You’ll still be a better engineer for it because of the qualities you possess already.”

Often, Ellingson said, her male counterparts do not outwardly see the sexism women might encounter.

“Even though the men in your field are on your side, they still don’t know what you might be experiencing as a woman,” Ellingson said. “You have to be proactive about it for yourself.”

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Encouragement is key

Catherine Feistner, a UI fifth-year civil engineering student, said she has been fortunate to study in the department with the most females.

“Civil engineers encounter the most females in their work. I’ve found a pretty friendly environment here,” Feistner said. “But there are always things we could be doing to change the ideas many people have about women in engineering.”

Although both Feistner and Colberg said it is more common to find male exclusivity in the workplace, the two have recognized the imbalance in the classroom.

“What I hear more commonly from my women students is about well-meaning attempts by faculty to be ‘more inclusive,’ although it often backfires because they try too hard,” Colberg said

Feistner said she has felt overlooked or removed from conversations in classes. But through dialogue and an openness to changing the environment, she has found ways to overcome the implicit bias women face.

“There are so many social things that are involved with these challenges,” Feistner said. “Talking about these issues can make a big issue become a little bit smaller one step at a time.”

Bethany Kersten, a fourth-year chemical engineering student and president of the Society of Women Engineers UI chapter, has always been accustomed to a five to 20 female to male ratio in her classes — a constant in class and the workplace.

However, it is her relationship with advisers and professors that has helped her form a more robust engineering community, she said.

“Although it is true that classes may not have equal numbers of males and females, your education is yours,” Kersten said. “Do not let the statistics hold you back. If you are passionate about a field, do not let anyone try to dissuade you from it.”

Looking forward

While males and females in engineering fields face differing obstacles, Ellingson said all strong engineers possess the similar qualities.

“Strong engineers are good at problem solving, they don’t shy away from challenges. If something is really hard, you are intrigued by it — you don’t want to quit,” Ellingson said.

According to the Society of Women Engineers national organization, the number of women in various STEM-related careers has increased in the past 20 years. However, the number of women in engineering in the U.S. has not grown since the early-2000s.

“The world desperately needs more engineers, and the largest untapped pool of talent for engineering and computer science careers is women,” Colberg said.

For Colberg, this means engaging more women in engineering at an early age and recruiting them into the many fields the industry offers.

Fitzgerald hopes young girls who tinker with computers and love creating projects out of ones and zeros know their passion is important.

“It’s my superpower. It is something that is unique about me and something that you don’t always come across,” Fitzgerald said. “My ability to jump those hurdles and feel confident in these traits that we so often think are for males makes me proud to be an engineering student.”

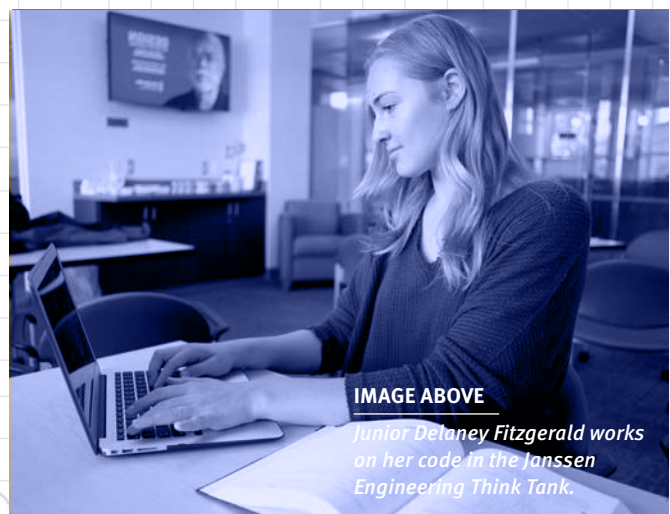


IMAGE ABOVE

Junior Delaney Fitzgerald works on her code in the Janssen Engineering Think Tank.

WHERE CIVILITY STANDS

STORY BY | Kyle Pfannenstiel
DESIGN BY | Cadence Moffitt
GRAPHIC BY | Cadence Moffitt

As politics grow more partisan, Palouse community members reflect on civility and political conversation

Politics have become messy.

Public trust in institutions has dwindled. Discourse has become strained. People have increasingly segmented themselves off in groups. And public displays — both from public officials and the populace — deemed uncivil, consume headlines week after week.

Audrey Faunce, a second-year University of Idaho law student, remembers growing up around politics. She and her father, Ken Faunce, chair of the Moscow Human Rights Commission, were often found together at downtown rallies and city council meetings.

Faunce, who identifies as liberal, said broaching political subjects with tact always is overrated. Drawing comparisons with historical examples, such as the Boston Tea Party, the Stonewall riots, the marches for women's suffrage, Faunce said shaking the political norm is an important tool for movements.

"None of those would have been deemed civil in those times, but they changed the politics in that era," Faunce said. "While in a perfect world civility in politics would be wonderful, I think at this point it is overrated. There is a time and a place for it and I find that that's actually rare."



On the other side of the political spectrum sits Mitch Royer, a UI fourth-year studying agribusiness who grew up in Cambridge, Idaho.

Royer, a conservative and self-proclaimed history buff, believes two presidents best represent the golden age of politics: former presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

Royer, like many, doesn't know how or when politics became so divisive. However, he attributes much of the tension to social media, or what he likes to call "political media."

"Everything is so politically fueled in today's time that it's getting counter-productive," Royer said.

WHERE ARE WE?

Over the last few decades, the general electorate has become increasingly polarized, with members of Congress becoming even more separated, said Markie McBrayer, a political science lecturer at UI.

"If you ask them nowadays how they identify, they are further apart than they were 20 years ago even. The change has happened relatively dramatically since the 1980s," McBrayer said.

Historically, she said political ideologies have had multiple dimensions — social and economic — but that over time those have become intertwined.



“It’s not both sides. It’s not to say there are Democrats who are awful, but it’s mostly right now focused on the right. It’s been a seat change,” Ellison said.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Another explanation for how political polarization spiked is through how society processes and responds to information. Bart Baumgartner, a philosopher professor studying informatic processes, explained how two phenomena — echo chambers and the backfire effect — influence society.

Echo chambers are when we surround ourselves with information we agree with and distance ourselves from information we disagree with. On the other end, the backfire effect is how we respond to exposure to new information.

“When (people) are exposed to information or beliefs or arguments that are contrary to what they themselves believe, they sort of put up their defenses and get more entrenched in their particular belief,” Baumgartner said.

Royer and Faunce both recognize that social media has a sizeable influence on political discourse, but offer differing conclusions.

During the 2016 election, Faunce said social media likely showed more of the discrimination marginalized groups face regularly.

She believes what some might call incivility — political discourse in an unabashed manner through protests, activism and calling out discriminatory behavior as it happens — is the most effective way of getting people to reflect on their beliefs and actions.

“I feel like disruption of their day through a protest is going to get them to notice and will get them to hear more about the issue and that can maybe change their mind,” Faunce said. “I think that calling somebody a racist, which is apparently the worst thing you could call a white person ever, will snap a lot of people into the defense, but also maybe sometimes reflection.”

Royer said social media breeds resentment. The Future Farmers of America auctioneer said he worries contemporary American political culture draws similarities with the Roman Empire before its collapse.

“We are at an era in our fairly young country’s political spectrum where we are more focused on in-fighting than the better good of the country,” Royer said.



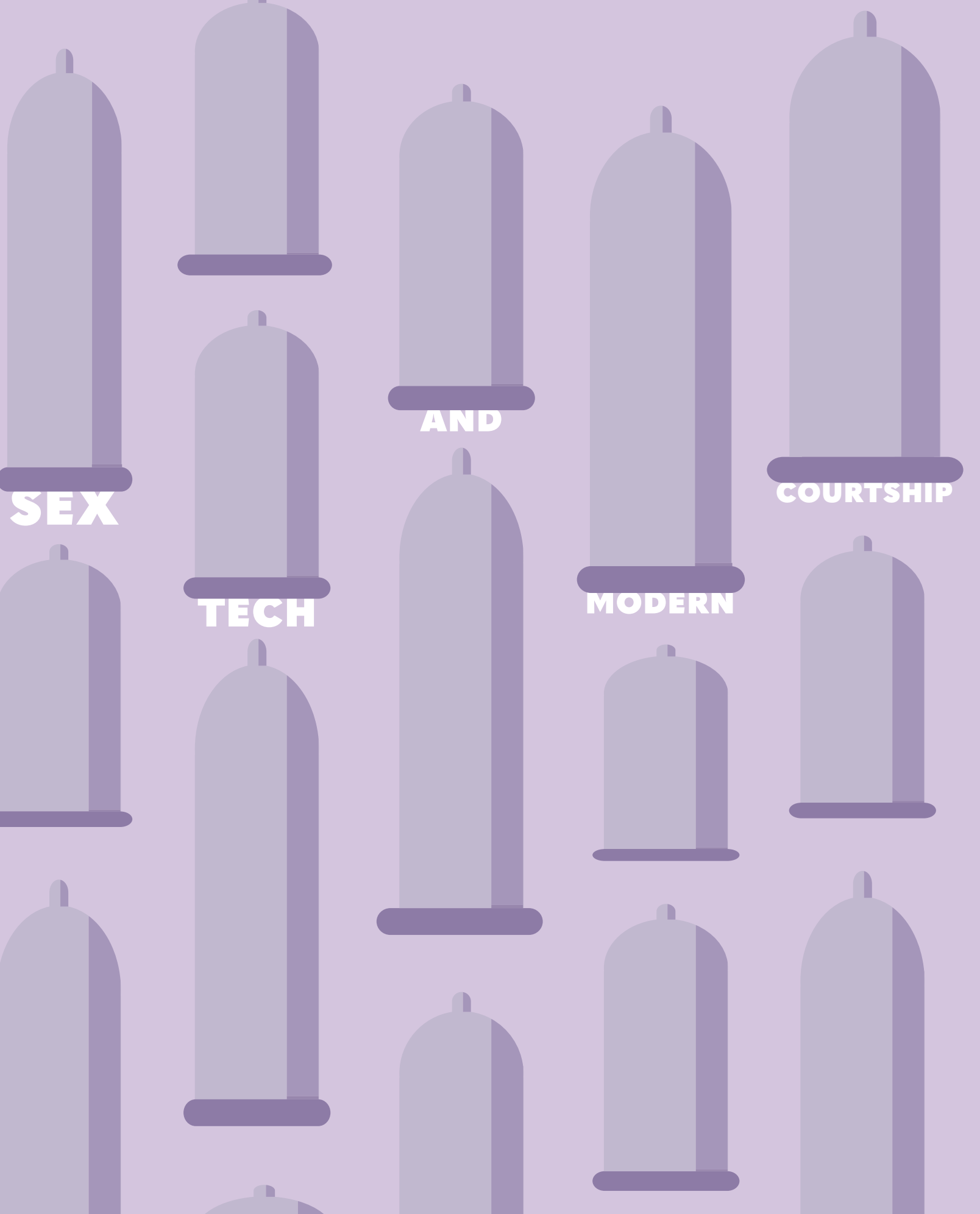
“You had conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans, but really in the past 30 years you’ve seen those sort of merge. In the wake of that we see polarization,” McBrayer said.

Brian Ellison, assistant professor of political science at UI, pegs the current political climate — in large part — to weakening institutions.

Two examples of the breakdown he offered were winner-take-all or single member congressional districts and the Electoral College’s choice for president breaking with the popular vote in 2016.

“It’s a really sort of dangerous situation,” Ellison said. “We have a government that does not have the sanction of most people in the United States. That’s really rare.”

As the institutions break down, Ellison explains, public support weans, driving candidates to ideological extremities because they worry about being beat out by other candidates who are further in the fray.



SEX

AND

COURTSHIP

TECH

MODERN

COLLEGE STUDENTS NAVIGATE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

STORY BY *Olivia Heersink*
PHOTO BY *Joleen Evans*
DESIGN BY *Alex Brizee*
GRAPHIC BY *Alex Brizee*

Emily Allis wasn't looking for a relationship when she downloaded Tinder in 2016.

Rather, the University of Idaho fourth-year student wanted to use the location-based mobile app to make platonic connections.

Created in 2012, Tinder allows nearby users to chat with one another after they each swipe right on the other's photo, creating a match. If users don't feel they match with the person featured, they can instead swipe to the left.

"I wasn't against finding someone to date, it just never happened that way," Allis said. "It was like a networking tool — think LinkedIn for friends."

But this outlook changed once the 20-year-old from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, came across her now boyfriend's profile.

Allis said the two clicked instantly, bonding over a love of travel and music. They met in person after a few weeks of constant communication.

Initially, they thought their relationship wouldn't last. But the pair soon realized just how much they meant to one another, Allis said.

"We both weren't looking for a significant other at the time," she said. "However, it was clear what we were doing wasn't casual. It was a lot more — it was love."

Meeting through Tinder allowed the couple of one and a half years to get to know one another on their terms without outside influence, Allis said. Without it, they might never have met.

"NOTHING TO LOSE"

However, not all online relationships form so easily.

Growing up in the almost 5,000-person town of Fruitland, Idaho, Ramiro Vargas did not know a single openly gay student at his high school.

Vargas said he spent a majority of his young life questioning his sexuality and eventually turned to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help make sense of it.

However, the 20-year-old UI third-year student said he soon realized the Book of Mormon was not the cure.

As he began to understand his identity, Vargas went online in search of a community who he could relate to — one that would accept him as is.

"I knew I was gay, but I'm in this environment where I'm not out ... and I'm a part of the Mormon Church," Vargas said. "There was literally no one else in Fruitland. I really had to turn to social media to find anyone like myself."

When he came to college, Vargas decided to up the ante and join Tinder, believing the app was his best shot at meeting "others like him" in Moscow.

He said he was already used to meeting people online and had "nothing to lose" by creating an account, expecting a bigger selection than he found in his hometown and the surrounding areas.

However, Vargas said he quickly realized how naive his initial belief was.

"As much as I thought that the selection was a lot bigger, it really wasn't," he said. "Dating is different, but it's still just as difficult."

Joining Tinder helped Vargas understand what he was looking for in a relationship-wise in a medium he was comfortable with, he said.

"I'm not really used to meeting people in person ... I'm comfortable meeting people online with the intention of one-day meeting face-to-face," Vargas said. "I think of myself as very charismatic over the interwebs."

Vargas said he didn't mind if he met someone romantically or platonically — he just wanted to connect with others.

After a few weeks of swiping through Tinder, Vargas went on his first "date." However, he said he wouldn't actually call it that.

Vargas received a message from a Washington State student, who said he was on his way to Moscow to pick him up for coffee. The two began talking on the app a few days prior. It was 10 p.m.

"I felt kind of pushed in that situation," he said. "It was very new, and I had never really used Tinder before. I didn't know what to expect or what he expected."

Nerves consumed Vargas once his Tinder match arrived

He said the situation immediately felt odd — a feeling that only increased as the night progressed.

Vargas attempted to exchange pleasantries, hoping to ease the tension.

“Just by looking at you, I already know how I’m going to kill you,” his date said.

Vargas laughed off the comment, but the apprehension never waned.

From campus, they drove to get coffee, he said. The student paid and Vargas promptly thanked him.

“Now, you owe me,” Vargas’ date said him. What Vargas owed him, he did not know.

After stopping for coffee, they went for a drive across the dark rolling hills, Vargas said. Vargas, then a first-year, didn’t know Moscow well enough at the time, so he was unsure of where he was being taken.

“It was a very flight or fight moment,” he said. “It was incredibly scary not to be in control.”

Eventually, the student dropped him off at home. Relief washed over him as he exited the vehicle.

“There’s so many things that could’ve happened,” he said. “I think a lot of

never had a desire to be.

However, near the end of her junior year, a break-up with a man she was dating on-and-off for six months changed her outlook, she said.

“I was kind of in a funk, and I wanted to see what else was out there ... I felt like I just wanted to meet someone easier,” the Boise native said. “Honestly, it was a bit of a self-esteem boost.”

Following the split, she reactivated her Tinder account and created a profile on Bumble — a similar app. Created in 2014, Bumble allows only women to send the first message; whereas anyone can start a conversation on Tinder.

In June, Mia went on her first date with someone she met through Bumble while at home for the summer.

The two made plans to meet around 10 p.m. to stargaze. However, it quickly turned into more, she said. He was the third person she ever had sex with. A condom wasn’t used.

school.

She had sex with both people within a day of each other. Protection was used with one partner, but not the other.

Soon, Mia said she began to present symptoms she thought mirrored a urinary tract infection and scheduled a medical appointment.

She tested positive for chlamydia — a diagnosis that immediately elicited tears.

After notifying each partner, Mia said she was made to feel as though it was solely her fault in infecting them.

“I came into this clean — someone was lying to me,” Mia said. “There’s a shame that comes with it, but it’s a two-way street.”

Before having intercourse with any of her sexual partners, Mia said she explicitly asked whether they had been recently tested. They all left her with the impression she had nothing to worry about.

Prior to college, Mia never had sex. She still had yet to be kissed.

“I literally went from being a virgin to having chlamydia in like six months,” she said. “I think I’ve been too blindly trusting of people ... I don’t know why it feels so embarrassing, it’s a disease like anything else.”

Graduating from a Catholic high school in Boise, Mia said she lacked a basic understanding of sexual health.

She said her teachers made it seem as though having sex out of wedlock meant a person was automatically going to contract an STI. It was in students’ best interest to wait until marriage, where they would be safe from infection. Contraception was never mentioned.

“All they promoted is abstinence, and

“SEX IS FUN. IT FEELS GOOD ... BUT, YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY BE SAFE WHILE YOU’RE DOING IT.”

people get in these situations ... You never really hear of the dangers with dating apps.”

The pair unmatched two days later. They haven’t talked since.

“I CAME INTO THIS CLEAN”

Like Allis and Vargas, Mia* downloaded Tinder early in her college career. But the 21-year-old wasn’t active on the mobile app until this summer — she

“It was the stupidest decision when I think about it now,” she said. “I drove to a stranger’s house in the middle of nowhere. What was I thinking?”

Days later, conversation between the two stalled, she said.

Mia moved on, she said, determined not to dwell on the situation. She soon met another man through the app, and reconnected with a friend from high

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

you just know that's not what these kids are doing ... It's irresponsible to think that people aren't going to be doing things and they should be well informed before they do," Mia said. "I wish I had gotten a better sex education when I was younger."

Fortunately, her mother, who is a family practice doctor, helped fill in some of the gaps. Yet, Mia said she still didn't feel as prepared as she should have been when coming to college.

"I didn't really even think about (using a condom) before, which is so stupid," she said. "I know I know better, or at least I thought I did ... I guess I never thought I'd be the type to start hooking up — clearly I am, though."

Only 52 percent of college students report using a condom during vaginal sex, according to the Centers for Disease Control. That same percentage of students — ages 18 to 24 — also represent almost half of all new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) each year in the United States.

"A VERY HUMAN THING"

Erin Chapman, a UI professor in the family and consumer sciences department, said many college students, such as Mia, often lack basic sexual health teachings, centering their limited knowledge on word-of-mouth encounters with peers and family members.

As a result, Chapman said young people find it harder to discuss sex, making it easier for them to contract various STIs because they aren't able to effectively communicate needs and expectations. She said students often forget these infections can be transferred during oral sex.

Although many STIs can be cured with antibiotics — chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis — some cannot, such as herpes

"I LITERALLY WENT FROM BEING A VIRGIN TO HAVING CHLAMYDIA IN LIKE SIX MONTHS."

and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

A lack of dialogue also contributes to several misconceptions surrounding sex and relationships, such as how frequently college students are engaging in various forms of intercourse, Chapman said.

Students generally believe their peers are more sexually active than they actually are, she said, which can lead them to engage in activities they aren't quite ready for — feeding into the idea of a "hookup culture" on campus.

Chapman said hookups are difficult to define because there are so many different definitions of what constitutes a hook up. It might be kissing. It might be sex.

"Whether you want to call it 'hooking up' or 'finding a relationship,' people are always going to find a way to get together," Chapman said. "The terminology changes, but sex is a very human thing and we don't do a good enough job talking about it."

To clear up any confusion, Chapman said she partners with Vandal Health Education and other on-campus offices, such as the Women's Center and LGBTQA Office, for programming events centered on sex and intimate relationships.

Lysa Salsbury, director of the UI Women's Center, said the university revamped its efforts after Trojan Condoms released a report in 2010 ranking several U.S. colleges based on their sexual health resources. At

that time, UI ranked last out of 140 universities.

Since then, Salsbury said UI climbed the ranks as sexual education has become more centralized, coming in at No. 22 in 2016 — a 32-point difference from the year prior.

"Sex is fun. It feels good," Salsbury said. "But, you should know how to properly be safe while you're doing it."

Madeline Brown, a graduate support assistant with Vandal Health, said the organization was created specifically to address the importance of engaging in safe sexual activities, as well as many other student health concerns, such as binge drinking and drug use.

Brown said abstinence-only curriculums — like the one Mia encountered — provide limited information and can often make sex seem like a taboo topic, but students have a "human right to learn."

"PROTECT YOURSELF"

The state of Idaho hasn't updated its sexual education policy since 1970.

"(Students) come here to learn things that will affect the rest of their lives ... and sex health is a huge part of life — it's a human need," Brown said. "So, it's important that we educate our students about safe sex and what healthy sex looks like."

Around 42 percent of UI students who are sexually active report using a condom or another protective barrier during vaginal sex within the last 30 days, according to a 2017 study

conducted by the American College Health Association.

Brown said Vandal Health primarily focuses on promoting condom use — internal or external — and informing students about STIs.

Free condoms and other contraceptives, such as dental dams, are available throughout campus and in several residence halls, she said. STI testing is available for students at the Student Health Clinic downtown.

“You like what you like,” Brown said. “Have sex if you want to, but don’t if you don’t ... (Either way) use a condom whenever you decide to have sex — protect yourself from STIs.”

After being diagnosed with chlamydia, Mia said she much more cautious when it comes to using protection during sex and plans to make getting tested a part of her regular health routine. She still doesn’t know who infected her.

Rather than feeling ashamed about having an STI, Mia said people should learn from it and “brush up on their sexual health.”

“(STIs) are more common than you think, and you shouldn’t feel ostracized because people get them a lot, they just don’t talk about it,” Mia said. “It’s important to get tested, especially if you’re seeing a lot of people.”

She remains active on Tinder and Bumble.

Like Mia, Vargas said he wasn’t going to be deterred by one negative experience.

He continues to use Tinder, as does Allis despite being in a relationship. She said the app has been a great tool for meeting friends, especially while traveling.

“Sex is about both people having fun, and worrying whether or not this person is going to give you an STI is the opposite of that. There are one’s that stay with you forever,” Mia said. “It doesn’t matter where you meet — Tinder, Bumble, the library or whatever — just be safe.”

DON'T FORGET. USE PROTECTION.

“AROUND 42 PERCENT OF UI STUDENTS WHO ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE REPORT USING A CONDOM OR ANOTHER PROTECTIVE BARRIER DURING VAGINAL SEX WITHIN THE LAST 30 DAYS.”

A GUIDING PAW

STORY BY | Brandon Hill
PHOTO BY | Leslie Kiebert
GRAPHIC BY | Lindsay Trombly
DESIGN BY | Lindsay Trombly

Guide dogs across the Palouse train day and night, preparing to save lives

A rhythmic clicking sound rises above the soft hum of Pullman's Daily Grind coffee shop.

The tip of an ink-black tail peeks over the tops of coffee tables, weaving in and out of the crowded shop.

As it approaches, two beady, black eyes gleam from between the legs of different patrons, and a glistening nose sniffs eagerly at the many scents wafting from the front counter.

"Mulder, down."

Sydney Gueller stares down at her dog with stern eyes. With one look, Mulder, a black Labrador Retriever, knows just what to do.

The guide dog-in-training takes a seat on the hardwood floor, with a face that depicts both loyal obedience and a deep curiosity. From around the shop, onlookers gaze at Mulder, who still looks the part of a puppy. However, his green vest signals that Mulder, no matter how cute, has a job to do.

"I definitely have a soft spot for him," Gueller said. "He's going to be a hard one to let go. They're bred for this. This is what they're meant to do. If he stays here, he's just a pet. He could go on and do so much more."

Gueller, a Washington State University junior, said she has been training potential guide dogs since her interest was first piqued in high school.

Now working with her fifth puppy-in-training, Gueller said she underestimated the amount of good training seeing-eye dogs can do.



The five-year veteran said she initially began her journey to becoming a puppy raiser after a volunteer recommended joining a local club in her hometown of Chelan, Washington.

“Our local leader convinced me to come to meetings. ‘Come, you’ll get to meet more dogs, hang out with dogs,’” she said. “But, once you get involved with Guide Dogs, you can’t stop. It’s always growing, and it helps so many people.”

Gueller became a member of Guide Dogs for the Blind, a national organization that relies on the help of local volunteers across the country to raise and train puppies who eventually go on to help those in need. Once in college, Gueller joined Guiding Paws of the Palouse, a subset of the national organization.

The 76-year old company began training dogs for visually impaired veterans

returning home from World War II. With a large number of training facilities present on the East Coast, Guide Dogs for the Blind sought to bring that same level of aid out West. Now, the organization has expanded to seven states, including Idaho, Oregon and Washington, according to the organization’s website.

“One of our sayings in this organization is, ‘Raise a puppy, save a life,’” Gueller said. “You get to play with a puppy, and you get to help so many people.”

Gueller said puppy raisers often spend about a year with their animal, which is bred and pre-chosen by Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Raisers are sent either Golden or Labrador retrievers, which she said are naturally born with a temperament suited for learning and obeying commands.

Their affinity for eating, Gueller said, results in an easier training experience, as the puppies are always eager for another reward in the form of a treat.

Meanwhile, Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), an organization parallel to Guide Dogs for the Blind, employs similar methods.

Renee Piper, who promotes CCI through her local business, said no matter what organizations provide

the dogs, the chance to help someone in need is priceless.

“A lot of people will ask me, ‘How can you do this?’ The end result has been so rewarding,” Piper said. “You just want to get another puppy after you get to experience meeting the person the dog gets match up with.”

Piper has trained several dogs, all of which have gone through the CCI training process. Once Piper’s puppies complete the basic trainings with her, they are sent back to “puppy college” at CCI’s headquarters in California.

Once there, CCI trainers build off the basic commands Piper has taught her K-9 companions until the pup is ready to be matched with an owner.

She recently observed a graduation of one of her dogs, and said she would not soon forget the feeling of seeing her puppy go on to do bigger and better things.

“It’s all been super rewarding,” Piper said. “It is the best feeling you can ever experience when you actually get to meet the person your dog is being matched to. Seeing the emotion and the connection that the person and the dog has made, it is so overwhelming and joyous. It just makes you want to get another puppy and do it again.”

However, both Piper and Gueller said the process of puppy training is not always full-proof.

Sometimes, a dog is simply not cut out for the demanding tasks required of guide dogs.

Less than 50 percent of trained dogs actually go on to guide the blind, Gueller said. In that instance, the original trainers become more involved in the process of choosing the future home of the animal.



IMAGE LEFT

Guide puppy-in-training Waffle awaits a treat during training.

Gueller said one of her puppies did not meet the requirements to move on to the next step. She later helped find the dog a “forever home” on the Palouse, and often visits her once-companion.

Alternatively, the dogs can be sent to different organizations that offer service animals to people of varying disabilities. Some dogs, Gueller said, can help those with Autism or become an emotional support animal.

Piper discovered her sixth puppy, Gratzl, had visual and hearing impairments, which inhibited the training process and eventually led CCI to find her an alternative occupation.

Piper said she took over Gratzl’s training, teaching the dog commands via sign language as Gratzl’s condition progressed.

Once she was ready, Gratzl became a therapy dog for Palouse Paws, a local organization that visits college campuses, offering students the chance to relax and briefly bond with animals.

“It’s hard, trust me,” Piper said. “It’s never easy to give these puppies up, but the end result just makes it super rewarding.”

Piper, now a puppy training expert, began her own initiative on the Palouse, which better enabled her to better help others in need.

In 2017, she founded Tail Waggin’ Adventures, a company that helps train not only guide dogs, but offers a wide variety of services, such as dog boarding and basic animal training. Piper said she saw a need in her community and could not — in good conscience — sit by without bringing her skills and the skills of well-trained dogs to the community.

“It’s always been a passion for me to provide a service to a community

“ONE OF OUR SAYINGS IN THIS ORGANIZATION IS, ‘RAISE A PUPPY, SAVE A LIFE.’”

that was in need,” she said. “I just felt like the Palouse area needed a strong location to provide a place that I can provide safety for their dogs to be able to play and not have parents stress about if their dog is being taken care of.”

When it comes to interacting with guide dogs in training, Gueller said the less others pay attention to the dog, the better.

When in doubt, she said others should treat the dog like a piece of medical equipment.

“Don’t look at them, don’t talk to them. You’d never walk up to someone’s wheel chair,” she said. “It’s just like walking up to the dog, it’s never a good idea. Since they are puppies, they are not as good as ignoring you. Just making eye contact with them can get them super amped up and wiggling them and they want to be pet.”

Younger puppies, such as Mulder, can be easily distracted, Gueller said, and require extra attention to become effective guide dogs.

She said she often receives older dogs transferred from another trainer, and was challenged early on in her and Mulder’s relationship.

With a younger puppy comes added responsibilities, as trainers are expected to teach the dog to relieve itself on command and ignore the

many distractions present on a college campus.

Despite Mulder being the youngest puppy Gueller has ever trained, she said he is also one of the most mellow and well behaved.

While both Piper and Gueller reside in Pullman, they said they would like to see more involvement in the Moscow area, and encouraged anyone interested in joining a local organization to reach out.

“We are open to others in the area that would like to get involved,” Gueller said. “Any U of I kids, anyone in Moscow is welcome to get involved. It would be great to get some dogs over there.”



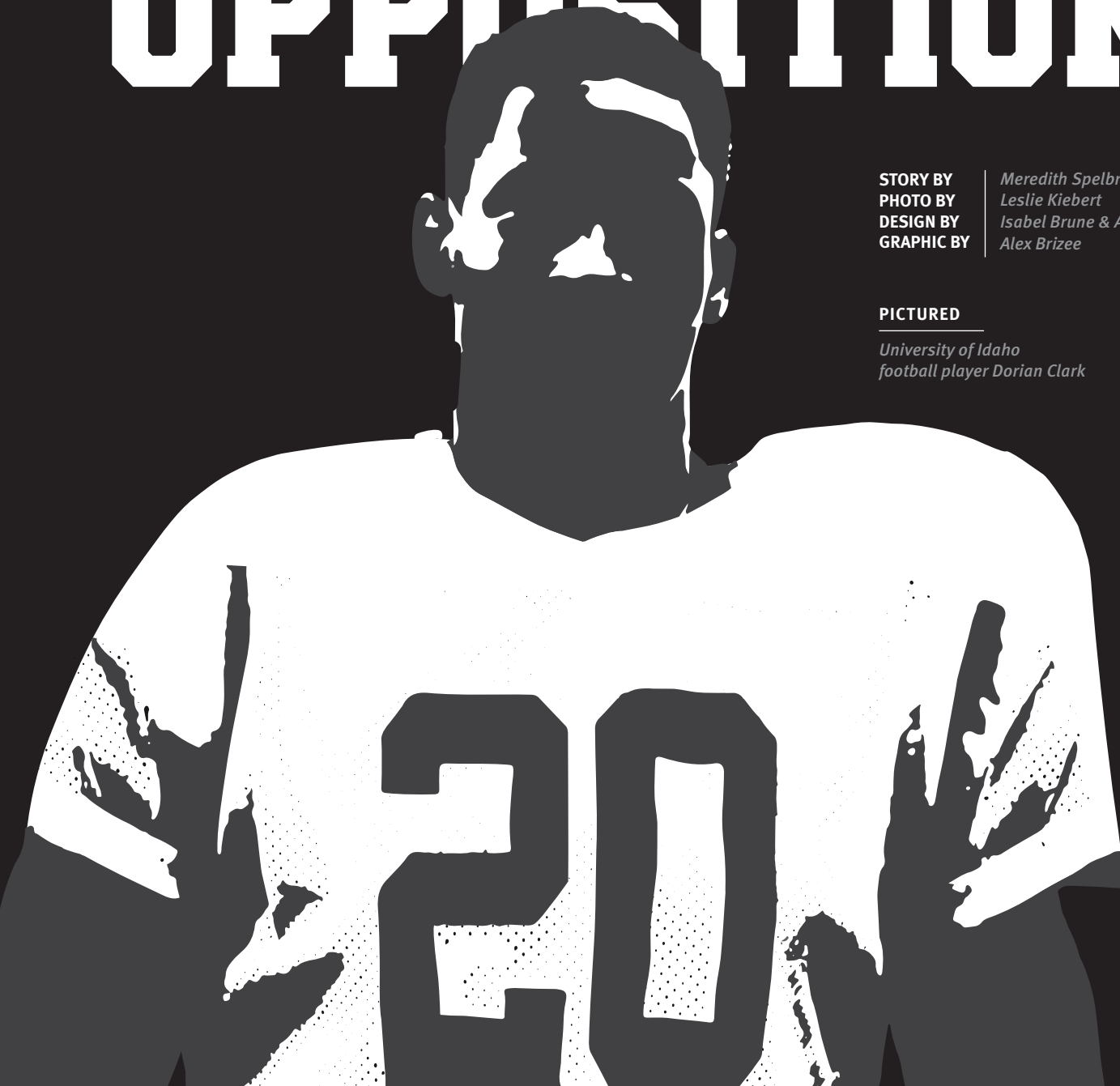
THE
UNSEEN
OPPOSITION

STORY BY
PHOTO BY
DESIGN BY
GRAPHIC BY

Meredith Spelbring
Leslie Kiebert
Isabel Brune & Alex Brizee
Alex Brizee

PICTURED

University of Idaho
football player Dorian Clark



STUDENT ATHLETES, MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND COACHES MOVE TOWARD STRONGER MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Washington State University quarterback Tyler Hilinski took his life Jan. 16, 2018, in his Pullman apartment.

Across the border, University of Idaho officials sprang into action.

Anna Rose Wiencek, a senior on the University of Idaho Women's Soccer team and former mental health and wellness chair on the Idaho Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), said the response to the suicide was immediate.

"Barrie (Steele, a UI athletic trainer) contacted me right away after it happened, (and) he said, 'We need to put something in right away, like some educational thing, because we need to get people educated,'" Wiencek said. "Now, instead of talking about it, we are going to do something about it."

The suicide prevention training QPR — Question, Persuade, Refer — rolled out in the UI Kibbie Dome throughout spring 2018, with a handful of in-person trainings and online courses for coaches, staff and student-athletes.

The QPR program is a research-based training course aimed at teaching participants how to recognize and spot behaviors of people at risk for suicide and how to appropriately intervene.

QPR is currently implemented at universities and colleges across the country, but only a small handful of universities utilize the program within athletic departments, said QPR CEO and founder Paul Quinnett.

The university is among the few.

Starting in the spring, all coaches and athletic staff were required to take the QPR training, said Sharon Fritz, UI psychologist and coordinator of consultation, outreach and substance use services. They have all completed the training.

Fritz said mental health is a topic UI has pursued for a number of years, receiving a \$300,300 grant from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center in 2014, which allowed for the hiring of health educator focused specifically on mental health and suicide prevention.

In January 2016, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) released a "Mental Health Best Practices" report, outlining resources and recommendations for student-athletes facing mental health challenges. While UI had already been

looking into mental health awareness on campus, Fritz said the report increased the urgency of expanding awareness into the athletic department.

"I feel very fortunate here at the UI because the athletic department has always felt that mental health is important," Fritz said. "We've always had a relationship with them in terms of providing support for their students."

Fritz also offers a mental health first aid course and "Let's talk," a program where she goes into the Kibbie Dome and allows athletes and coaches to approach her without the stigma of attending the counseling session.

Fritz said the UI Athletic Department has really shifted its focus on issues of mental health, especially as more athletes come forward with their struggles nationwide.

"We see more coaches understand mental health, they have consulted more with me," Fritz said. "I have seen an increase in the consultation with coaches that have come to seek me out and say, 'Well how can I help my student best?'"

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRACTICE

Dorian Clark, a senior on the football team, was one of hundreds of UI student-athletes who filled the large lecture room in the Kibbie Dome during the QPR training sessions — not once, but twice.

"Once (the trainings) put it in words, and they show you what it looks like, it is really easy to see the hints from teammates or guys, because we are together every day," the redshirt defensive back said. "Going through the QPR trainings, it made it everything real for me, actually looking for the signs and being there for your teammates."

Clark said the side-effects that can come with the demands of being a student-athlete never occurred to him before completing the QPR training, as well as the number of factors that could impact him and the rest of his peers within the athletic department.

"As a student-athlete, there are a lot of things that can get you down and it is hard to get back up," Clark said. "It is just so many things it is easy to get down from as a student athlete. Once they put it in that kind of way it made it real for me to see how easily you can be affected by depression."

“ AS A STUDENT-ATHLETE, THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS THAT CAN GET YOU DOWN AND IT IS HARD TO GET BACK UP.”

DEALING WITH THE PRESSURE

Student-athletes are featured on UI social media pages and plastered on posters across campus, wearing the Vandal logo. Many feel the pressure to perform well on and off the field.

“It is not like you can just show up to practice,” Wiencek said. “You always have to show up to practice 110 percent because the moment you take a practice off, someone is coming for your spot and we all came here to play.”

When an athlete is unable to participate — due to injury or other concerns — the challenges are only heightened.

After injuring his shoulder shortly before his junior season, Clark was forced to the sideline. As the rest of the team practiced, he spent time in recovery, completing adjusted workouts.

“I felt so alone in that moment,” Clark said. “Even though I knew my teammates were with me, I still felt kind of standoffish because I was missing a season. I had so much hope into the season and now it got cut short right before the season started and in that moment, I just felt so down on myself.”

Most students know the pressure that comes with watching a to-do list

grow longer and longer — constantly balancing classes, work, extracurricular activities and a social life. It is a balancing act student-athletes are constantly working to achieve, while still performing at the highest physical level.

“(Athletes) are always in the limelight,” Fritz said. “They have some demands and pressures from at least three major areas in their life, and then knowing that they’re under scrutiny in terms of how they behave and what happens. And then the need to perform at a high level in all those areas puts a lot of pressure on athletes.”

“Push through the pain” may be a mantra to motivate athletes through a workout, but Fritz said the same mentality cannot always be applied to mental health struggles.

Instead of encouraging athletes to push through it, Fritz said the solution can be simple — let the athlete talk about it.

From an hour of ‘Let’s talk’ in the Kibbie Dome to one-on-one counseling sessions to simply talking with an athletic trainer, student-athletes have a variety of options to address their mental health concerns.

Fritz said the athletic department has been flexible and receptive to allowing students the necessary time to take care of their mental well-being.

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

All coaches, staff and student-athletes within the UI Athletic Department have completed the QPR trainings and more trainings will continue to take place.

But Fritz said mental health wellness is not a new topic on UI’s campus.

“(It) had been in the background and now it’s pushed it into the foreground,” Fritz said. “That is why we are on the top — we didn’t just start doing it, we had been doing it, and now we just directed more effort toward the athletic department.”

Claire Johnson, SAAC president and senior soccer defender, said these programs need to be continually emphasized and implemented beyond the department to the entire campus.

“We are on the right path for sure,” Johnson said. “I think once we implement a little bit more, it will just be a regular conversation ... something you are informed on and something you know about.”



If you feel you need to talk to someone, consider calling one of these numbers.

**National Suicide Prevention
1-800-273-8255**

**UI Counseling and Testing Center
1-208-885-6716**

**Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-208-398-4357**

STUDENT HEALTH CLINIC

Now located at the

**Moscow Family Medicine Main Street Office
(623 South Main Street)**

Call for an appointment: 208-885-6693
Appointments available Monday-Friday.
Walk-in times also available Monday-Thursday.

You must present your VandalCard at the time of each appointment.

The clinic offers a full range of primary and preventative care. Services are available to all students and their dependents regardless of the type of health insurance they choose.

The Clinic is a participating provider with SHIP and most private health insurance programs that cover U of I students. Confirm coverage with your carrier prior to receiving services.



**University
of Idaho**

For More Information:
Student Health Services
www.uidaho.edu/studenthealth





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