

## UIAA DIRECTORS IN IDAHO PROFILES

### **Troy Braga '02, Northern Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Finance and Human Resources

**Hometown:** Gooding, Idaho

**Favorite class:** “IBC - Integrated Business Curriculum — It was by far one of the toughest classes I have ever taken, however it prepared you for the real world.”



**Favorite class:** “Statistics. My first introduction to that subject was a bit overwhelming, but through a great teacher (Dacey), I came to love it and it turned me in a direction for the rest of my time at Idaho that has led me to a very rewarding career. A very close second was my time in the Davis Investment Group even though that technically was not a class.”

**Why U of I:** “Mainly by opening my eyes to opportunities I never knew much about. Being from a very small town, my view of the world was fairly narrow and my time at Idaho opened doors for me that I didn’t even know existed.”

**Why I serve:** “I have a deep appreciation for what my time in Moscow did for me and this seemed like a great opportunity to get involved giving back.”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** Hands-down, Mario Reyes. Mario was a huge advocate for not only my education, but also in helping me manage my time balancing IBC and playing basketball for Idaho. Without his encouragement and support, I never would have decided to join the team as a walk-on. He was the ultimate student advocate and I still keep in touch with him for his advice and friendship.”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “Davis Group trip to Chicago with Mario. Being a faithful Vandal even through plenty of tough years in athletics. Taking my kids to campus on fall weekends and always visiting the Fiji house, hello walk and other favorites, as well as telling them the same stories so many times they know what’s coming before I even start!”

### **Mil DeSilva '09, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Food Science and Nutrition

**Hometown:** Meridian, Idaho

**Favorite class:** “Studying biochemistry provided me with a profound grasp of both macroscopic and microscopic systems. I actively apply those insights to enhance my understanding of healthcare.”



**Why U of I:** “University of Idaho offers an exceptional university experience. However, it’s more than just academics; it’s about embracing the spirit of being a Vandal. As University of Idaho Vandals, we embody fierce competitiveness, independent thinking, and a drive to make a lasting impact.”

**Why I serve:** “There exist myriad compelling reasons to embrace the Vandal spirit, and each generation deserves to personally encounter these motivations. As for our current and future alumni, their achievements and contributions merit wholehearted celebration. Being a Vandal isn’t just about the past; it’s about the present and the future we collectively build.”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “During my senior year at the Perch apartments, I made a seemingly innocuous decision: I bought Rock Band. Little did I realize that this simple purchase would transform into a cascade of unforgettable CJ’s post parties, where friends would gather to revel in rhythm, unleash their inner rock stars and create cherished memories. Each note resonated with laughter, and the sheer joy of being together. We found ourselves immersed in a harmonious blend of music and friendship.”

**Lisa Donnellon '05, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** B.S. Public Relations

**Hometown:** Lewiston, Idaho

**Favorite class:** “I love my all my Public Relations classes! Any opportunity to present or give a speech!”



**Why U of I:** “U of I taught me to be driven and dedicated. My degree allowed me to advance my career quickly by using my communication skills. I am very outgoing with a positive attitude which allows me to be comfortable presenting/speaking to large or small audiences.”

**Why I serve:** “I loved my time at U of I! When a Vandal meets another Vandal, I feel like there is an instant connection! Being involved with the Alumni Association to ensure others feel the same way and continue to remain engaged in university activities. The opportunity to be involved with U of I after college is a way to give back to a special place I called home for four years.”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** “Sue Heinz. She was my PR professor for several classes. She encouraged me to try new things and take risks. She was very supportive and always shared great insights.”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “I recently reconnected with 15 of my fellow Vandal friends. We have been sharing photos and reliving many memories from our time at University of Idaho. It was so fun! I want everyone that comradeship and community.”

**Rory Fletcher '04, Northern Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** B.S. Sport Science

**Hometown:** Juneau, Alaska

**Favorite class:** “Biomechanics. It most closely resembled what I would learn in physical therapy school and I loved combining anatomy with physics and understanding how the body moves.”

**Why U of I:** “Through living groups, classes, intramurals, etc. I got to meet people from all different backgrounds. I really started to understand how building relationships was essential no matter what your career was. I have kept that in mind as I continue with my career/life.”

**Why I serve:** “I wanted to be able to give back to U of I in a meaningful way. While living in Moscow, I saw how much impact the university has on this community as well as the state of Idaho (and beyond). I want to do what I can to support the mission of the university as well as the more than 100,000 Alumni.”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** “Kathy Browder. She was the biomechanics professor and her classes helped prepare me the best for the rigors of graduate school.”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “I met my wife at the university in the fall of our junior year. 20 years later we are still together. That will always be my best Vandal memory.”



**Mallory Cook Griffith '10, '12, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Secondary Education — Social Studies and English. Masters in Curriculum and Instruction

**Hometown:** Coeur d' Alene, Idaho

**Favorite Vandal memory:** "Cheering on the mighty Vandals! I loved the rush of excitement on game days; students, alumni, staff, community members, friends and family making their way to the Kibbie Dome to support the team."

**Why U of I:** "The College of Education prepared me for a career in teaching. I was able to get a strong background in Social Studies and English to have the confidence to teach those content areas. U of I provided me opportunities to work with local schools, teachers and my student teaching experience to develop my teaching skills. I was able to meet with experienced teachers as mentors to guide me through my time in college and the teacher certification process."

**Why I serve:** "I blossomed on campus, made lifelong friendships, met my husband, developed connections and became prepared for my career. U of I provides lifelong opportunities and should be celebrated and cherished. I love being able to promote its vision and core values."



**Chris Haener '89, Central Idaho**

**Sharee Hamilton '02, Southern Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Spanish with an Emphasis in Business

**Hometown:** Idaho Falls, Idaho

**Why I serve:** “I am proud to be a Vandal and I’m excited to be able to give back to university and our Vandal family. Serving on this board allows me to help grow the connection between Vandal alumni and our alma mater.”



**Favorite class:** “My major included a mix of Spanish and business classes — both of which I loved! I was able to go on exchange during my junior year and took business classes in Italy and Spanish classes in Costa Rica. That experience solidified my interest in meeting people from different cultural backgrounds and my love of travel.”

**Why U of I:** “U of I prepared me for life after college by exposing me to experiences and opportunities I wouldn’t have had otherwise. As a first-generation college student, I wasn’t sure what to expect when I moved from Idaho Falls to Moscow. When I look back on my years at U of I, I couldn’t be more thankful for the incredible personal and professional growth experiences I had!”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** “I met Jack Brown through my husband when he was a grad student in Jack’s Plant Science program. It was then that I realized I missed out on getting to know more of my professors on a personal level. Jack always took the time to get to know his students personally and pushed them to take advantage of opportunities that would make them well-qualified graduates. I am thankful that we still keep in touch!”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “I have so many fond memories of my time at U of I! Life at the Pi Beta Phi house was always eventful, and I treasure the lifelong friendships I made there! Mom’s Weekend was incredibly entertaining when my mom and my aunts came to town! And I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention lots of great family time at U of I — including myself, there are fourteen of us cousins who are Vandals, and we love to have a good time cheering on the Vandals at football games!”

**John Hoyne '96, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Bachelor of General Studies, emphasis in Architecture and Business

**Hometown:** Aberdeen, Washington

**Why U of I:** “The opportunity to build a network of friends and business connections has provided me numerous opportunities.”



**Favorite class:** “It’s a toss-up between Business Law and the World of Corporate Business. BLAW 265 was an excellent course, and I appreciated the additional time

I spent with Jerry Wegman. The class provided a foundation about contracts, warranties and other legal topics I deal with running a business. James Toomey and the World of Corporate Business was an eye-opening experience. You would attend a lecture and then have either lunch or dinner with the guest speaker, it was an excellent opportunity to interact and learn from business leaders."

**Why I serve:** "When I realized the experiences, friendships and opportunities that I had at the University of Idaho, it was a no brainer to find ways to give back."

**Favorite faculty or staff:** "I was fortunate enough to be involved in the ASUI Student Government and Boards and got to meet and work with David Mucci. Dave was a mentor, leader, educator and all-around great person. He would always make time to chat in the hall or give advice about a difficult substation. He is a special person."

**Favorite Vandal memory:** "Spirit Cow at Homecoming and serving as Vandal Booster Intern for the Southern Idaho Golf Tournaments."

### **Bobby Myers '10, '17, Northern Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** Human Resource Management, Marketing, Executive MBA

**Hometown:** Powell, Wyoming

**Why I serve:** "I choose to serve the Alumni Association because it's a rewarding opportunity to give back while being afar. So many great Vandals have helped me along the way, and I want to be that Vandal for somebody else."



**Favorite class:** "Leading Strategic Change. This class became the most rewarding nearly four years after taking it. In the spring of 2022, I referenced the coursework of this class more than when I was enrolled in the EMBA. I relied on the materials as we quickly built an adaptable organization through what seemed like an unknown future. We had to embrace change and create an agile operation that had previously been a working model for decades. I owe keeping our organization intact over the last three years to this class."

**Why U of I:** "U of I prepared me for life after college with its vast alumni network. With so many alumni in Coeur d'Alene that I could reach out to, I quickly realized the opportunities available when I moved here not having a career path that I was passionate about. The support after college has been the most beneficial in my professional career."

**Favorite faculty or staff:** "I had Dan Eveleth as a professor in both my undergraduate and master's program. His thoughtfulness and intention that he puts into his lectures and coursework expanded my view on reasoning before every decision. Everything he put forth to his class had an intention and would always seem to resonate more as the years passed."



**Robb Steinke '84, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** B.S. Ag Business

**Hometown:** Idaho Falls, Idaho

**Favorite Class:** “Personal/Business Accounting and also Real Estate Law. These courses were integral to my job as a banker and as a real estate appraiser and also personally into my life.”

**Why U of I:** “U of I gave me the tools to succeed and also the people that I met at the university helped to further my career.”

**Favorite faculty orsStaff:** “Larry Branen! He was there for me when I was a student and after I graduated. He helped mold me into the person that I was to become.”

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “My main memory is when I met my future wife when I was a sophomore.”



**Samantha Storms '12, '13, Western Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** B.S. Public Relations (Business); M.S. Adult, Organizational Learning and Leadership; G.C. HR Development, Leadership and Counseling

**Hometown:** Idaho Falls, Idaho

**Favorite class:** “While I ultimately changed my major to public relations, my experience as an international studies student with the Martin Institute left a lasting impression on my college experience. It was an honor to represent University of Idaho as part of the 2010 delegation.”

**Why U of I:** “I am thankful for my extracurricular activities. Many of them shaped the person and professional I am today, including serving as ASUI student body vice president and senator, and being a member of both the Homecoming Committee and the Student Alumni Relations Board. These and other leadership roles are the inspiration behind my current seat on the U of I Alumni Association Board of Directors.”

**Why I serve:** “I have always believed in the importance of giving back to my community. After serving the U of I Alumni Association for nearly a decade while living out of Idaho, hosting and planning alumni events, I am proud to be back in my home state and thankful for my Vandal network stretching far and wide.”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** “I have been fortunate to have so many incredible mentors from U of I, many of whom I still turn to for sound advice and friendship today. Their dedication to Vandal students does not go unnoticed and their impact on my life is immeasurable.”



**Favorite Vandal memory:** “Homecoming will forever be a special memory for me as both a student and now alumni. Coming back to Moscow always feels like coming home and embodies the true sense of reunion with my Vandal Family and friends.”

**Aaron Wiliamson '95, Western Idaho**

**Liza Wilson '09, '11, Central Idaho**

**Degree/Major(s):** B.S. in Conservation Social Science, M.S. in Bioregional Planning and Community Design

**Hometown:** Twin Falls, Idaho

**Favorite Vandal memory:** “Besides meeting my husband at the Fresno State game in 2009, taking my kids to Vandal games and events. Having them experience the energy and camaraderie is the best feeling.”

**Favorite class:** “I learned so much from my conservation management and planning course. It introduced me to experiential learning and gave me a passion for strategic planning and working in/with rural communities. I also loved working with Ron Walters solving "wicked" problems. His visionary planning and thinking outside the box, opened my mind to a world of possibilities that I would never have dreamed about.”

**Why U of I:** “Through my time at U of I, I was allowed time to discover myself and my likes, dislikes, and interests; to be independent and build confidence in my knowledge and abilities. Most importantly, I was never sure what path I wanted to take career wise, but I did know that I wanted a partner-in-crime, and to have a family, so meeting my husband was a huge bonus!”

**Why I serve:** “I have a passion for building communities and fostering connections, and Vandals are the best! Serving on the UIAA is a way that I can support the university that supported me. I would love to be part of inspiring the next generation of Vandals to continue the success of a great university.”

**Favorite faculty or staff:** “Nick Sanyal inspired me with his love for teaching and his genuine care and concern for his students to achieve success. His drive for thinking out of the box and developing course work that made real world impacts inspired my whole academic career. Similarly, Ed Krumpe and Stacy Camp, both of whom were on my master’s committee, inspired me with their diverse backgrounds and genuine care for the success of their students.”

