

BLOT

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University
of Idaho

Editor's Note

Readers,

In the first Blot Magazine of 2019, you will find a breadth of topics — some about prisoner education programs and others about the science and technology behind dance. We'll discuss community sustainability, Moscow's music scene and the service outreach University of Idaho students find most impactful.

Among these subjects, our greatest focus this issue revolves around the stories we don't often hear: stories about the experiences of students with disabilities.

It's easy to think about disability in physical terms — the kinds of disabilities that we can easily see and describe. But disability is more than what first comes to mind. Disability is a combination of diversity, individual ability and experiences.

So in this issue, we looked to the experts providing education and assistance to students with disabilities. The Center for Disability and Access Resources and the Raven Scholars Program provide some of the important resources and access options for students with disabilities.

But, even more important to better understanding disability is recognizing how broad the topic is and learning about these students through their own voices.

We learned that disability as diversity is often left out of the picture. While it might be difficult to broach such a broad subject, these students shared their want to have open conversations about what makes them diverse.

So, let's have deeper discussions about disability. Let's share stories about diversity. Let's connect through our differences. And let's celebrate our want to learn about one another.

- Hailey St.

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*Cover note: Daniel Robertson and Scott Jones (see page 12 for story) are pictured with volunteer models.



Humans of Moscow

Ramiro Vargas is a third-year UI student and a member of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity.

“I think a lot of people, I guess, have this preconceived notion that they are scared to go out of their comfort zone. It gets easier as you do it. For me, being involved in the Women's Center was just my first step. And then it just naturally builds, like, 'If I can do this, this shouldn't be too hard.' And by then you become more social, you become more open, then all of the sudden you're just doing things all the time. But it definitely enhances the college experience, times 10.”

— Ramiro Vargas

In This Issue

05

Breaking Down Bars

Sociology course encourages students and incarcerated people to collaborate, creating an equal learning space

07

Local Service Turned Global

UI students, staff learn active citizenship on the Palouse and working across the globe

11

Connecting with the Crowd

Local bands, musicians reflect on the Palouse music and entertainment scene

13

Putting the Person First

People with disabilities share their experiences searching for accessibility and inclusion

17

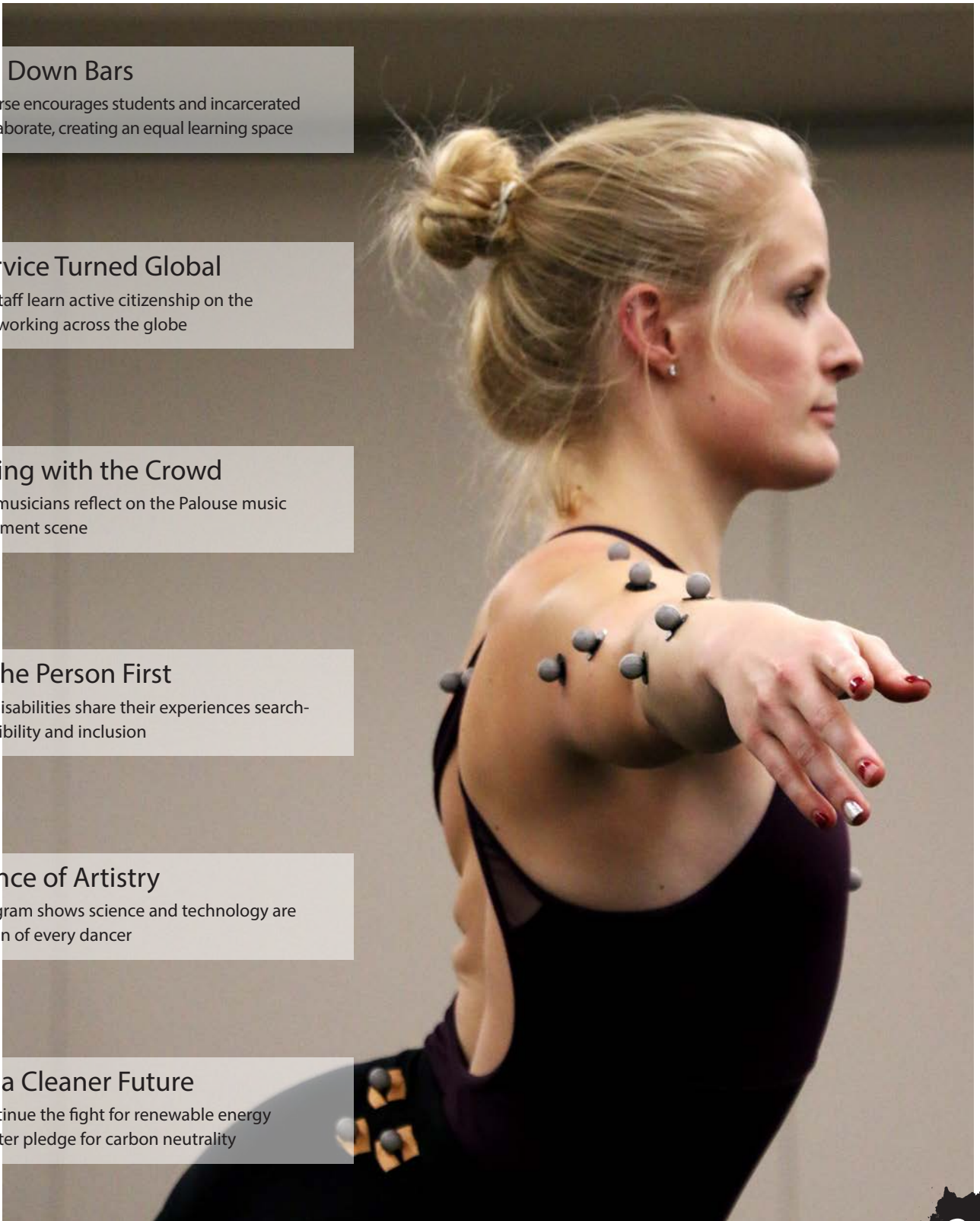
The Science of Artistry

UI dance program shows science and technology are the foundation of every dancer

21

Building a Cleaner Future

Students continue the fight for renewable energy eight years after pledge for carbon neutrality



BREAKING DOWN BARS

STORY BY Olivia Heersink
DESIGN BY Grayson Hughbanks
GRAPHICS BY Grayson Hughbanks

SOCIOLOGY COURSE ENCOURAGES COLLABORATION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND INCARCERATED PEOPLE, CREATING AN EQUAL LEARNING SPACE

Nine pairs of feet step off the bus one-by-one, notebooks in tow. A tall fence looms before the group of University of Idaho students, with barbed wire curled around the top of the metal barrier.

They make their way toward the red, brick building just beyond the enclosure, exchanging their individual IDs for yellow visitor badges and white name tags upon entering the all-male, medium-maximum security prison. The final destination? A classroom.

The almost 55-mile journey to the Idaho Correctional Institute in Orofino is one the students make each Wednesday, attending a three-hour course taught there by Omi Hodwitz, an assistant professor in the UI Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

It's called Inside-Out, an international prison exchange program that brings together undergraduates and incarcerated persons as peers, encouraging collaboration between the two in an equalized setting.

'BOTH SIDES OF THE PRISON WALL'

The program began with a conversation between a Temple University professor and an incarcerated man named Paul more than two decades ago.

Lori Pompa, an instructor at the Philadelphia institution, traveled to a Dallas, Pennsylvania, prison with a group of 15 undergraduates for a tour of the state facility in 1995.

During the visit, they met with a panel of incarcerated men, most of whom were serving life sentences. The hour-long discussion centered heavily on issues related to crime and justice, said David Krueger, interim assistant director of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

As Pompa and the students prepared to leave, Krueger said Paul approached the group asking if the conversation could be continued regularly — possibly over the course of a semester.

Pompa told the man she would consider it. However, traveling weekly to a facility more than 100 miles away wasn't entirely feasible.

Still, Krueger said Pompa couldn't get the idea out of her head and began contemplating ways to make Paul's suggestion a reality at a prison closer to Temple.

She approached the Philadelphia Prison System, and two years later, the first Inside-Out class was created with Pompa at the helm. Just 30 individuals were enrolled.

Today, more than 900 instructors have been trained in the proper Inside-Out practices across 46 states and 11 countries, according to the program's website. Around 35,000 inside (incarcerated persons) and outside (undergraduates) students have taken a course.

"When the inside students and the outside students are brought together, they are really there as peers. There's an attempt to break down those hierarchies and to recognize that students from both sides of the prison wall can benefit the other and they can really learn together," Krueger said. "(Everyone's) voices are valued in the classroom."

Since costs are relatively low, Krueger said correctional facilities have been

receptive to the program, with more than 150 prisons and jails hosting the Inside-Out classes.

Before someone is qualified to teach or enroll in the course, they must meet certain qualifications.

Krueger said class leaders must attend intensive training. However, when it comes to the specific curriculum, they have the freedom to choose their subject.

Past classes, Krueger said, have centered on various topics, such as gender studies, nursing, criminal justice and theater.

“Our educators are very creative and represent all kinds of backgrounds,” he said.

Prior to enrolling, undergraduates typically go through a careful selection process spearheaded by the instructor, he said. Incarcerated persons must have their high school diploma or GED certificate in order to participate.

By the end of the course, Krueger said both groups of students often view the world differently, and have a desire to “become a better contributing member of society and to help be a part of solving society’s problems.”

“It’s human nature to separate and to objectify some groups as outside groups,” Krueger said. “(But) if they can break through those stereotypes and those barriers in one experience of their lives, hopefully they’ll become citizens that can work through other types barriers — race, gender, class.”

‘A FAIR AMOUNT OF EFFORT’

Once Hodwitz discovered UI didn’t offer a prison exchange course, she began working with the Idaho Department of Corrections. Eventually, she struck a partnership with the facility in Orofino, with help from Deputy Warden Kenneth Shriver.

Hodwitz said Inside-Out has struggled to establish programs in some western states — such as Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota — partly

“Students from both sides of the prison wall can benefit the other, and they can really learn together.”

because of “public and political narratives around what prison education should look like.”

“It tends to be more of a coastal phenomenon,” she said. “(But) I lucked out by having the right conversations with the right people. It did take a fair amount of effort.”

While Hodwitz wasn’t the first educator to attempt implementing the prison exchange program in Idaho, she was the first to do so successfully.

Brian Wolf, chair of the UI Department Sociology and Anthropology, had never heard of Inside-Out until Hodwitz approached him.

“I thought it was wonderful,” Wolf said. “The fact that students go and see the inside of a prison and interact in a structured learning environment with inmates gives them something they can’t find in a standard classroom. I could cite articles on this, I could give a lecture about it, but that wouldn’t be the same as them actually experiencing it themselves.”

Now, UI is one of more than 140 higher education institutions in the world with a sponsored Inside-Out course, according to the program’s website.

Wolf said he believes the class shows students the redemptive and reformative aspect of education, while also giving incarcerated persons “a sampling of a college degree.”

“The people that are incarcerated have done something that’s wrong — that’s bad — but at the same time, they are committed to bettering themselves somehow,” he said. “We can’t bring the

‘ON AN EQUAL FOOTING’

inmates to campus, but we can bring the campus to the inmates.”

Like many of her UI classmates, 22-year-old Jemma Leavitt had never been in a prison until she enrolled in the Inside-Out course last fall.

The fourth-year student said she enjoyed the class, which then centered on injustice, so much, she registered a second time.

“It’s one of the most interesting classes topic-wise, (and) it’s one of the best options available,” Leavitt said.

However, Leavitt wasn’t the only one to re-enroll, with around half of the class being repeat students — both inside and out.

Teaching assistant Steph King said they believed the fall class went so well because it is different from any course offered at the university. There are various required or recommended readings and reflective assignments, but no lectures — just peer discussion.

“The way in which it’s formatted, as well as the people in the first go-around, really influenced how much people wanted to continue doing it and continue building it,” the 23-year-old UI graduate said.

Hodwitz said the class, which now focuses on biocriminology, would not work if it followed a more traditional format.

“There has to be this heavy peer collaborative component and there has to be a lot of interaction and there has to be a lot of discussion,” she said. “That’s what makes it an Inside-Out course. That’s what makes it successful.”

"I'm not used to seeing people so excited to come to class, whether they are inside or outside students."

Although the ultimate goal of the class is peer collaboration, the end result is a publishable book focusing on the history of criminological thought. The outside students will do the bulk of research, while those inside will write the text with Hodwitz serving as the editor. A tentative deadline is set for August.

"The book project is not an Inside-Out project, it's independent," Hodwitz said. "(And) it speaks volumes about the intellectual prowess of the incarcerated and university students who choose to take part in this class."

But King, who helped plan both semesters, said the program has its challenges and requires careful preparation.

Outside students not only leave behind their backpacks and electronics, but their last names and personal history. Inside students follow similar guidelines, keeping their criminal pasts

to themselves.

However, the lack of disclosure, Hodwitz said, puts "everyone on an equal footing" as students in a classroom.

While the class is free for the incarcerated individuals, they don't receive any college credit unless they pay \$1,200 in tuition. Hodwitz and Wolf hope to eventually reduce that amount, creating a catalyst for higher education.

"A lot of folks are rethinking what the next few years of their life will look like," Hodwitz said. "(Some of the inside students) had really low opinions about their ability to actually function in a structured academic environment, and now, they're motivated and inspired to pursue advanced learning opportunities. I'm not used to seeing people so excited to come to class, whether they are inside

or outside students."

Ideally, Hodwitz said there would be an even number of inside and outside students. However, the current course has nine undergraduates and 19 incarcerated persons — an almost 20 percent increase in students from the previous semester.

Both King and Leavitt said they were surprised to see such success in the collaboration between the two sets of students.

"You're not really expecting anything from any student because it's a new experience," King said. "You go in imagining a normal university class where everyone is lackluster, and then, you quickly realize everyone actually wants to be there."

Hodwitz said the spring class will determine the curriculum for next fall — something she hopes to do with each semester moving forward.

Leavitt said she encourages all undergraduates to consider taking the course — a sentiment King echoed.

"It's an experience you need to be an educated person leaving the university to broaden your perspective," King said.





STORY BY Alex Brizee
DESIGN BY Cadence Moffitt
GRAPHIC BY Cadence Moffitt

UI students, staff learn active citizenship on the Palouse and working across the globe

Volunteering. Voluntourism. Civic Engagement. Humanitarian Outreach.

These terms are often lumped together as if their definitions are synonymous. Despite describing different experiences, each word represents opportunities University of Idaho students and staff have had on the Palouse and beyond.

A learning experience

Madison Bergeman had never traveled abroad without family or friends until her second year of college, when she traveled to the Philippines as part of an alternative service break (ASB) trip in December 2016.

Bergeman learned about ASB trips during her


first year and made it a priority to go on one. She didn't truly know then what these types of trips could do for a person, she said. Now a fourth-year UI student, Bergeman has been on three ASB trips throughout her college career — each teaching her something new.

While working with an elementary school in the Philippines, she quickly learned to think on her feet teaching English to young children. With help from a translator, Bergeman was able to bridge the language barrier.

She then traveled to Ecuador for her second ASB trip, a place where she described the work as some of the hardest she has ever done.

"I remember taking my boot off, and at the end of the day, dumping it out and just like sweat

*Editor's note: Tristen Beaudoin's story may not specifically represent the views of the Peace Corps as an organization.



If you want to go out and volunteer, that's great. But if you really want it to have an impact, you've got to take it with you. You've got to tell other people — you can't forget about it."

draining from my boots," Bergeman.

This last winter, Bergeman helped lead an ASB trip to Uruguay — her third trip — where she was in charge of planning and working with community partners to make the experience as seamless as possible.

She also taught other students Spanish during pre-trip meetings. Although they may not have become fluent in the language, Bergeman said they learned what they could in order to better communicate with the people of Uruguay.

Becoming part of someone else's life is what has made these overseas experiences so impactful, she said.

"You would never have guessed that you would be in a hostel in Uruguay, living with this family and they've just welcomed you into their home — the intertwining of our lives and their lives," Bergeman said.

Looking abroad

Earning his degree from UI in 2017, Tristen Beaudoin spends his postgraduate life working as a volunteer for the Peace Corps in Rwanda, Africa.

Beaudoin has always wanted to work with humanitarian efforts or international development.

As a Peace Corps volunteer, Beaudoin said he teaches middle school-level English — his main service initiative.

"Volunteering, in general, can have a lot of different impacts. (But) I think it has to be responsible volunteering — it's very possible to volunteer and to cause damage," Beaudoin said.

He said the Peace Corps appealed to him specifically because of its high level of training

and expert knowledge in sustainable development. While a majority of his time is spent teaching English, Beaudoin works on secondary projects, as well.

Beaudoin said he helped create an English club for students outside of class and a professional development group for the school's teachers. He also worked on projects beyond his specific jurisdiction, creating a permaculture garden — a highly sustainable plot that adapts to the area climate. Peace Corps officials structure the projects so that Beaudoin works with community partners, generally someone who is local.


In his time at UI, Beaudoin planned to go on an ASB trip, but later decided against it after attending an orientation meeting.

He said the program's practices didn't align with his own service philosophy and felt as if there was too much focus on student learning and cultural awareness, with minimal discussion on community impact. Though many volunteer organizations don't want to be branded as voluntourism groups — which has a more negative connotation — Beaudoin said he feels most are.

"I think that (voluntourism) can be great for some people, (but) I didn't feel like it was a good use of the money," Beaudoin said.

Instead of funding short trips abroad, Beaudoin said he feels monetary contributions should be put toward on-the-ground efforts or given to certain organizations directly.

"Going for a few hours to a week to teach a lesson or work with people at an orphanage isn't going to make a serious impact," Beaudoin said. "But a lot of resources went into that that could have actually made an impact."



He said there isn't a problem with voluntourism efforts as long as the main focus surrounds travel and learning about other cultures, or the "philanthropic mission is just deceiving."

Exposure to foreign communities is important, Beaudoin said. Without it, people's idea of developing countries can be incredibly misleading.

"In every nation, there's a lot of disparity of wealth, that includes the United States," Beaudoin said. "But when people travel aboard — specifically to impoverished areas — it can perpetuate a stereotype of the poor helpless African or Southeast Asian or wherever. They have a lot of potential on their own, and a lot of these countries are developing very fast and have their own resources."

Life-long service

After graduating from college in 2000, Eric Anderson wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life. But once he learned his cousin was serving in the AmeriCorps, he decided to apply.

"The best two years of my life was in the AmeriCorps," said Anderson, associate director of career development for UI Career Services.

His work with the AmeriCorps focused on environmental work in Charleston, South Carolina.

Volunteering is not the focus of AmeriCorps, Anderson said. Rather, it is a national service program, with people enlisting to serve their community — similar to someone enlisting in the military.

Because of certain politics, however, the AmeriCorps has not always been perceived that way, he said.

After his two years of service, Anderson later returned to Charleston, working as a staff member instead of a volunteer. It was there

he developed an interest in teaching service learning and career development — an interest that eventually lead him to his job at UI.

While Anderson began volunteering at a young age, he only learned what it meant to be "civic minded" after joining the AmeriCorps.

Taking what he learned in his everyday life, the organization was able to transform the idea of volunteering into service learning.

Anderson is an active lifetime alumnus of AmeriCorps and chapter leader. Along with volunteering at two local nonprofits, he has also advised UI ASB trips, including one in Charleston.

The values one can learn from volunteering not only come from the actual service work, but also the different cultures and surroundings, Anderson said.

"Why should we spend money to go halfway around the world when we know there's homeless people in Idaho? I totally get that argument, but also as the University of Idaho, we are trying to transform students and give them lifelong education, you know. Maybe that means that sometimes we have to go outside of Idaho, too," Anderson said.

Service work gave Anderson a much broader "perspective on our country," he said. It's why Anderson stresses the importance getting involved — no matter one's beliefs.

But being in the world and seeing how certain issues affected people changed that for him, Anderson said.

"If you want to go out and volunteer, that's great. But if you really want it to have an impact, you've got to take it with you," Anderson said. "You've got to tell other people — you can't forget about it."



CONNECTING WITH THE CROWD

STORY BY | Max Rothenberg
PHOTO BY | Joleen Evans
DESIGN BY | Pepe Maciel



IMAGE ABOVE

Brantley Bacon plays the keytar during a live performance.

Local bands, musicians reflect on the Palouse music and entertainment scene

In a small, three-bedroom apartment near the University of Idaho campus, a local band is playing “The Final Countdown.” The space is tightly packed, with makeshift bouncers patrolling the building’s entrances. Suddenly, the song changes to Aladdin’s “A Whole New World.”

For Kelsey Chapman, UI fourth-year student and lead singer for Two Point Oh, the performance is just another opportunity to gauge the audience’s reaction and experiment with original covers.

“People will sit there stunned for a minute, then finally get it — they’re hearing the classic lines ‘I can show you the world,’” she said. “I love the reaction every time.”

Chapman, along with fellow band members Vince DiFatta (drums), Brantley Bacon (keytar), Bobby Meador (guitar) and Connor Bruce (bass), did not expect to find much success.

However, the Moscow community received the group with open arms, leading to a recent spike in interest.

“We take songs and throw other things in the middle or change the style completely,” Meador said. “But it works. Our sound has developed so much in the last year and we really have something. These aren’t genres we would normally play, but we make them our own.”

The current iteration of Two Point Oh formed May 2018, when Chapman filled

in last-minute for Buckshot Lafunk — the group’s name at the time. Although Chapman had never performed with the other members, Meador said he knew the group’s direction had to change and that she was the missing piece.

“It was something about the atmosphere and how Kelsey controlled the crowd — we immediately knew she was the key,” he said.

In desperate need of a bass player, the group decided on Bruce shortly after. Within two months, they formed Two Point Oh.

“It’s in the name. We’re the next step, the second iteration, the 2.0,” Bacon said.

Shelby Gutierrez, a recent UI graduate,

former marching band member and local music fan, said discovering new, often unfamiliar music is part of being a musician — Two Point Oh has not disappointed.

She said Bacon, in particular, brings a unique vibe to each performance.

“How many groups do you know with a keytar?” Gutierrez said. “And not in a tacky way — like, a good keytar player.”

The band was initially described to Gutierrez as a Buckshot Lafunk spinoff — a group she and many other Vandal Marching Band members were familiar with.

“We loved it. The energy was infectious, and over time, we came to know their jams (and) anticipate the mashups,” Gutierrez said.

She said while the lines gradually became blurred and the membership less precise, everything became clear when she first heard the name Two Point Oh and saw Chapman on vocals.

“I turn out to three to four events a semester — I’m usually coming for them, not going to lie,” she said. “Plus, it’s just so fun. People really let loose, and I think it breaks barriers that might be present in our other professional relationships.”

Finding time to rehearse has been a struggle, DiFatta said, as it can be difficult for the members to balance music with school and work. Setting concert dates has proved even more challenging.

“I play in five other bands and work three jobs — often I have to get up in the middle of the night to go to rehearsal,” DiFatta said.

Despite these obstacles, Two Point Oh finds time to rehearse at least twice in the week leading up to a gig. And the practice pays off.

“When we’ve finally nailed a cover to the wall, and you see the crowd’s reaction, people going nuts for it — you know you’ve done it,” Meador said. “You’ve set out to accomplish something

”When we’ve finally nailed a cover to the wall, and you see the crowd’s reaction, people going nuts for it — you know you’ve done it.”

and you’ve actually done it.”

Locations can vary anywhere from apartments to bars and other local venues, but the group noted difficulty in finding new venues.

“It’s definitely a music town, but setting up the gigs (can be hard). There’s a surplus of talent here and so many people are willing to do it for free. It can be challenging,” Bacon said. “And we can’t really play face-melting punk at Bucer’s or One World.”

Meador said it is also difficult to balance the “two extremes” of touring bands and open jam acoustic sessions.

“You can’t do homework while listening to us — you just can’t. It’s impossible,” Chapman said.

In addition to the many available on-campus music programs, Moscow is home to a number of venues which cater to various live musical opportunities. One such spot, The Bayou — a concert venue operating out of a residential Moscow home — has become a popular location for independent touring bands.

Run by UI student Gabriel Smith since 2017, The Bayou is gearing up for its first 2019 show.

“The bands can really connect with the crowd in this spot — it’s more of an independent style of show,” Smith said. “Many have said it’s their favorite show on tour and it’s usually a pretty good crowd for whatever it is, regardless of genre.”

While The Bayou relies mainly on Facebook promotion, flyers and word of mouth, shows can also be booked at Humble Burger and One World Cafe.

Smith, who has been a longtime member of what he calls the “do it yourself” community, said creating a sense of community around music has always been a value he holds dear.

“Part of it comes from being a small town with not a lot going on — the crowd is always super receptive, partially because there aren’t many opportunities to find this independent music,” Smith said. “I’m focused on how this sense of community can positively affect other people.”

With new song recordings and professional studio work, Bacon said Two Point Oh now has a project to show off to potential businesses.

“It wouldn’t even be a stretch for us to do a full album — what we do is so unique with our original covers,” Bacon said. “There’s just enough continuity for people to hang, but twists, turns and subverted expectations along the way.”

Energized by their most recent performances, Two Point Oh members are excited to move forward.

“We can pack a venue now — it’s insane to think about,” DiFatta said. “That’s never happened in any other band I’ve been in. Everyone in this band works so hard, we could be a wrecking crew at writing music once school is done. We just need to pull the trigger.”

While Chapman is set to graduate in May, Bacon still has one more year left at UI. Nevertheless, the group plans to stay together for the foreseeable future and continue growing their audience.

“This is something we’ve all wanted to do, Chapman said. “And it’s now a reality.”

PUTTING THE



IMAGE RIGHT

Michaela Brown works in her lab as a research assistant.

“

I definitely love spreading the message that if you have a disability you can participate in science fields and science research.

— Michaela Brown

PERSON FIRST

People with disabilities share their experiences searching for accessibility and inclusion

STORY BY Hailey Stewart
PHOTOS BY Joleen Evans
DESIGN BY Alex Brizee

There are approximately 40 million Americans, or 12 percent of the United States population, living with a disability, according to 2016 census bureau data.

Of those Americans, the most recent figures show around 11 percent of students with disabilities are enrolled in higher education institutions.

These institutions must provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and beyond to ensure their access to equal educational opportunities, the U.S. Department of Education notes.

But the phrase “reasonable accommodations” and the term “disability” are both broad, said Amy Taylor, the director of the University of Idaho’s Center for Disability Access and Resources (CDAR). Disabilities can range anywhere from physical disabilities to learning and neurological disabilities. That is why the Center works to involve all students who want or need additional help, regardless of their disability.

“We’re here to make the university and education accessible to all learners,” Taylor said.

The Center provides advising, academic coaching, alternative studying and testing arrangements, classroom and campus accessibility options and assistive technologies, among others.

Christin Fort, CDAR’s assistant director, said flexibility is key in providing a more accessible and inclusive education for students with disabilities. After a detailed and interactive intake process with Taylor or Fort, they discuss the variety of options available for any particular student.

“We can be creative to find what does work for a student,” Fort said. “Because every

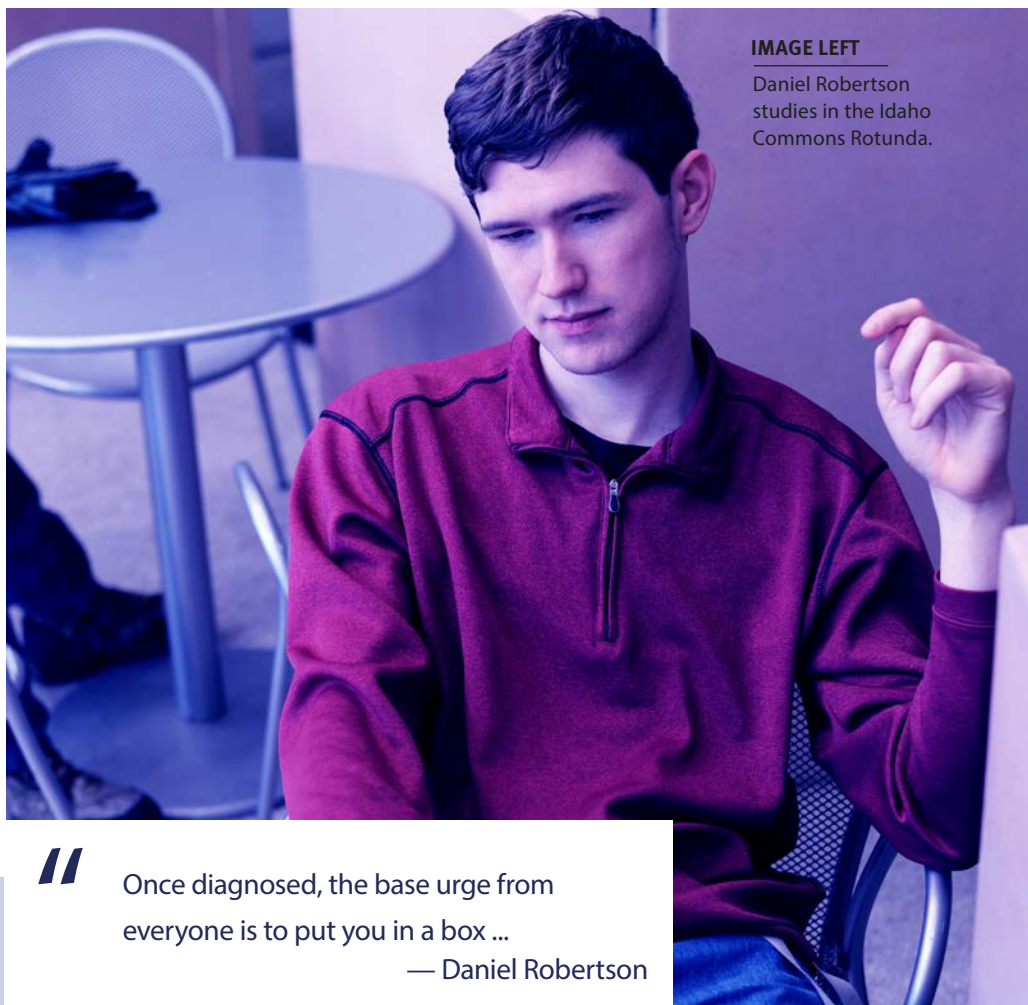


IMAGE LEFT
Daniel Robertson studies in the Idaho Commons Rotunda.

“ Once diagnosed, the base urge from everyone is to put you in a box ...
— Daniel Robertson

student — no matter their disability — needs something different to help them succeed.”

When CDAR moved into the Bruce Pitman Center just over a year ago, Taylor said it gave the program more room to provide services for students. In the basement of the building, multiple study areas and testing rooms are fitted with sound proofing, adjustable lighting and convertible desks for the varying needs a student may have.

Many of the nearly 500 students the Center works with ask for help with note taking, attendance, academic planning

and testing accommodations, Fort said.

In addition to the help students can receive from CDAR, another program on campus is also designed to help and advocate for students on the autism spectrum.

The Raven Scholars Program, coordinator Leslie Gwartney said, was introduced in 2011 as an organization to help bridge the gap between high school and college for students with autism. Similar to CDAR, the program aims to provide individualized academic coaching and planning for the 23 students enrolled in the program this semester.

More than anything, Gwartney said she

wants students with autism to know they can come to the Raven Scholars office for any guidance they might need.

“It’s a place to find success — a place to belong,” Gwartney said.

Part of that success, Gwartney said, comes from learning social and life skills through the program. This sort of education is what Gwartney calls hidden curriculum or the skills students on the autism spectrum might want help continuing to learn during their college experience.

More than helping with academics and educational accessibility, Taylor said she hopes to encourage students with disabilities to be transparent about the help they might need.

“Much of our job consists of directing students to be self-advocates,” Taylor said. “That really means knowing they can be doing better and reaching out to find that success.”

Gwartney said many students on the spectrum leave homes where their parents were largely the advocates for their children’s education. Like Taylor and Fort, Gwartney said self-advocacy for students with disabilities can go a long way.

“Sometimes it’s the small things that matter most,” Gwartney said. “Independence through self-advocacy is huge.”

Michaela Brown

When Michaela Brown was 16 years old, she contracted a virus that compromised her immune system — unleashing an array of illnesses.

“Every year is different,” Brown said. “From different pains to food allergies. I’ve learned to roll with it.”

Brown, now a 22-year-old fifth-year chemistry student at UI, has central sensitization syndrome, a chronic pain disorder, and narcolepsy, a neurological disorder that causes sudden sleep attacks.

“My body doesn’t understand the difference

between normal touch and intense physical pain,” Brown said. “Pain meds don’t work, so I just have to deal with it.”

Although others can not directly see Brown’s disabilities, they can impact her education on a daily basis.

“People look at me and often think, ‘You don’t look sick.’ But it really is something I deal with and learn more about every day,” Brown said.

She said the common stressors among college students can trigger her chronic pain, making it difficult to attend classes or complete long projects. So, Brown immediately looked to CDAR to help with those daily difficulties.

From aiding in the process of notifying professors about her disabilities to creating more accommodating spaces to take tests in, Brown said the Center helped change the direction of her college experience.

“Having that kind of support has been really great,” Brown said. “It’s helped me to build so many unexpected relationships.”

Those relationships, Brown said, were formed out of learning more about her disabilities and allowing others to learn about what works best for her and her education.

“If you’re someone who doesn’t have a disability or illness, or you don’t know someone similar, then you are kind of left in the dark,” Brown said. “I feel that a lot when I tell people about myself and when I tell them about my story.”

Not everyone may know Brown is a student with a disability, but she said open communication about being disabled is most important to her.

“Sometimes I feel there is this stigma with invisible illnesses. People get confused when they can’t see a physical disability,” Brown said. “But everyone is in a different situation and it just takes a single conversation to learn more.”

Scott Jones

Scott Jones, a 23-year-old UI student with

autism, sees autism as less of a “spectrum” and more of a “web” — an intricate maze that works differently for all people.

“Using the word spectrum almost complicates the understanding of autism more. A spider web can be so specialized and always changing,” Jones said. “You don’t always know someone has autism. Sometimes it takes looking behind the scenes.”

Diagnosed as autistic at age 6, Jones said his mother helped him plan most of his grade school education. However, college provided a new realm of freedom.

“Academics has never been my strongest suit. But the transition from high school into college was an easier transition than I expected,” Jones said. “I got more of that freedom with a college experience that I had less of before.”

For most of his college career, Jones said he had never heard of the Raven Scholars Program. Unexpectedly, he learned about the office’s work with students with autism and immediately reached out.

While the program offers many different services, Jones said he enjoys spending most of his free time at the Raven Scholars offices being around people who care about his success.

“It’s nice to have someone to answer to at weekly meetings, but it’s really great to know someone is there and has your back,” Jones said of the program advisers. “Whatever it is you need — they will explore all options to help you out.”

For the fifth-year anthropology student, social interaction may not come easy, but with a background in the study of humans, Jones said he used his education to grow socially in recent years.

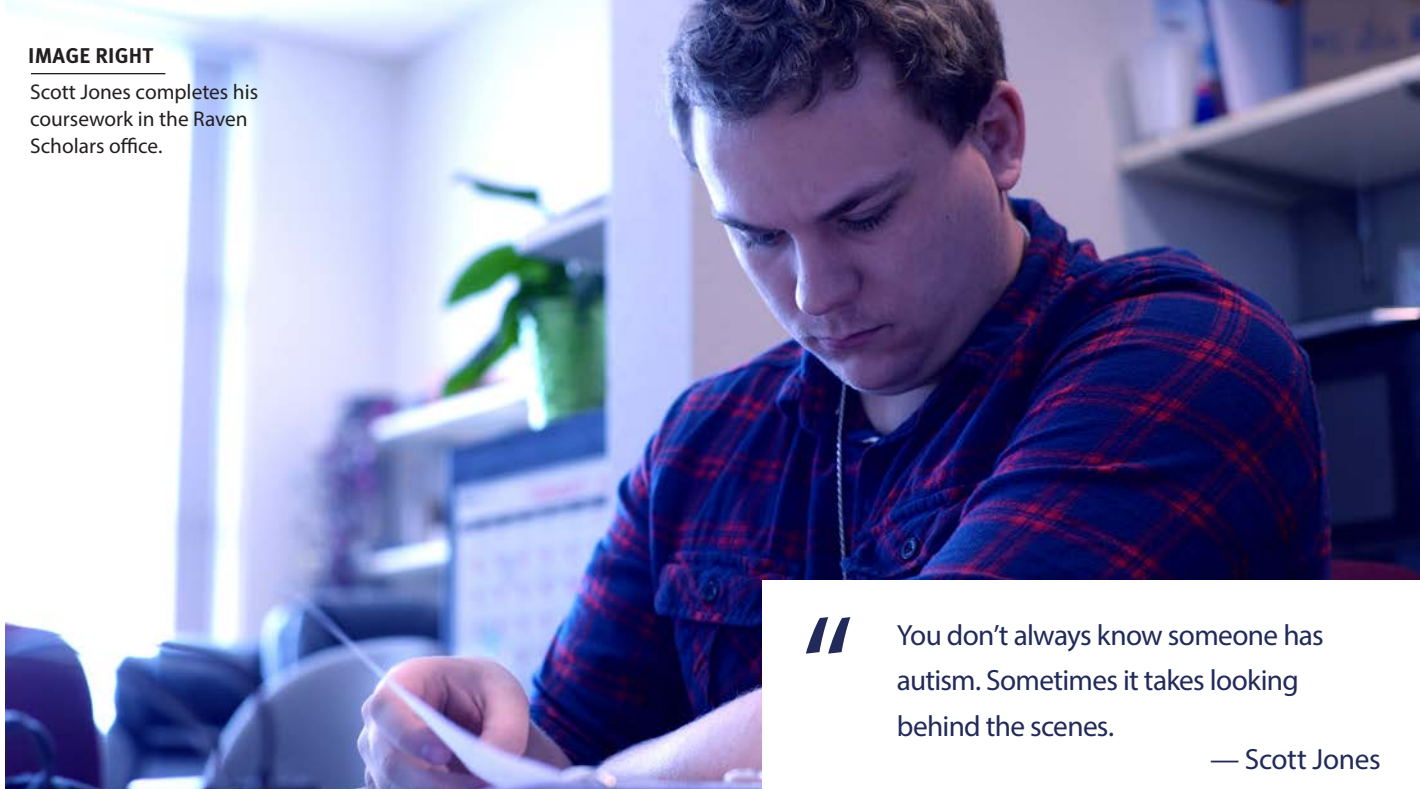
“I don’t naturally pick social settings since I have to make a conscious effort in that way,” Jones said. “But, I’ve learned more about people as a whole while being here.”

Daniel Robertson

After spending several years out of school, Daniel Robertson didn’t expect

IMAGE RIGHT

Scott Jones completes his coursework in the Raven Scholars office.



// You don't always know someone has autism. Sometimes it takes looking behind the scenes.

— Scott Jones

to finish college.

“(But) I just woke up one morning and decided I had to finish school and do it for myself,” the 25-year-old UI student said.

The transfer student from North Idaho College has two years left before finishing his degree in management information systems.

Feeling comfortable and welcome in his environment was a struggle until Robertson came to UI. Diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and placed on the autism spectrum at age 5, Robertson said fitting in hasn't always been easy.

“Once diagnosed, the base urge from everyone is to put you in a box and stifle which does not fit the mold,” Robertson said. “I didn't fit the mold. I guess I still don't — but that's me.”

Robertson, who utilizes the Raven Scholars Program for help in “navigating college life,” said the organization works to help everyone in their own way.

“There are all these unwritten rules when you're in school. You don't always understand those rules right off the bat,” Robertson said. “It's nice to have people there who can show you the ropes and

help you understand the rules.”

Moving away from his hometown in North Idaho gave Robertson the chance to find a space where he felt accepted and could find success as a student.

“I've found a lot of personal growth in the last year,” Robertson said. “I'm proud of that.”

Bobbi Flowers

A non-traditional law student, 52-year-old Bobbi Flowers spent just as much time studying on campus as she did in a hospital over the last several years.

After many years in different careers and her husband's cancer diagnosis, which lead her to the conclusion she could help others through law, Flowers graduated from the UI College of Law last December.

In the midst of her husband's health issues, Flowers said he still encouraged her to finish her degree.

“It's not something I ever dreamed of,” Flowers said. “But I had to find something and I wanted that something to help people.”

However, when Flowers was a child, she knew something wasn't right with her reading abilities. Throughout most of her

childhood education and several careers before entering law school, Flowers avoided finding diagnosing for her reading disability.

But in the early 90s, she learned she had scotopic sensitivity syndrome — a perceptual disorder that complicates the brain's ability to process visual information, according to the Irlen Institute.

Until entering law school in 2013, Flowers went through most of her life without outside accommodations when it came to reading and processing information.

For people with the disorder, black and white texts often become blurry, long sentences can be difficult to follow and bright lights may be hardest to read in.

Instead, Flowers said her brain processes information best when it's showcased on a rose tan color paper or through that color of lenses. That's when CDAR stepped in.

With all the case studies, texts and exams law school requires, Flowers looked to CDAR to help communicate her educational needs. CDAR staff became her advocates.

With CDAR, Flowers could print and read from colored paper that worked with her



IMAGE LEFT

Bobbi Flowers studies at Gritman Hospital, while waiting for her husband.

“ Reaching out for help is important. The difference can be not being successful and finding success. — Bobbi Flowers

eyes and take tests in rooms lit just for her.

“After all those years of reading without the extra help. It put me back a bit. School could have been so much harder without the help I received,” Flowers said. “I would have never passed law school without CDAR.”

All forms of accommodation, no matter the disability, are what Fort and Taylor said are key to producing a more inclusive education for students with disabilities. Whether it be learning access or physical access, Taylor said the university is making strides in both.

“The addition of elevators, ramps, curb cutouts and classroom technology modifications are ongoing projects, and improvements are made regularly as

budget allows,” Taylor said. “By making something accessible for students with disabilities, we are making things accessible to all learners.”

More than anything, Taylor said the programs on campus encourage communication between students with disabilities and those without disabilities.

“We like to embody the belief that disability is diversity,” Fort said.

Part of that diversity means recognizing all kinds of disabilities, Andrew Scheef said.

The assistant UI professor of special education said people tend to think about the image of a person in a wheelchair as the “universal symbol for disability.” Recognizing diversity among

disabilities, he said, is important to better understanding disability.

“Like any part of identity, you can’t just understand who someone is by looking at them,” Scheef said. “Ask people first. Get to know them. Some people want to talk more than others, but you have to start somewhere.”

However, Scheef said he understands the hesitation people might have initiating these conversations.

“What I tell my students is the default is always person-first language,” Scheef said. “Simply put the person first when you speak to anyone and everyone.”

Brown said she has experienced first-hand the discomfort others might have when broaching the topic of disability.

“When people hear my story, people want to be very careful around me or baby me. But that doesn’t help anyone,” Brown said. “Treat people with disabilities the same as you would anyone else.”

Like Robertson, Brown said she knows how disability can bring about diversity and independence.

“Essentially, we all come off the same assembly line. Some of our wiring is just wired differently,” Robertson said. “But we’re each our own electrician. It all depends on what we do with what we have.”

The most important aspect of better understanding the experiences of students with disabilities, Flowers said, is simply taking the time to get to know others.

“What is a little time invested in someone?” Flowers said. “That could manifest itself into a life-changing experience.”

READ MORE

To view an extended version of this story, visit blotmagazine.com.



CDAR
Bruce Pitman Center
Suite 127
208-885-6307



Raven Scholars Program
Idaho Commons
Room 330
208-885-9107

THE SCIENCE OF

Artistry

IMAGE ABOVE

Taylor Eddleston is with body pos-sensors for research.

UI DANCE PROGRAM SHOWS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ARE THE FOUNDATION OF EVERY DANCER

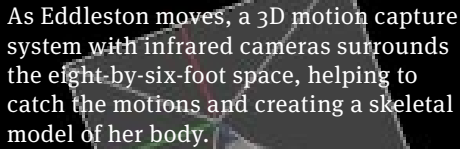
STORY BY *Meredith Spelbring*
PHOTOS BY *Leslie Kiebert*
DESIGN BY *Lindsay Trombly & Alex Brizee*

Taylor Eddleston stands in the middle of a black rubber floor, surrounded by snow white walls and a low hanging ceiling. Bright fluorescent light floods the room.

Despite the sterile setting, the University of Idaho third-year dance student rolls through a short routine, undeterred by the unnatural setting she find herself in.

For a brief moment, Eddleston stands motionless in her high-waisted black tights and purple leotard, her hair slicked back in a ballerina bun. She points her toes outward and bends at the knees.

Suddenly, she launches herself into the air. Her extremities are covered head-to-toe in small reflective orbs capturing her every movement.



As Eddleston moves, a 3D motion capture system with infrared cameras surrounds the eight-by-six-foot space, helping to catch the motions and creating a skeletal model of her body.

“What we do is basically make a representation of the individual without their body,” said Joshua Bailey, an assistant professor in the UI Department of Movement Sciences and coordinator of the Integrated Sports Medicine Movement Analysis Laboratory.

At first glance, it looks like sci-fi technology integrated into dance.

“It is like video games, where they have humans turned into characters,” said Abigail Shepard, a UI fourth-year student. “This information can do so much for us, so we can see how we are moving.”

With students taking classes that range from biomechanics to dance labs, science and technology blend seamlessly into the dance program.

Shepard came to the university knowing she wanted to dance in some capacity. Initially, she planned to one day enter the pharmaceutical industry before switching course and becoming a full-time dance student — a major she once believed was more artistic than scientific.

“I didn’t expect what I was getting myself into, but I love it,” Shepard said. “I feel like I’ve been pushed to my absolute best.”

Science-based dance research is relatively new, said Ann Brown, an assistant professor in the UI Department of Movement Sciences and director of the Human Performance Laboratory.

“The area of dance science is pretty new. I would say only within the past 10 to 15 years dance science has kind of cropped up in the United States,” Brown said.

Due to the limited amount of research in the field, Shepard has taken it upon herself to participate in any and all experiments conducted in the department — not solely for her own benefit, but for those who come after her.

“(It) has really driven me to participate as much as I can in all of this because I want there to be research for those that come in in the future,” she said.

Bailey and his team collect a dancer’s data throughout their time at UI, allowing them to better examine their past and present movements.

“It is my goal, my team’s goal, our goal to make them feel as comfortable as possible,” Bailey said. “Nothing we are trying to do is judging or putting them in a hierarchical standing in the program. It is just trying to provide more information to improve their program and improve their dancing.”

Since performances can often be hard to judge or score, it is an important component working to bridge a crucial gap in the dance world, Brown said.

“If you were to compare a similar type of sport like gymnastics — gymnastics is easier because there are certain qualities that are judged to give a certain score,” Brown said. “But with dance, there is no valid or accepted way to score dance.”

The dancers’ skeletal models generated by the sensors give Brown a starting point to establish a valid method for judging dance.

“It is really challenging to take the creative part of dance and look at it in a really scientific way,” Brown said.

EXPANDING THE SCIENCE

The scientific side to dance is not just limited to skeletal models and sensor technology. The program prides itself for teaching dancers about body composition and nutrition, as well as how each impacts the individual’s performance.

Body composition, Brown said, is not about looking at a person’s weight, but more specifically what the dancer’s body is made of.

“Most people focus too much on body weight. A better indicator of overall health is body composition and what

we are made up of, not just overall body weight,” Brown said.

Inside the Physical Education Building’s Human Performance Lab located is a DEXA — dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry — machine. Dancers lay flat on the table as the machine slowly scans their body, calculating the body’s composition: bone density, muscle and fat mass.

Brown and the dancers can all see the exact science of the dancers’ bodies, making it easier and more effective to talk about diet and nutrition. However, simply preaching healthy eating habits to college students can be a battle in itself.

“It is unrealistic to think that college students are going to go to the (Moscow Food) Co-op and buy these fresh vegetables and cook these glorious meals,” Brown said. “That is not going to happen. We talk about how to make the better choices.”

Even with the program’s focus on healthy eating, maintaining a lean and thin body is still a stigma that can loom over dancers, especially for those with a background in ballet.

“In most cases, it is telling them they need to be eating more,” Brown said. “It is not less. The emphasis is not to be eating less, to be getting skinnier — the emphasis is to maintain muscle mass.”

Shepard, who has been dancing for nine years, felt the weight of this stigma even before she began dancing at UI.

“It has definitely been a struggle coming to terms with the fact it is not about how I compare, it’s about how I perform in myself,” Shepard said. “Each year, I get a little better at just accepting we are not all the same, that every body is different — every body will move differently.”

‘WE ARE ATHLETES’

Long after most students leave campus, the Physical Education Building remains teeming with dancers. From academic courses to studio and then rehearsal, dance students spend much of their time

in the old brick building.

Each day is spent working toward their seasonal end goal of Dancers, Drummers, Dreamers — a yearly performance in the spring showcasing a variety of talents.

Despite the hours spent training, rehearsing and performing, UI fifth-year student Saban Ursua said dance is a sport consistently overlooked.

“There are times we just don’t get enough recognition,” Ursua said. “We are athletes. We are in the studio basically 24/7 working to the bone, not only as artists but as athletes.”

When the dancers are on stage, the movements look effortless — their main goal. Belle Baggs, an associate professor in the Department of Movement Sciences, said this may be part of the reason why it could be easier to discount them as athletes.

“Say you watch some ballet dancer, and they do an incredible leap across the floor. You see it as effortless,” Baggs said. “When you see it, you are wowed by it, but you see it as effortless. It is effortless because they are so efficient at their training, because they understand their bodies so well.”

While people might believe greater effort is exerted in sports considered more mainstream — such as basketball or football — Ursua said the disparity between these sports and dance doesn’t exist.

“They’re on the field entertaining the masses, (and) so are we,” Ursua said. “We are on stage moving, entertaining the masses, doing all these flips and tricks and spins. How is that any different in effort than what they are doing on the field?”

Regardless of long days filled with dance classes and rehearsals, Ursua said the opportunity to move makes it all worth it — even with the skepticism some may have toward dancers’ legitimacy as athletes.

“I really love to move,” Ursua said. “In the dance program, moving any way that you want to is definitely encouraged. We want you to move.”

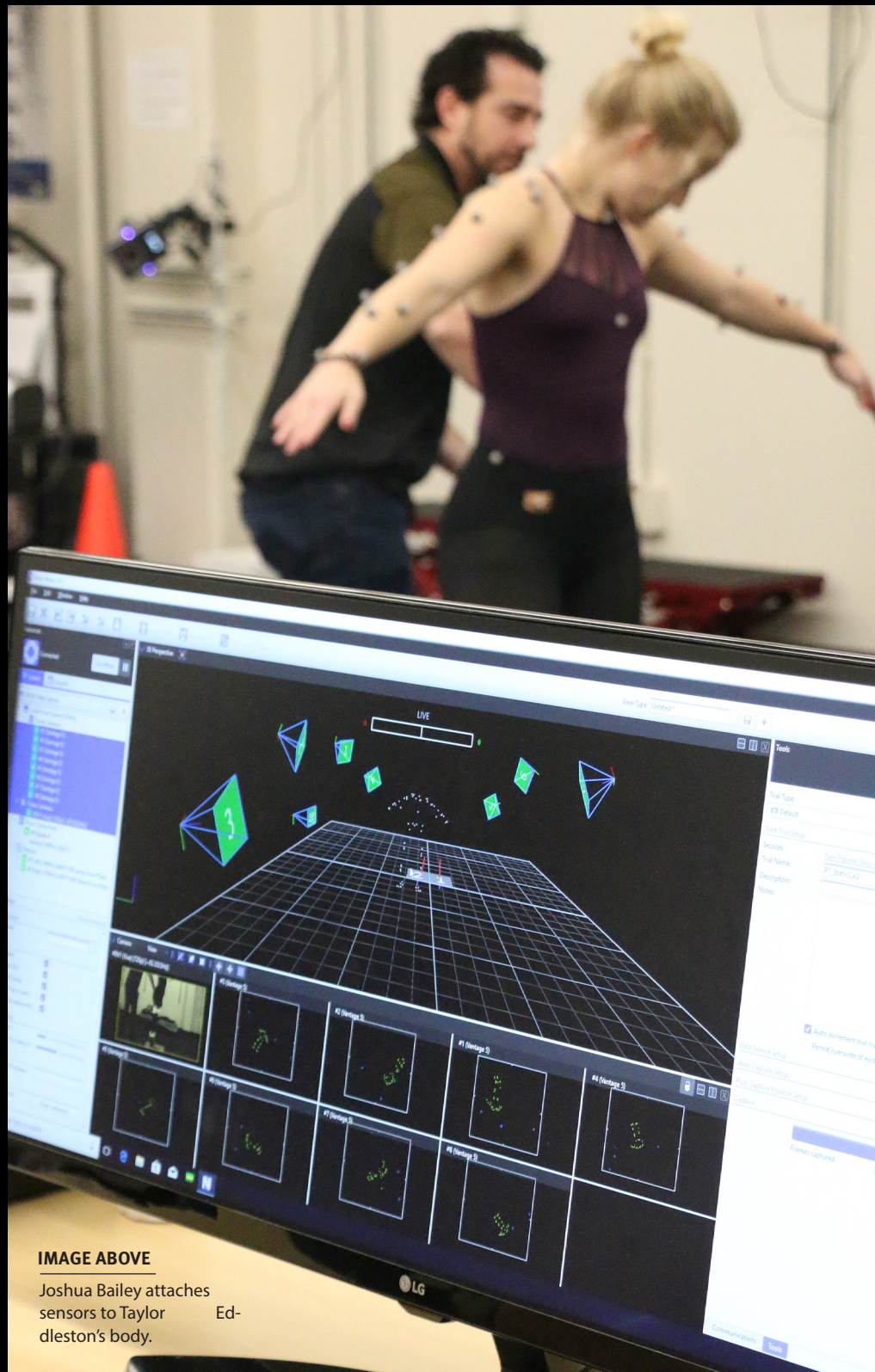


IMAGE ABOVE

Joshua Bailey attaches sensors to Taylor Edleston's body.

Building a Cleaner Future

Students continue the fight for renewable energy eight years after pledge for carbon neutrality

STORY BY Brandon Hill
PHOTO BY Joleen Evans
DESIGN BY Ethan Coy
GRAPHIC BY Riley Helal

A white plume of smoke dissipates into the frozen Moscow air, escaping from an aged smoke stack high above the intersection of Sixth Street and Line Street.

Below, cars putter along the icy roadways, sending their own gasses into the atmosphere.

Despite coming from different sources, these nearly invisible emissions each introduce foreign chemicals into the air, combining to create a more harmful effect than once realized — climate change.



“Climate change, with its long-range and pervasive effects, is a tremendous concern that we all face,” wrote former University of Idaho President Duane Nellis in 2010. “If we take action now, we will have a greater chance to mitigate the impact of global climate change than if we take a ‘business as usual’ attitude.”

Nellis, whose statement introduced the UI Climate Action Plan, called for an unprecedented change to campus life — carbon neutrality.

Carbon neutrality, a complex method of describing clean energy, took hold of the UI campus after Nellis announced his ambitious goal:

the campus would become completely carbon neutral by the year 2030.

No school had yet reached that goal at the time. Not much has happened to spark radical change, in the last eight years, according to students of the Vandal Clean Energy Club.

For Melissa Marsing, the president of the club, there has been progress, “just slow progress.”

“The rate that the university is showing improvement is not fast enough to reach that quick of a goal,” Marsing said.

A transfer student from the College of Southern Idaho, Marsing said it took time to realize her passion for sustainable energy. Now, she leads younger UI students in creating change on the Palouse, specifically by making easy-to-use ways for the university to access carbon-neutral fuels.

Brian Hanson, one of the founders of the

Vandal Clean Energy Club, said leaders — like himself and Marsing — develop projects new members can contribute to, such as a new fuel tank made to distribute bio fuels, which is in the works.

The university utilizes multiple vehicles — mostly Dodge models from the late 90s and early 2000s — which were originally intended for normal petroleum-based diesel, Hanson said.

One of the benefits of diesel engines is they can be easily converted for fuel created from other forms of common waste, such as cooking oil, Marsing said.

Unlike petroleum, cooking oil is commonly plant-based, resulting in emissions that do not add any additional carbon into the atmosphere. Instead of harvesting ancient fossil fuels from below the earth’s surface, biodiesel could easily be sources from the average restaurant.

“One of the best things about biodiesel is that it’s a drop-in fuel,” Marsing said. “You can drop it into any diesel vehicle and you’re not going to have any issues with it.”

One of the ways this fuel is collected, is by visiting locations on campus and in Moscow where large amounts of cooking oil are thrown out, such as the Hub or various local restaurants.

From there, the oil is treated with chemicals, making it suitable for powering a vehicle, a much cleaner — albeit time consuming — process than visiting the nearest gas pump.

The process of creating biodiesel might seem intimidating at first, Hanson said. But the benefits greatly outweigh the cost, environmentally and financially.

One of the best examples of this, he said, was the BioBug, likely the most easily recognizable biodiesel mascot on the Palouse.

The BioBug, a Volkswagen Beetle originally donated to the UI Biodiesel Education Program, was first used in the early 2000s as a test for how

everyday engines can handle cleaner fuel. Nearly two decades later, Hanson said the bug continues thriving.

With a range of 55 miles per gallon of fuel, Hanson said it still shocks him that some people are wary of biodiesel and its benefits.

Hanson and an associate made one of the most common expeditions a UI student will make — from Moscow to Boise and back — on a single tank of fuel. It was all done in the Bio Bug off a single tank of gas — twelve gallons good for 600 miles of travel and then some.

“We drove down there on fuel we made ourselves, and one tank of fuel got us all the way there and back, including driving around Boise and McCall, on one fuel tank. That’s 12 gallons of fuel,” he said.

The difference in fuel, Hanson said, is most easily observed in candle form. When presenting clean energy initiatives to young students, he said he often burns two candles — one made of biodiesel and the other of petroleum.

The two kinds of smoke produced look like exact opposites, with thick, black smoke emitting from the petroleum wick and clean, nearly invisible smoke drifting from the biodiesel.

The club, Marsing and Hanson said, efficiently creates biodiesel, making it readily available to campus vehicles capable of utilizing it has posed another challenge.

That’s why the club has tackled the project of building the state’s only B100 fueling station, a gas pump dedicated solely to providing biodiesel to UI facility vehicles. Hanson said this can help ease the process of filling up.

“One of our big issues is that we’re collecting oil at a faster rate than the school is consuming fuel, even though the school consumes over 36,000 gallons of diesel annually,” he said. “They don’t really utilize biodiesel on campus. We have multiple vehicles on our



12 gallons of biodiesel = 600 miles of travel



IMAGE LEFT

Brian Hanson lights biodiesel fuel on fire to illustrate the benefits of carbon-neutral fuel.

own personal fleet that run 100 percent biodiesel. However, that use is not enough to keep up with the oil collection.”

The issue with clean energy is not just contained to those invested in the business of biofuels.

According to a 2018 campus-wide survey conducted by the UI Sustainability Center, 100 percent of UI administrators believe climate change exists and 73 percent of respondents would support a student fee increase of \$5 or less “to help fund campus solar arrays or other energy conservation infrastructure.”

Additionally, 56 percent of respondents said it was important for UI to reach its 2030 goal of carbon neutrality.

One of the individuals within the university helping to reach the 2030 goal is Scott Smith, central plant manager of the UI Energy Plant.

Smith, an employee of the plant for nearly 16 years, said the aging building on the corner of Sixth and Line streets is one of the biggest players in producing cleaner energy and reducing overall energy usage across campus.

While internal combustion engines used in campus vehicles play an important role in the fight for carbon neutrality, Smith said heating campus buildings with steam helps eliminate about 97 percent of electricity usage. This keeps reliance on utility companies, such as Avista, low.

Reducing energy usage overall, he said, has helped UI take the necessary steps toward the 2030 goal.

“The recent changes on campus haven’t been about trying to eliminate that three percent of natural gas or trying to offset that piece of Avista that’s not coming from a clean source,” Smith said. “Most of the focus has been about reducing our energy usage.”

The process of producing steam begins not in the plant itself, but in a roughly 30-mile radius around Moscow, where towering cedar trees are harvested.

When logging companies need a place to dispose of unusable lumber, the waste is sent to the energy plant, where wood chips are heated to extreme levels.

Boilers powered by this process create the heated vapors required to warm the average classroom or office. The steam is then shot across campus to most of UI’s buildings through underground pipes. These pipes, Smith said, serve another useful purpose: heated sidewalks.

“The intent was never to heat the sidewalks. It just so happens that you know you’re going to lose energy from those pipes that are carrying steam. You might as well put those underneath the most used walkways to keep them free of snow and ice in the wintertime,” he said. “It’s actually capturing some of that

waste that we would have otherwise lost.”

Meanwhile, Hanson said he hopes those students who benefit from initiatives, such as the UI Energy Plant and the Vandal Clean Energy Club, will take a moment in their own daily lives to try and live more sustainably.

It all comes down to emotions — the primary reason why he said UI resists changes to its facilities, Hanson said. Experimenting with biodiesel in university lawn mowers was a simple action taken by the administration, a result of numerous pleas by the club.

However, with 2030 swiftly approaching, Hanson said he hopes more aggressive action will be taken to hit that goal, not just simple lifestyle changes.

“We’re not looking to just help this school,”
Hanson said.

“We’re looking to help the world.”

Tobacco- FREE for UI and

The University of Idaho is a tobacco-free campus. Cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes and all other tobacco products are not permitted on UI property. More information can be found at uidaho.edu/tobacco-free. APM 35.28

Quitting tobacco can be difficult

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- Free one-on-one counseling sessions at Gritman Medical Center: [208-883-6236](tel:208-883-6236).
- Free Freshstart group cessation classes on campus. Register online at www.uidaho.edu/tobacco-free.



Because stories are worth telling.

