
From: Office of the President <noreply@m.uidaho.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 15, 2026 6:01 AM
To:
Subject: U of I grads relish the Vandal experience

Letter from the President



Office of the President, president@uidaho.edu
May 15, 2026

Dear Vandals,

The University of Idaho experience comes in all sorts of packages, from interning at one of the country's top accounting firms to mapping forests for the Idaho Department of Lands to representing our students through student government.

This weekend, we celebrate the culmination of more than 2,400 student journeys at [commencement](#). Our graduates' transformative education at the U of I prepares them to make a difference in their respective industries and communities in the years ahead.

Moscow native [Catherine Niehenke](#) passed on her dream school on the East Coast after realizing the U of I's College of

Business and Economics offered exceptional opportunities closer to home. She graduates with double majors in accounting and international studies, double minors in marketing and French, and the Alumni Award for Excellence from two colleges.

Beyond academics, Niehenke led as the president of the Graue Scholars Program and her sorority. She studied abroad in France and helped establish a campus food pantry. Scholarships made U of I financially practical, and her impressive resume landed her a job with Ernst & Young in Boston, fulfilling her original dream after all.

[Ryann Harrington](#) grew up in agricultural central Washington with no background in forestry, but a chance encounter with U of I recruiters at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis redirected her career path. She is earning degrees in forestry and wildfire ecology after serving as student president of the Society of American Foresters club and as a U of I student ambassador.

During her time as a Vandal, Harrington mapped timber sales, inventoried forests, volunteered as a fire dispatcher and completed an Idaho Department of Lands internship, which led to a position after graduation. Her mentor, Professor Randy Brooks, praised her long-term thinking, stewardship values and community-building leadership style.

[Seyi Arogundade](#), a Lewiston native and second-generation Vandal, served as ASUI president while pursuing dual degrees in journalism and political science. Inspired by a former ASUI president's speech during a campus visit, she made student leadership her goal from day one. Arogundade rose through executive boards and served as chief of staff before winning the presidency.

Shortly after her election, Arogundade was diagnosed with lupus, requiring hospitalization and a summer of recovery, but she returned determined. Her tenure focused on amplifying

student voices, increasing club funding transparency and encouraging broader campus engagement. She plans to attend law school after graduation.

No matter what they study, U of I students can choose from a broad spectrum of hands-on learning opportunities. Each one contributes to the signature Vandal experience and prepares our graduates to make a difference across our state and around the world.

Congratulations to the University of Idaho Class of 2026!

Go Vandals!

C. Scott Green
President



Snapshots

Lindley Award winner inspired by grandfather's path

First-generation student Alexa Benitez earned the U of I's top College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences honor — the

Lindley Award — after completing a double major in political science and psychology with a 4.0 GPA. Inspired by an immigration attorney who helped her grandfather become a U.S. citizen, she plans to attend law school.

[Learn more.](#)

U of I senior headed to MIT to pursue doctorate

Biochemistry senior Keaton Adams graduates from the U of I this spring and accepted a doctoral offer from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Working in Professor Chris Marx's lab, Adams authored a peer-reviewed journal article exploring research with significant implications for antibiotic resistance.

[Learn more.](#)

Architecture student builds future by looking at what already exists

U of I senior Paul Pederson discovered his passion for adaptive reuse — repurposing existing structures rather than demolishing and rebuilding them — through coursework and a Phi Kappa Phi-funded study trip to Singapore and Malaysia. He plans to pursue a master's degree and conduct further research in sustainable architectural design.

[Learn more.](#)



The U.S. Department of State recognized the U of I as a top-producing institution for Gilman Scholarship recipients.



Copyright © 2026 University of Idaho, All rights reserved.

You received this email because of your affiliation with the University of Idaho.

University of Idaho
875 Perimeter Drive
Moscow, ID 83844
info@uidaho.edu

[Forward this email to a friend](#)