
From: Office of the President <noreply@m.uidaho.edu>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2026 6:01 AM
To:
Subject: U of I grad returns to Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

Letter from the President



Office of the President, president@uidaho.edu
April 17, 2026

Dear Vandals,

After spending nearly a decade fully immersed in the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, Mason Oyler gains a new perspective this spring.

The [University of Idaho grad](#) is a long-term substitute teacher at Lake City High School in Coeur d'Alene and gets to experience the festival through the lens of the two dozen musicians he is bringing to Moscow. They'll bask in three days of education, competition and jazz-infused fun. The festival kicks off Wednesday, April 22.

"I still remember coming to the jazz festival for the first time as an eighth grader," Oyler said. "It's definitely a lot of different

emotions coming back. To watch students experience the same things that I got to be a part of is a unique place for me to be in. It's cool that it has come full circle."

Oyler completed his student-teaching assignment in Fall 2025 at Lake City and is now filling in for Lake City instructor Shad Frazier, who is out on military leave this semester.

"It's a great program and I was fortunate to be able to step in and build on all the work that (Frazier) put in," Oyler said. "It's really cool that I got to have this first full-on teaching experience with a group of kids that I worked with before."

The Lionel Hampton School of Music faculty members are like family for Oyler, who earned degrees in music education, music composition and instrumental performance (percussion). A full decade of jazz festival experiences inspired Oyler's passion for not only teaching but also composing and performing music.

He leads the Mason Oyler Jazz Orchestra, a group of U of I alumni and current students who perform locally, including May 17 at the Kenworthy Theatre in Moscow.

At the Jazz Festival, students have a chance to compete for the Avista Scholarship, which Oyler received as a high school student. The award goes to the top high school vocal and instrumental soloists at the festival. He hopes one of his students will win the same scholarship and continue their journey to study music at U of I. Avista is a longtime supporter of the event.

"The Avista Foundation is honored to partner with the University of Idaho to support students whose talent and potential help strengthen the university and the communities we serve," said Paul Kimmell, Avista regional business manager.

Oyler said he is seeking a full-time music teaching position for next fall.

“I hope wherever I end up, I can bring students back to the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival to share in that experience,” he said.

We’re proud of the 59-year legacy of the [Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival](#) and the positive impact it makes on thousands of students each year.

Go Vandals!

C. Scott Green
President



Snapshots

U of I grad student explores rattlesnake relocation

College of Science graduate student Emily Martin studies the prairie rattlesnake and its adaptation to relocation efforts. The research is informing how park rangers deal with snakes found near areas such as well-used hiking trails or parking lots.

[Learn more.](#)

Schiele works to engineer stronger tendons

Professor Nathan Schiele investigates tendons and how we might be able to repair and strengthen them through biological engineering. Schiele discusses his work on the connections between muscle and bone on “The Vandal Theory” podcast.

[Learn more.](#)

U of I staff member answers the call in Boise

Cyrus Vore, a UI Extension 4-H Youth Development program coordinator, served as acting chief clerk for the Idaho House of Representatives earlier this year. Vore read close to 600 bills, memorials and resolutions to lawmakers and helped the legislative session run smoothly inside the Capitol.

[Learn more.](#)

**Did
you?
know**

The average U of I student receives about \$7,300 dollars in scholarship funding each year. That covers more than 75% of tuition and fees for Idaho students.



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