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**From:** Office of the President <noreply@m.uidaho.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 1, 2025 6:16 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Uldaho, NIC team up to meet workforce needs

# Letter from the President



Office of the President, [president@uidaho.edu](mailto:president@uidaho.edu)  
**Aug. 1, 2025**

Dear Vandals,

Idaho mining companies know there is a great workforce shortage looming in their resurgent industry. The University of Idaho is moving quickly to meet the need, teaming up with North Idaho College (NIC) on a unique Geological Engineering degree.

The new offering from the U of I's College of Science, College of Engineering and NIC will provide viable options for working professionals in the Silver Valley, and valuable skills for traditional students interested in the industry.

In Coeur d'Alene, U of I center CEO Andy Fields worked closely with NIC president Nick Swayne to respond to pleas for mining

workforce from the nearby Silver Valley. Mines in central and southeastern Idaho also plan to resume operation in the coming years to boost production of elements critical to electronics, health care and numerous other products.

“We have cobalt, gold and antimony mines opening across Idaho, and a massive regrowth of mining in the state,” said Alistair Smith, College of Science professor and chair of the Department of Earth and Spatial Sciences. “We need critical minerals for all kinds of things from hospitals to national defense, and industry estimates that by 2030, 50% of the mining workforce will have retired. There’s a big need for new workers and a lot of companies are looking to retrain their current employees.”

Fields said the new program will equip graduates for high paying jobs in a sector that looks much different than it did in the previous century.

“These companies are very innovative, from mitigating risk and creating a safer work environment to their water treatment systems,” Fields said. “There are a plethora of jobs for our graduates, and we’re committed to building a sustainable workforce pipeline. We’re empowering local students and helping take care of Idaho industries.”

The mining uptick will not only provide excellent job opportunities, it could also boost local communities in Idaho.

“There are great opportunities for people in the Silver Valley, but the mines are also going to attract talent to the area,” Fields said.

The U of I and NIC’s partnership builds on a strong relationship. Many students transfer from NIC to the U of I each year, and the two schools share facilities on the campus near downtown Coeur d’Alene where we collaborate on 2+2 programs for place-based students to earn bachelor’s degrees in computer science and elementary education. Now we share a pathway

for students to launch rewarding careers in an industry that is vital to Idaho's success.

"We feel indebted to NIC for reaching out and working with us on this," Smith said. "This degree advances our land-grant mission through strengthened partnerships with NIC and with industry."

The U of I is proud to play a central role in the Gem State's mining resurgence. We're grateful for our partners in industry and higher education that help us deliver value for students and great return for our state.

Go Vandals!

C. Scott Green  
President



## Snapshots

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**U of I sets new fundraising record in FY 2025**

Generous Vandals and industry partners donated \$67.6 million to U of I during Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025), the largest annual amount ever. The annual total pushed the Brave. Bold. Unstoppable. philanthropic campaign to more than \$514 million. The campaign runs through December and is the largest fundraising effort in state history.

[Learn more.](#)

## **Vandals win Big Sky Presidents' Cup**

The U of I Athletics department took home the Big Sky Conference Presidents' Cup for the first time in history. The trophy is awarded to the Big Sky school that excels athletically and academically throughout the year, with standings in each sport and average GPA factored into the final rankings.

[Learn more.](#)

## **Idaho WWAMI student serves in Bonners Ferry**

Braedon Buchanan, an Idaho WWAMI medical student, is spending a month working and learning in Bonners Ferry through the Rural Underserved Opportunities Program. The program places students in primary care clinics in underserved towns for a four-week immersion experience. Buchanan will serve at Boundary Community Hospital and Clinics.

[Learn more.](#)



President Green's annual State of the University address is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Sept. 2 in the Bruce M. Pitman Center International Ballroom and streaming on UI Live.



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