

University of Idaho  
2025 – 2026 Faculty Senate Agenda

Meeting #23

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 3:30 pm  
Zoom Only

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes (VOTE)
  - Minutes of the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Meeting # 22 (February 24, 2026)  
**Attach. #1.**
- III. Chair’s Report
- IV. Provost’s Report
- V. Invited Guest Presentations
  - AI Working Group Update – Ben Hunter, Dean of University Libraries. **Attach. #2.**
- VI. Committee Voting Items and Reports
  - FSH 3060 Equal Employment Opportunity – Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen, Chair of Ubuntu, and Elissa Keim, Office of General Counsel. **Attach. #3.**
  - FSH 3065 Equal Employment Opportunity in Recruitment and Hiring – Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen, Chair of Ubuntu, and Elissa Keim, Office of General Counsel. **Attach. #4.**
- VII. Other Policy Business
  - APM 50.16 Criminal Background Check Procedures – Brandi Terwilliger, Director of Human Resources. **Attach. #5.**
- VIII. Other Announcements and Communications
  - None
- IX. New Concerns or Issues
- X. Adjournment

Attachments

- **Attach. #1** Minutes of the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Meeting #22 (February 24, 2026)
- **Attach. #2** AI Working Group White Paper
- **Attach. #3** FSH 3060 Cover Sheet and Redline
- **Attach. #4** FSH 3065 Cover Sheet and Redline
- **Attach. #5** APM 50.16 Cover Sheet and Redline

## 2025 – 2026 Faculty Senate – Pending Approval

### Meeting # 22

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm PST

Zoom only

**Present:** Bailey, Barannyk, Borrelli, Erickson, Hagen, Haltinner (vice chair), Harrison, Hu, Kenyon, Kolas, Lawrence (provost, w/o vote), Long, McKenna, Miller, Murphy (chair), Remy, Rinker, Rivera, Roe, Shook, Strickland, Stuen, Thorne, Tohaneanu, Vella (faculty secretary, w/o vote), Victoravich

**Absent:** Maas

### **Call to Order**

Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes (vote)**

- The minutes of the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Meeting #21 (February 17, 2026) were approved as circulated.

### **Chair's report**

- In the national news, a legislator in Tennessee withdrew their efforts to eliminate tenure for professors at public universities.
- Senate will not meet over spring break. Cera is working on fixing the Outlook calendar issue and new invitations for senate meetings will be sent out shortly. Please contact Tim if issues persist.
- Several extensive policy revisions and new policy items will be coming to Senate for a vote soon. Please be sure to allow sufficient time to review the binders prior to the meetings.
- The annual African American Read-In will be held February 25 at the UI Library lobby on the first floor, from 12:30pm - 2:00pm. Read a brief selection from a Black or African American-authored book or simply relax and listen. There will be door prizes and refreshments. This event is sponsored by UI Library, Black Studies Program, and English Department.

### **Provost's Report**

- Higher education budgets are expected to be on the JFAC agenda Monday and we hope to have additional information next week.
- There is an AI training opportunity for faculty – AI for Teaching and Learning: Higher education. A few seats are left for those interested. [AI for Teaching and Learning FAQ](#)
- The first annual symposium for UI Energy Institute will be held March 4-5 in the Bruce Pitman Center. The symposium begins March 4 at 5 pm with the keynote at 7 pm. [UI Energy Institute Symposium](#)
- Title II accessibility for online materials goes into effect in April. CETL has done an amazing job in training students to help faculty be compliant in their courses. Resources are available for current and future courses.

- Gwen Gorzelsky provided a reminder of the 2026 Student Success Symposium Ignite and Elevate: Teaching for Student Persistence, Friday, February 27 in the Idaho Student Union Building. [Student Success Symposium](#)

Questions:

A Senator expressed concern that the students trained to help with Title II compliance were unable to assist with math lectures involving formulas. It was noted that recent developments have resulted in solutions to this issue. Celi offered to follow up with CETL Instructional Designers to help and provide guidance.

**Invited Guest Presentations**

- Staff Council Update – Cody Williams, Staff Council Chair, and Annie Exline, Staff Council Vice Chair.

Representatives from Staff Council provided an overview of initiatives including staff awards, support for staff on and off campus, and operational excellence. Efforts include implementing staff awards and recognition programs to celebrate achievements and enhance longevity. Work is also being done to foster staff engagement and connection across UI campuses. Operational excellence is another focus, with ongoing work to improve campus processes to better support faculty and staff.

Questions:

A senator asked about the structure of staff council. Staff council leadership includes chair, vice chair, elections officer, communications officer, operations officer and financial representative. There are about 30 staff council members representing different categories of staff positions. It was noted that staff council and the staff compensation committee are standing committees of senate. Senate has an obligation to address staff issues as well as faculty issues.

**New Concerns of Issues**

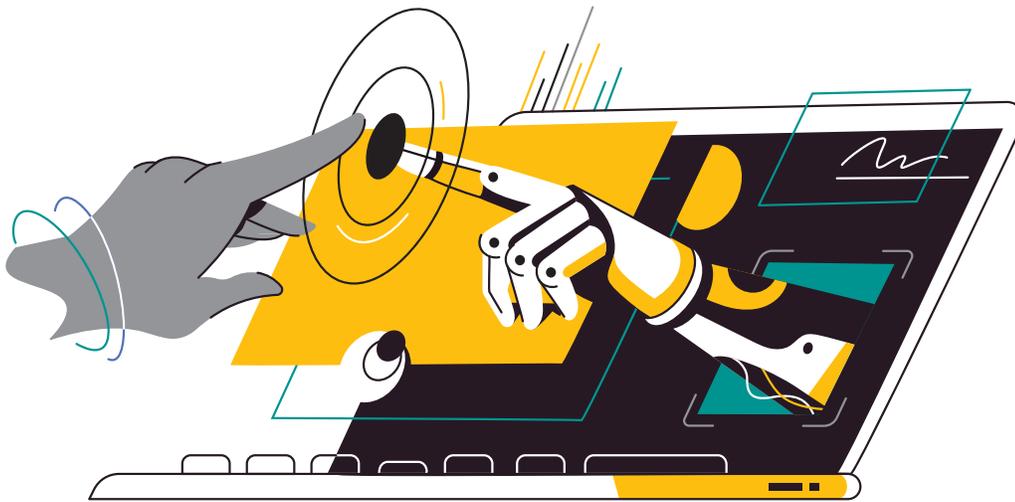
- A senator asked a question about receiving an email notice that canvas courses are expiring. It was noted that Teams automatically makes teams for courses and they expire if they are not used. This is to preserve storage space and mitigate costs.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m. PST (5:02 p.m. MT).

Respectfully Submitted,

Chantal Vella  
Secretary of the University Faculty & Secretary to Faculty Senate



# U OF I ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WORKING GROUP

## ABSTRACT

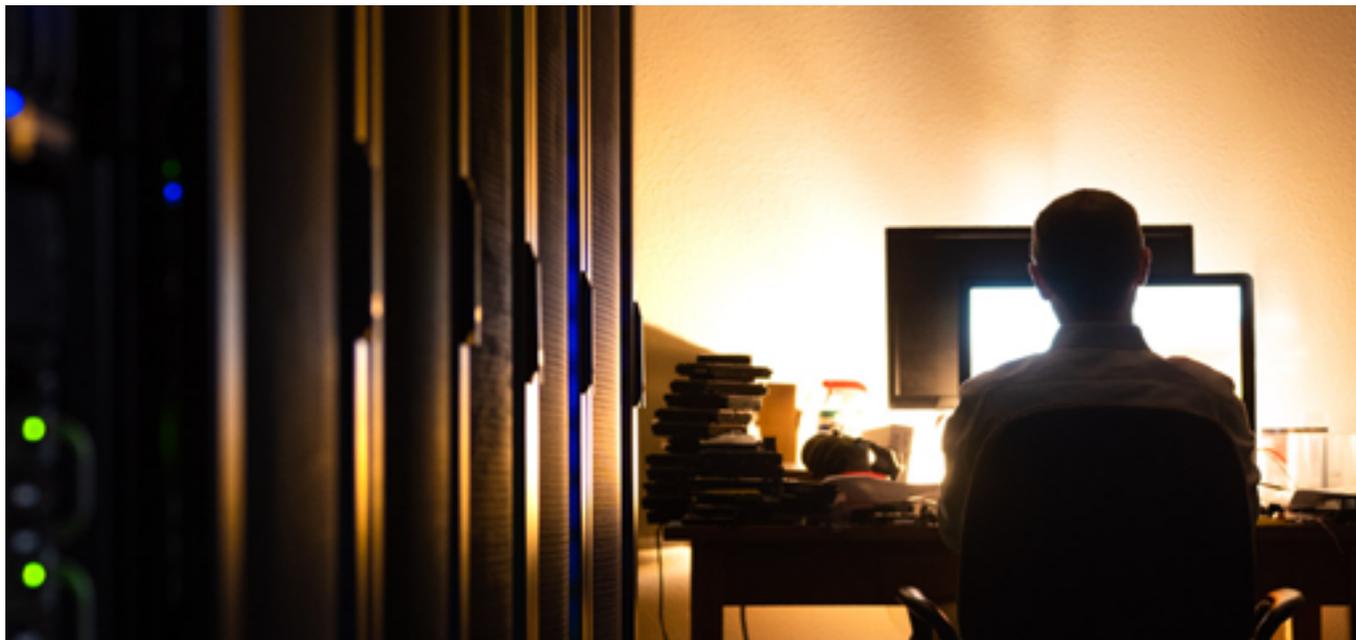
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U of I has been actively exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by generative AI since it rose to prominence in 2022. In response to its rapid adoption across research, teaching, and administrative functions, the university established the Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG) in 2024 to coordinate efforts, gather campus-wide input, and develop strategic recommendations. Through listening sessions with faculty, staff, and students, the AIWG identified key priorities, including the need for clear AI usage guidelines, ethical considerations, AI literacy education, and improved access to AI tools and training. The group also assessed institutional AI initiatives based on cost and impact, recommending a phased approach to implementation. These recommendations serve as a final step for the AIWG, with responsibility to be passed on to an Artificial Intelligence Execution Group in the spring of 2025.



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## Executive Summary

Since generative AI rose to prominence in 2022, higher education institutions, including the University of Idaho (U of I), have faced both significant opportunities and challenges. Generative AI technologies are rapidly evolving, leading to widespread adoption across teaching, research, and administrative functions. Despite the rapid integration of AI, universities are in the early stages of defining institutional policies and best practices to ensure responsible and effective use.

U of I is currently leveraging AI in research, administrative improvements, and pedagogy. Public AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are in common use by faculty, students, and staff. Rather than enacting specific policies, U of I has opted to issue guidance on AI use, emphasizing security, academic integrity, and research ethics. While there is much activity around AI at U of I, this activity has not been centrally coordinated or tracked.

In November 2023, the U of I's Office of Research and Economic Development convened a stakeholder meeting to discuss AI's current and future impact which eventually led to the formation of the Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG) in spring 2024 to foster collaboration, explore AI opportunities, and address challenges. In addition to creating a central website and providing input on the latest OIT campus memo on AI, the group gathered campus-wide input through listening sessions facilitated by members. These sessions, attended by dozens of faculty, students, and staff, highlighted diverse perspectives on AI's ethical concerns, academic integrity, environmental impact, and its potential to enhance efficiency in academic and administrative tasks.

Using information from these listening sessions, expertise from AIWG members, and information gleaned from other universities, the AIWG developed draft recommendations. These recommendations were then sent to external stakeholders who provided feedback which was incorporated into the document. This final document provides a path forward for an AI Execution Group to move forward on to better leverage AI at U of I.

The AIWG recommends that the AI Execution Group should prioritize initiatives that are both low-cost and high-impact, such as developing clear AI usage guidelines, providing information on AI platforms, and encouraging ethical AI use. Efforts should also focus on creating self-paced AI tutorials, supporting communities of practice, and improving access to AI teaching resources. Additionally, showcasing AI success stories and piloting university-developed AI models for administrative use can enhance innovation with minimal investment.

The AIWG also identified high-cost, high-impact initiatives and recommends that the AI Execution Group should assess return on investment before implementation. These include funding AI-powered platform subscriptions, expanding research computing capacity, making strategic AI-focused hires, and using AI for recruitment, student support, and personalized communications.

Lower-priority activities with either low cost or low impact, such as highlighting AI courses, sharing regular AI updates, and hosting events, may still provide value with minimal effort. Lastly, while academic and social engagement tools and seed grants were deemed high-cost and low-impact, they remain potential long-term opportunities worth monitoring.

# Environmental Scan

## AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND AT U OF I

Since 2022, generative AI has become widely available to all constituents in higher education, and adoption has been rapid. Much has been written about how generative AI offers significant benefits and challenges in higher education, and most institutions are still early in the process of defining how best to utilize the technology even though it is already in wide use by faculty, students and staff. It is also extremely complicated in that the number of generative AI offerings and the capabilities of the tools are changing at an unprecedented pace. Addressing the necessary institutional policies, processes, procedures and training to effectively and safely utilize generative AI are topics that are a significant challenge for most, if not all, higher education institutions. Generative AI offers a myriad of possibilities for higher education, but as with all new technologies the capabilities and use of the tools have moved much faster than policy and procedures.

U of I is engaged with AI in many ways, including but not limited to conducting research into AI, exploring the utilization of AI to improve administrative processes and use in teaching courses. Additionally, multiple public AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are now in wide use by students, faculty and staff in teaching, learning, research and service. The university has also established the AIWG to identify use and to strategize our best approach to the use of AI at the university.

To date, the university has decided to issue guidance for the use of AI rather than specifically address AI use in university policy. This decision was made based on the limited availability of best practices, rapid changes in the technology and because many key issues like academic honesty, research integrity, acceptable use of technology and others are already addressed in policy. University guidance on AI security concerns is annually distributed in a university-wide email and can be found at <https://support.uidaho.edu/TDClient/40/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=2823>. Guidance to faculty on AI use can be found at <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/cetl/ai-teaching-learning.asp>.

## AI POLICIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

To get a sense of the current landscape in higher education, the AIWG collected AI use policies from 37 different North American colleges and universities. Using Google NotebookLM, these policies were analyzed for common themes. The following is a summary of the most common themes sorted by number of policies mentioning them:

- **Syllabus Policies and Transparency:** Many documents emphasize the need for instructors to create clear policies about AI use in their courses and to communicate these policies to students via the syllabus and class discussions. (13 documents)
- **Guidance for Instructors:** Many documents provide guidance to faculty on developing AI policies, revising assignments, and integrating AI into the classroom. Some sources also recommend that instructors experiment with AI tools. (9 documents)
- **AI as a Tool:** Several sources suggest that AI can be a useful tool for brainstorming, idea generation, research, and text synthesis, but with the caveat that AI-generated content may be inaccurate. (8 documents)
- **Academic Integrity:** A strong focus is placed on academic integrity and the need for students to produce original work. The use of AI without citation or claiming AI-generated content as one's own is often considered academic misconduct. (6 documents)
- **Data Privacy and Security:** The importance of safeguarding sensitive and confidential information when using AI is highlighted. Users are warned against entering personal data into AI systems. (6 documents)
- **Citing AI:** When AI use is allowed, students are generally expected to properly cite any AI-generated content, and may also be required to submit the prompts that were used. (6 documents)
- **Alternative Assessments:** The documents propose using alternative assessment methods to discourage the misuse of AI, such as in-class discussions, multimodal assignments, and making the writing process visible. (6 documents)
- **Ethical Considerations:** The documents raise ethical questions regarding the use of AI and promote discussions about how it might affect learning, student development, and potential biases. (6 documents)
- **University Support:** Many sources suggest resources and support centers at universities that offer assistance with teaching and learning in the age of AI. (6 documents)
- **Evolving Nature of AI:** Many sources note that AI policies and guidelines are continuously changing as the technology evolves, and recommend that instructors stay informed. (6 documents)
- **Variety of AI Use Policies:** The documents present various approaches to AI use, such as prohibiting it, allowing it with acknowledgement and citation, or permitting it without disclosure. (5 documents)
- **The Importance of Critical Thinking:** The documents emphasize the importance of critical thinking and designing assignments that promote analysis, comparison, and application rather than just summarization. (5 documents)

- **Importance of Human Oversight:** There is a consensus that human oversight and critical thinking are essential when using AI, and that students should guide and verify AI-generated content. (4 documents)
- **Emphasis on Learning:** Several sources stress that instructors should emphasize the learning process over the final product and design assignments that help students understand and synthesize information. (3 documents)
- **AI Detection Tools:** Some documents caution against relying on AI detection tools, citing their inconsistent accuracy and the rapidly changing technology. (3 documents)

## AI Working Group

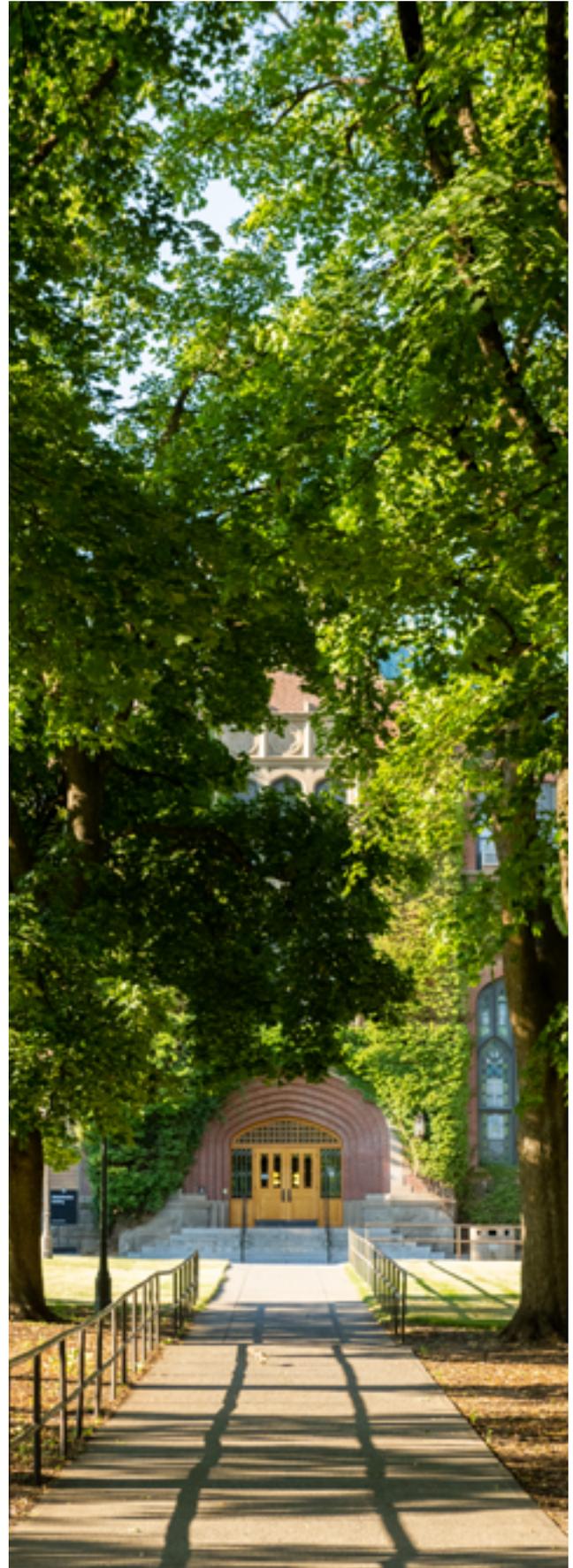
### FORMATION OF WORKING GROUP

In November of 2023 the Office of Research and Economic Development convened a meeting of stakeholders from units across campus to discuss AI at U of I. The discussion at this meeting was wide-ranging but demonstrated a clear desire for a deliberate campus approach to address the current and future impact of AI on all functions in the university.

With the encouragement of Torrey Lawrence, Provost and Executive Vice President, and Dan Ewart, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Ben Hunter, Dean of University Libraries, convened a group of interested individuals to begin discussions of how to better encourage and coordinate efforts around AI across the university.

The AIWG convened in the spring of 2024. Discussions focused on a desire to promote collaboration around AI and general awareness of risks and opportunities. Potential activities for fall of 2024 that were discussed included forming cross-unit communities of practice and having a campus-wide symposium. Due to travel schedules and most members being on academic year contracts, the group did not meet over the summer.

The group reconvened in fall of 2024. After reconsidering the already changed landscape of AI after several months of significant technological advances and evolving attitudes, the group reconsidered its approach. Acknowledging a lack of awareness about general campus needs and attitudes surrounding AI, the group decided on the need for listening sessions to best determine how to move forward. Chandra Zenner Ford, Office of the President, worked with President Scott Green to develop a formal charge for the group to move forward with information gathering.



## CHARGE FROM PRESIDENT SCOTT GREEN

Recognizing the growing impact of AI on teaching, learning, research and administrative functions, the AI committee's goal should be to develop a cohesive strategy that supports the university community in leveraging AI technologies responsibly and effectively. The AI Steering Committee should gather the information needed to establish, assess, coordinate and advance the use of artificial intelligence (AI) across the U of I.

After the AI Working Group gathers information from stakeholders and maps priorities with specific sets of recommendations for AI initiatives across the University, a smaller team will be formed to lead the execution phase beginning in the spring of 2025. The AI Execution Team will report out at regular intervals to President Green and Provost Lawrence and will share progress on the identified outcomes focused on support & training, policy development and coordination of AI across teaching, research and administrative functions.<sup>1</sup>

## MEMBERSHIP

- **Ben Hunter**, Chair and Dean of Libraries
- **Bert Baumgaertner**, Associate Professor of Philosophy, CLASS
- **Dan Ewart**, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
- **Jean-Marc Gauthier**, Virtual Technology & Design Program Director, Associate Professor
- **Douglas Habib**, Assistant Director for Programming, CETL
- **Michael Overton**, Associate Professor; Associate Director IIDS (Institute for Interdisciplinary Data Sciences)
- **Barbara Petty**, Associate Dean and Director of U of I Extension, CALS
- **Brad Ritts**, Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Economic Development
- **Barrie Robison**, Professor; Director IIDS (Institute for Interdisciplinary Data Sciences)
- **Dilshani Sarathchandra**, Associate Professor, CLASS
- **Lucas Sheneman**, Director of Research Computing and Data Services
- **Brian Smentkowski**, Professor of Political Science and Director of CETL
- **Adam Stoltz**, Director of Enrollment Marketing, University Communications and Marketing
- **Aleksander Vakanski**, Associate Professor, College of Engineering

<sup>1</sup> Green, S. (2024, October 10). *Artificial intelligence – Call for input* [Memorandum]. U of I.

- **Min Xian**, Associate Professor, College of Engineering
- **Chandra Zenner Ford**, Office of the President, Executive Sponsor

## LISTENING SESSIONS

The AIWG conducted ten open listening sessions via Zoom over the month of November 2024. Faculty, students, and staff each had three sessions, and a session for Family and Consumer Sciences was conducted at the request of their faculty. Sessions were advertised via the Daily Register, MyUI, and the memo from the president, and attendees registered on the AI website.

A total of 199 people registered for these sessions (53 faculty, 35 students, and 111 staff). While attendance was not at 100% of registrants at any given session, all but one of the sessions (the final student session) had sufficient attendance for meaningful conversation. Attendees also received a survey at the end to submit additional comments.

Sessions were one hour apiece and facilitated by members of the AIWG. Each session consisted of five open-ended questions:

1. **What is your general attitude toward generative AI?**
2. **Are you currently using generative AI?**
3. **What opportunities do you see for using generative AI in your work?**
4. **What challenges do you see generative AI presenting in your work?**
5. **How can the university best support you when using/managing the use of AI?**

## FACULTY

Faculty perceptions about generative AI are diverse, ranging from skepticism, to cautious optimism, and enthusiastic adoption. Concerns center on ethical issues centered around use of unlicensed intellectual property in developing models, potential over-reliance on AI diminishing critical thinking skills, environmental impacts, and inherent biases in AI outputs. Attendees also expressed uncertainty about how data and data privacy work with publicly available AI models.

Faculty also raised concerns about academic integrity, as students might use AI to complete assignments, and there are difficulties in tracing the origins of AI-generated content. Additionally, the amplification of biases and inaccuracies in AI outputs and the need for new skill sets to navigate these technologies present obstacles.

Despite these reservations, many expressed appreciation for AI's practical benefits, such as saving time and supporting administrative tasks. Current applications of generative AI include editing emails for tone and grammar, computer

coding, summarizing texts, language learning, and creating content like captions, podcasts, and study guides. Some expressed interest in AI helping with grading to save time. Some faculty were also excited about the potential for AI assisting their research, and for research into AI itself.

There is a desire to integrate AI literacy into foundational undergraduate courses, establish clear university policies on AI use, and provide faculty training. Faculty expressed support for mini-grants, training, and policy development, while fostering ongoing dialogue about the ethical and practical dimensions of AI through workshops and lecture series. Providing funding for subscription-based AI platforms was suggested, and others mentioned the research potential of having locally hosted models that could handle sensitive data, particularly in the social sciences.

## STUDENTS

Like faculty, students expressed a diverse range of opinions on AI. Attendees at the student session valued its efficiency in summarizing, brainstorming, and simplifying complex concepts but voiced concerns over its ethical implications, environmental impact, and potential to undermine critical thinking. Challenges such as academic dishonesty and ethical issues tied to environmental justice and resource consumption dominated much of the conversations. One attendee was deeply unhappy about what they perceived as a “pro-AI stance” being taken by the university.

Despite these concerns, it was clear that among the attendees, most were utilizing AI for a variety of tasks, sometimes with the encouragement of their instructors, and sometimes despite warnings against using it. Using AI to brainstorm and work through writer’s block, iterate drafts of papers, and improve grammar and perform basic copyediting were some of the given use cases. There was general agreement that students need to have the necessary skills using and understanding AI to prepare for the future.

Students expressed a desire for clear, practical guidelines for using AI in academic assignments; resources and training for their instructors to navigate AI-related plagiarism and misconduct; and workshops and communities of practice to share best practices. They also expressed a desire for a critical approach to AI, particularly regarding the effect of increased AI use with energy consumption and the university’s climate action initiatives.

## STAFF

The concerns that staff voiced were very similar to those from faculty and student groups. Data privacy, environmental impact, and concerns around intellectual property were all mentioned. There were concerns about AI-generated content reflecting poorly on and potentially replacing individuals working in creative fields like arts and design.

However, based on those who attended these sessions, staff appear to be the most enthusiastic early adopters on campus. Notably, more staff registered and attended listening sessions than faculty and students combined. Attendees at the staff sessions cited proofreading and improving tone for emails and other written communications, project management, automation of administrative tasks, automating repetitive tasks, and supporting marketing and design processes.

Potential university investments and support identified by staff included university supported subscriptions to ChatGPT or other platforms, guidance on which platforms were preferred by the university for use in university business, and clear and actionable policies and guidance, and training opportunities to learn more about what others are using AI for and what is possible.

## OVERALL FINDINGS FROM LISTENING SESSIONS

Perceptions of generative AI among faculty, students, and staff reveal a mix of skepticism and cautious optimism. Shared concerns include ethical issues, data privacy, environmental impact, and the risk of AI undermining critical thinking and creativity. Despite these reservations, AI’s potential to improve efficiency and support tasks like summarizing, brainstorming, and automating workflows is widely recognized, as is its potential in research and scholarship. There is a general recognition that AI is only going to become more important across all fields and aspects of daily life.

AI applications are already in use across campus. Faculty and students most frequently use it for writing assistance, computer coding, and research, while staff leverage it for project management, marketing, and administrative tasks. Students emphasize its value in overcoming writer’s block and preparing for future careers, while staff are enthusiastic early adopters, recognizing its ability to streamline operations.

To address concerns and enhance AI’s benefits, participants highlighted the need for clear university policies, training, and investment in tools. Suggestions include integrating AI literacy into curricula, funding AI subscriptions, and fostering workshops and communities of practice.

## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

After gathering feedback from the listening sessions and gathering input from AIWG members, a draft white paper was produced. This was then sent to two individuals with deep experience in the tech industry in Silicon Valley who are currently working in the private sector with AI. These two individuals, both graduates of the U of I, provided feedback to a subset of the AIWG via a Zoom call. Additionally, we received written feedback from another individual working with an AI startup in the private sector.

Their feedback resulted in five major themes that have been incorporated into the paper. Those themes are as follows:

- 1. U of I as AI Developer:** U of I should set its sights beyond AI adoption and also focus on AI development, focusing on niche applications like forestry, agriculture, and sustainability. Many of the biggest players in AI are overfocused on consumer applications with potential broad interest, leaving opportunities for important research neglected. These are important areas where U of I could help drive the conversation and make significant contributions.
- 2. Data Privacy and Security:** AI's data privacy and security risks are major concerns, particularly regarding how external AI platforms handle university data. The university should ensure that their vendor review process ensures AI tools comply with strict privacy standards and that institutional data is not used to train external models. Transparency is critical — students and staff must understand how their data is collected and processed, with an option to opt out where feasible. Additionally, distinguishing between locally hosted AI models, which offer greater security, and public AI models, which pose higher risks, is essential. IT and data security personnel should receive continuous training to keep pace with evolving threats, ensuring university-wide AI security remains robust.
- 3. Overreliance on AI:** One of the stakeholders noted that they are seeing that junior developers are struggling with some coding tasks due to their overreliance on AI. This phenomenon is almost certainly not limited to coding and the technology industry, and it is critical that higher education is considering the risks of overdependence, particularly in professional fields where foundational skills remain essential. Faculty should design assignments that encourage independent thought while allowing AI as a supportive tool. Ethical AI use in coursework, research, and communication must be explicitly addressed to prevent misuse.
- 4. Bring Nuance to Discussions of AI's Impact:** Data centers for all uses, not just AI, make up 1-2% of global energy consumption. While that's a relatively small amount, it still represents a huge amount of energy and AI adoption could grow that number significantly despite rapid efficiency gains. Because AI applications tend to take much more energy than traditional computing methods, students and faculty should be taught about when using AI is appropriate as opposed to circumstances when other methods would be just as well, or even better, suited to a given task.

- 5. Strengthening AI Education with a Focus on Communication Skills:** As AI becomes more integrated into professional environments, it is increasingly shaping how employees write, present, and collaborate. Effective communication remains a critical career skill, yet AI-generated content presents both opportunities and challenges. Over-reliance on AI for writing and messaging can lead to misinterpretation, ethical concerns, and the erosion of fundamental communication abilities. To prepare students for an AI-infused workplace, universities should incorporate AI-assisted communication training into curricula, emphasizing clarity, appropriateness, and ethical considerations. Experiential learning opportunities, such as industry partnerships and AI writing workshops, could further reinforce these skills. Additionally, establishing an AI communication lab, faculty training initiatives, and research into AI's impact on workplace communication would support students in developing the necessary expertise to navigate professional interactions effectively.

## AI @ UI WEBSITE

On behalf of the AIWG, staff from Research Computing and Data Services (RCDS) have created a website to centralize information about AI activities and learning at U of I. While this site is still in its early stages, it is growing into a central hub that will, in time, serve several purposes. Specifically, this website will:

- showcase university scholarship, research, and teaching around AI for both external and internal audiences;
- centralize policies and guidance around AI;
- give an overview of and contact information for AI resources at U of I; and
- provide a calendar of AI related events and learning opportunities on campus.

This website can be found at <https://ai.uidaho.edu>

## UPDATED GUIDANCE ON USE OF AI

With the assistance of the AIWG, Dan Ewart sent a memo to all of campus on September 10, 2024 with updated guidance on using AI. That document can be found at the AI @ UI website discussed above.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ewart, D. (2024, September 10). *Updated guidance on using AI* [Memorandum]. U of I.

# Recommendations for AI Execution Group Activities

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

One of the most common themes from the listening sessions was the strong desire among students, faculty, and staff for guidance on how AI can be safely and effectively used across university functions. Therefore, the AIWG recommends that the university:

- **Create and Maintain Guidance around Using AI:** The AI Execution Group should coordinate with relevant stakeholders across the university to develop new and enhanced guidance for the use of AI, with specific guidance around teaching, research and administrative activities. Given that there's a great deal of similarity between other universities' guidance and policies, looking to existing documentation for inspiration will be very helpful. This guidance should be proactively distributed and located both on the AI website and in the OIT Knowledge Base, with cross-publication as appropriate.

At this time, it is not recommended that a specific policy (AMP/FSH) be developed to address AI. The university should establish a body to continue monitoring the applicability of current policies and monitoring of best practices in higher education.

All requests for the use of vendor-provided AI products should continue to go through the IT Governance process to ensure minimal duplication of expenditures, applicability, data security, data privacy, compliance and cohesive user experience. The unique risks associated with AI should be carefully monitored and, as necessary, IT governance processes should be adjusted to take these into account.

## AI LITERACY EDUCATION

### Overview

Based on the listening sessions conducted by the AI Steering Committee and qualitative assessments of committee members, several themes emerged with respect to the culture of AI literacy on campus.

- **Facilitate First-Hand Experience:** First, there is a need for increased access to user-facing concepts and practical examples that invite faculty, staff, and students to gain first-hand experience using some AI systems.
- **Provide Information on Use of Specific Platforms:** There is a need for clarity regarding the resources and opportunities that are conditionally endorsed, along with explanations of known tradeoffs. Some AI tools are better suited for specific tasks than others due to their varying strengths. For example, some AI research assistants are designed to reference specific sources uploaded by users, providing citations and indicating when relevant information is not available. These features make them particularly useful for fact-based



inquiry. In contrast, more general AI chatbots may generate plausible-sounding responses even when the information is not explicitly found in provided materials, making them more prone to fabricating details. As a result, such chatbots may be better suited for tasks like brainstorming and creative exploration rather than strict factual accuracy.

- **Encourage Ethical Use of AI:** There is a need for guiding principles for weighing the ethics of using AI systems. These guiding principles should help faculty, staff, and students navigate potential uses that go beyond the conditionally supported and unsupported use cases illustrated through practical examples. Ethical considerations may include intellectual property ownership and use, data privacy and security, and environmental concerns.

Regarding the culture of AI literacy on campus, the AI Execution Group should develop a plan to address these needs. Doing so would lower barriers to entry, correct and inoculate against misperceptions, and provide a common ground for a continuous discussion about AI literacy education that keeps pace with emerging AI technologies.

In addition to qualitatively assessing our campus AI literacy culture, the AIWG conducted a preliminary assessment of both curricular and non-curricular learning opportunities at UI.

## Curriculum and Instruction

In reviewing the 2024-25 Catalog, the AIWG found several certificates dedicated to AI. These were as follows:

- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) Undergraduate Academic Certificate
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) Graduate Academic Certificate
- Robotics Systems Undergraduate Academic Certificate
- Robotics Engineering Graduate Certificate

With two exceptions in the Robotics Certificates, all of the courses for these certificates are housed in the Department of Computer Science. No minors or majors dedicated to AI are currently being offered at U of I. Additionally, unlike some other institutions, we do not currently offer a certificate in AI that would be accessible to students in other disciplines.

The AIWG is aware that courses addressing AI topics are offered in various departments. However, a systematic search was not conducted, in part because some of the known courses were offered as special topics.

The AIWG recommends that the AI Execution Group should:

- **Identify and Highlight Courses that are Focused on AI:** These may range from beginner non-technical introductions to highly technical programming opportunities but should be highlighted to show formal

learning opportunities in this emerging area.

- **Create New Certificates and/or Degrees in AI:** There may be opportunities to unify the patchwork of existing curricular opportunities for learning about AI. Once existing opportunities are brought together, there may be opportunities to create certificates or encourage creating courses to address identified gaps. It may be possible to quickly create programs and/or new certificates in AI.
- **Incorporate AI-Assisted Communication Training:** Students need guidance on how to effectively and ethically use AI in writing, messaging, and workplace collaboration. Integrating AI-assisted communication training into existing coursework can help students refine their ability to use AI as a tool while maintaining critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills.

Additionally, the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) has compiled numerous resources for instructors. The AIWG recommends using the AI @ UI website and potentially other communication mechanisms to:

- **Highlight and Develop Existing Resources for Instructors:** The AI Execution Team should ensure that existing guidance and resources for U of I instructors are easily available and findable. Additionally, the AI Execution Group should actively collaborate with CETL and others to ensure that areas identified in this paper, such as ethical use of AI, are covered and emphasized.

## Non-Curricular Learning

Numerous AI-related presentations and workshops are already taking place, facilitated through IIDS, The Renfrew Interdisciplinary Colloquium, the Library, and others. However, there is yet to be a systematicity for these opportunities. That said, some extant asynchronous opportunities, such as recorded workshops, could be curated and housed in a central place, alongside summaries that describe prerequisites and expected outcomes.

Looking towards the future, the AI Execution Group should consider how to improve non-curricular learning for AI literacy. When doing so, the group is encouraged to keep in mind less technical audiences. The ability to use plain English to interact with some AI systems comes with both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include low barriers to entry: no technical programming skills are required, most Generative AI systems are highly general, and in the case of chatbots, they tend to meet users where they are. Disadvantages stem from the fact that dialoging in English tends to mask the boundaries of the capabilities and limitations of these systems. Knowing some basic design features of AI systems highlights that they do not reason like humans; they can be more proficient at some things, and much less at others.

In addition, non-curricular learning should note that developing a baseline understanding of AI capabilities is to practice with them for about ten hours. What counts as helpful and unhelpful depends on the user. Non-curricular

learning should recommend users start with things they are already highly familiar with so that they can use their own knowledge as a foundation for assessing the system they are interacting with. Users thereby hone an attitude of optimistic skepticism before moving into areas where the AI system fulfills more substantial roles.

In addition to first-hand practice and familiarity with AI systems, this committee recommends encouraging high-level conceptual understanding of the following user-facing concepts across students, faculty, and staff: next-token prediction, prompt engineering, and context windows. Together, these concepts equip users with baseline abilities to predict the capacities and limitations of AI systems.

Concretely, this committee recommends:

- **Create and/or Adopt a Self-Paced AI Tutorial:** A self-paced prompting tutorial geared towards a general U of I audience should be easily accessible to all users. Incentives for completion should be investigated. This may be required or recommended for all incoming and current students and/or faculty.

## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Generative AI offers transformative opportunities for research at the U of I, but it also presents unique challenges that demand strategic attention. One key challenge is the rapid pace of advancement in this field, making it difficult for scholars to stay current with emerging applications and best practices in their areas of study. Additionally, the effective use of generative AI requires substantial infrastructure and intellectual support, placing high demands on institutional resources.

Despite these challenges, generative AI presents significant opportunities. The lack of universally accepted practices and the rapid evolution of AI technologies create a unique opening for the U of I to take a leadership role in this space. While well-funded universities and private companies are heavily investing in AI for research, many opportunities remain untapped—particularly those that align with Idaho's needs and leverage U of I's strengths. By focusing on these areas, U of I can make meaningful contributions that set it apart.

By investing in research computing, training, course buyouts, and seed funding, the university can build internal capacity and equip existing faculty and staff with the necessary skills to harness these technologies. This short-term investment in capacity building promises substantial long-term benefits, positioning the institution at the forefront of research innovation.

However, the AIWG acknowledges that there are limited resources at U of I that could be reallocated for this purpose. Direct financial investments should be carefully reviewed in terms of both immediate impact and long-term return on investment but will likely be necessary to move the university forward.

The AIWG recommends that the Execution Group investigate the following opportunities, including estimates for cost and potential impact:

- **Fund Subscriptions to AI-powered platforms:** The university currently funds institutional subscriptions to Microsoft's Copilot as part of its Microsoft package. There are other institutional subscriptions available that should be explored as an augmentation or replacement for this service. Notably, Open AI's ChatGPT Edu has been adopted by numerous institutions including Boise State University (with a limited number of seats) and offers a more secure version of one of the most popular AI platforms. Similar services are possible using locally hosted models on internal servers (see next bullet point), and both options for providing AI support should be considered. The benefits of enhanced access to AI platforms would likely be seen beyond research and scholarship applications, with immediate impacts likely in teaching and learning as well as administrative processes.
- **Locally Host Generative AI:** Locally hosted generative AI platforms can ensure a level of data privacy and protection that commercial models cannot. In addition, using locally-hosted models is considered a best practice for scholarly work and will likely soon be considered a necessity. While RCDS currently has limited capacity in this area, research and administrative functions that deal with sensitive data could be greatly enhanced with relatively minimal investments by expanding our computational capacity. Any goal of expanding AI capacity for research should prioritize investments in research computing.
- **Provide Fellowships:** Providing support for faculty, students, and/or staff to use AI in their teaching, learning, research, and work could encourage work with AI. Cutting-edge training can be developed internally, as is evidenced by the IIDS Generative AI Fellowship, and should be explored before any external options are explored. In addition to training opportunities, financial incentives or, in the case of faculty, course releases should also be strongly considered.
- **Create Internal Seed Grants:** Providing seed grants to U of I faculty to jumpstart research and help them become more competitive for external funding could assist those who feel like they are "late to the game" and provide encouragement to pursue external funding.
- **Consider New Hires:** Some universities have done cluster hires around AI or created new positions specifically to enhance research in AI. This is a significant and expensive step but should be noted as part of the current AI landscape in higher education. Careful attention should be given to the goals of any cluster hire and the required investment needed to make the investment worthwhile versus investing in developing our current faculty.

In addition to these direct investments in infrastructure, the AIWG has discussed the potential for:

- **Communities of Practice:** There are numerous potential implementations of communities of practice for researchers who are utilizing AI and machine learning in their work. While potentially difficult to design and implement, a successful community of practice program could be extremely powerful in facilitating information sharing, collaboration, and interdisciplinary approaches.

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Regular and strategic communication about AI developments at U of I is essential to foster awareness, collaboration, and innovation. As discussed above, the AIWG has already launched a dedicated AI@UI landing page, serving as a central hub for resources, news, and success stories.

While this is a start, there is much more that could be done to communicate internally and externally about AI in a way that highlights the university's successes while also fostering broader and deeper awareness across campus of this quickly advancing technology. It is very important that U of I do more in communicating its efforts and establishing its identity as a leader in implementing AI.

While a complete implementation of all of the initiatives below may not be feasible, the AI Execution Group should work with appropriate stakeholders to evaluate and prioritize these recommendations based on institutional goals, resources, and return on investment.

- **Highlight Success Stories:** U of I can actively showcase faculty, staff, and student projects that leverage AI for research, teaching, and administrative innovation. By partnering with University Communications and Marketing to develop multimedia content — such as video spotlights and blog posts — we can amplify the impact of these initiatives. Additionally, integrating AI-related stories into broader university communications will help highlight the relevance and transformative potential of AI across campus. To further enhance the university's reputation for innovation, we suggest sharing notable advancements in AI research and applications with media outlets and prospective partners.
- **Provide Regular AI Updates:** Investigate disseminating newsletters or announcements that highlight AI advancements, tools, and applications relevant to the campus community. Leveraging existing channels, such as social media, digital signage, and the AI website, will allow us to share concise updates and foster greater engagement. Additionally, we suggest publishing an annual "State of AI at UI" report to summarize key accomplishments, showcase ongoing projects, and outline future goals, helping to keep stakeholders informed and aligned with the university's AI-driven initiatives.

- **Highlight Campus Events:** We recommend hosting panel discussions, workshops, and webinars featuring both internal and external experts to explore AI trends and ethical considerations. To further support the campus community, we suggest expanding the AI landing page to include a comprehensive calendar of events, training opportunities, and a repository of learning materials. These efforts will foster dialogue, increase awareness, and enhance access to resources for learning and collaboration on AI-related topics.

## ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

AI offers immense potential to enhance enrollment growth and retention across the U of I. By integrating AI-driven tools into recruitment strategies and leveraging data insights, we can more effectively engage with prospective and current students.

### Enrollment

AI tools can optimize recruitment by enabling data-informed decision-making and personalizing communication at scale. By integrating AI-powered analytics within Slate CRM and enhancing the university's web experience, we can create meaningful connections with prospective students. The AIWG recommends working with relevant stakeholders to explore the following strategies:

- **Utilize Data-Driven Recruitment:** Investigate leveraging AI-powered predictive analytics within Slate CRM to identify high-potential applicants by analyzing historical enrollment trends, academic performance, and engagement patterns. Collaborative efforts between Strategic Enrollment Management, Marketing, and academic units can further enhance these efforts by informing targeted outreach campaigns that align with institutional priorities, ultimately improving recruitment strategies and supporting enrollment goals.
- **Personalize Communications:** AI tools such as chatbots and dynamic content generators, can deliver personalized messages to prospective students based on their preferences and engagement history. Additionally, enhancing the university's web presence with AI-driven content recommendations can create a more engaging and tailored experience, helping prospective students discover relevant programs and opportunities that align with their interests.
- **Enhance Campus Visit Experiences:** AI insights could be used to refine campus visit programs by offering tailored schedules that align with individual interests, such as major-specific tours or personalized meetings with colleges and departments. Additionally, implementing integrated scheduling tools can help ensure that campus visits are seamless and meaningful, creating positive and lasting impressions for prospective students and their families.

## Retention

AI can also play a vital role in retaining students by identifying at-risk individuals early and facilitating timely interventions. Integrating AI tools with Slate CRM can improve both academic support and engagement. The AIWG recommends working with relevant stakeholders to explore the following strategies:

- **Early Identification and Support:** Investigate utilizing AI systems to monitor key data, such as attendance, grades, and engagement, to detect patterns that may signal potential challenges for students. Collaboration between Academic Advising and Student Success teams will be essential to ensure that these data-driven interventions are timely, targeted, and effective in supporting student retention and academic success.
- **Academic and Social Engagement:** Investigate leveraging AI-powered platforms to provide personalized recommendations for academic resources, events, and campus organizations that align with students' individual goals and interests. Additionally, implementing AI-driven personalized reminders for tutoring sessions, workshops, and other support services can help students stay on track, remain engaged, and feel well-supported throughout their academic journey.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Generative AI brings with it a range of challenges, including economic anxiety, the potential for illegal or unethical use of intellectual property, and its environmental impact. While addressing these complex issues fully is beyond the capacity of the U of I, we believe there are meaningful steps the University can take to navigate this evolving landscape responsibly.

- **Prioritize People:** Generative AI should be viewed as a tool to empower faculty and staff, enhancing their work rather than replacing it. The focus must remain on supporting individuals in their roles, leveraging AI to complement human expertise and creativity.
- **Seek Partnerships:** Additionally, the University should actively seek collaborative partners to confront the challenges posed by AI. Addressing these issues will require openness to innovative solutions and partnerships, even from unexpected sources. Collaboration can help generate the resources and perspectives needed to tackle AI-related concerns effectively.
- **Conduct Pilot Programs:** There are immediate opportunities to pilot AI technology in administrative and academic settings, and these should be proposed through the IT Governance process and, where possible, begun quickly. AI is rapidly evolving and the more U of I learns about where AI can provide benefit, the quicker improvements can be made.
- **Address Environmental Concerns:** The university should strive to offset the environmental consequences of AI whenever feasible and should educate students, faculty, and staff about environmental impacts and responsible use. This commitment extends not only to the university's own operations but also to the broader community, encompassing students, faculty, staff, and the state of Idaho as a whole. Specifically, the Office of Sustainability should be part of discussions about mitigating environmental impacts of AI use.
- **Respect Intellectual Property:** Finally, the University must respect intellectual property. Beyond strict adherence to state and federal laws, it is essential to honor the spirit of these laws, ensuring the ethical use of intellectual property in all applications of AI.



# Implementation

## ROLLOUT

These recommendations outline a high-level roadmap for coordinating and investigating AI initiatives. The AIWG advises the AI Execution Team to begin with initiatives that are both low-cost and high-impact. Most of these efforts will require collaboration with other campus units to develop strategies for effective implementation.

The AIWG recommends launching these efforts in spring 2025, with ambitious timelines to achieve as much progress as possible by the fall semester. Early work by the AI Execution Group will provide valuable insights into emerging opportunities, enabling a more informed approach to

resource-intensive initiatives. Additionally, these efforts will help determine whether dedicated personnel are needed to manage AI-related coordination at U of I.

## PRIORITIZING EFFORTS AND RESOURCES

The following activities from the list above have been identified as being both low cost and high positive impact and should be among the first priorities of the AI Execution Group. Although the combined cost of personnel time to implement these initiatives may eventually require dedicated staff, either through reallocation of existing resources or a new hire, initial implementation can proceed without significant upfront investment. The following are listed in no particular order.



## High Impact/Low Cost

- **Create and Maintain Guidance around Using AI:** The AI Execution Group should collaborate with stakeholders to develop clear AI usage guidelines for teaching, research, and administration. Leveraging existing university policies can streamline this process, and the guidance should be accessible through the AI website and OIT Knowledge Base.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create, disseminate, and maintain guidance.*
- **Provide Information on Use of Specific Platforms:** Clarify endorsed AI tools and their tradeoffs.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create, disseminate, and maintain information.*
- **Encourage Ethical Use of AI:** Develop guiding principles to help users navigate ethical concerns in AI use. These should align with U of I's mission and include examples of supported and unsupported use cases.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create, disseminate, and maintain information.*
- **Incorporate AI-Assisted Communication Training into Curriculum:** Work with relevant departments on campus to ensure that AI-Assisted communication is taken into account where appropriate in the curriculum.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low, though may require greater effort depending on abilities and enthusiasm of relevant instructors and faculty.*
- **Create and/or Adopt a Self-Paced AI Tutorial:** Develop a general AI tutorial for the U of I community, with potential incentives for completion to encourage participation.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Variable; low-cost options such as adopting existing open Canvas modules could be done using existing resources, though maintenance could be more time-consuming if the host institution does not maintain their content. More expensive options include licensing content from a vendor or developing entirely new learning materials for the U of I community.*
- **Develop and support Communities of Practice:** Establish communities of practice to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration on AI projects. These groups can foster innovation and knowledge-sharing.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create and facilitate the group(s).*
- **Create New Certificates and/or Degrees in AI:** Coordinate existing AI courses to create unified learning paths. This could include certificates or new courses to fill educational gaps.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Variable. Initial investigations can be done with relatively little effort, though new courses would require new or reallocated faculty time.*

- **Highlight Existing Resources for Instructors:** Ensure that guidance and resources for teaching AI are easy to find and access for U of I instructors.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to revise and create content.*
- **Highlight Success Stories:** Showcase U of I AI projects through multimedia content and university communications. Sharing these stories with media and partners can boost U of I's reputation for innovation.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Low. UCM has already highlighted some AI success stories, and better coordinated AI efforts on campus will allow for easier identification of projects and initiatives to highlight.*
- **Locally Host and Pilot Generative AI for Administrative Use:** U of I researchers have developed LLMs and AI chatbots that can be applied to administrative improvements. Piloting the use of these internal models on administrative challenges would take low effort and could address the pilot problem while pointing to additional use cases.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Variable. There are already implementations happening, but significant increases in demand for these services would require additional developers and computing resources.*

## High Impact/High Cost

The following activities from the list above have been identified as having a high cost but also having a high positive impact and should be examined by the AI Execution Group with potential effectiveness and return on investment in mind. They are divided into two categories: investments that build our capacity, and initiatives that we could create ourselves and/or purchase from vendors.

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### CAPACITY BUILDING

- **Locally Host Generative AI for Research:** Hosting research-oriented AI platforms internally can enhance data privacy and support sensitive research. Expanding research computing capacity is a critical investment.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *Variable. There are already implementations happening, but significant increases in demand for these services would require additional developers and computing resources. Note that research applications are more likely to be more personnel and compute heavy than administrative applications.*
- **Consider New Hires:** While cluster hires in AI are costly, they can enhance research significantly. Careful planning is required to ensure new hires complement existing faculty expertise.
  - ❖ **Cost:** *High. Adding multiple new faculty positions in a high-demand field may be deemed necessary, but given the investment, could only be pursued after careful planning.*

- **Provide Fellowships:** Offer fellowships or financial incentives for AI-related teaching, research, and administrative projects. Internal training programs like the IIDS fellowship should be prioritized.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Variable. Current fellowships financial incentives of a few thousand dollars and rely on current personnel to facilitate the work. Significant increases in the number of fellows could require additional hires in the units supporting the fellowships.

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## PURCHASE AND/OR LOCALLY CREATE

- **Fund Subscriptions to AI-powered Platforms:** Explore funding for AI tools like ChatGPT Edu. Expanded access could benefit research, teaching, and administrative efficiency. Increasing access to AI tools and examples will help faculty, staff, and students gain practical experience.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Extremely variable. Current pricing for ChatGPT Edu is approximately \$240 per user per year, putting this out of reach for a full campus implementation. There are other comparable platforms that offer far more reasonable pricing for a campuswide subscription, though costs would still likely be around \$300k per year. Making a limited number of seats available for interested users is a common strategy used by universities to manage costs.
- **Enhance Campus Visit Experiences:** Use AI to offer tailored campus visit schedules and personalized tours. Integrated scheduling tools can help create seamless, memorable visit experiences.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Variable. This is a rapidly expanding marketplace with many products and many potential applications. Specific recommendations would need to come from Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM).
- **Utilize Data-Driven Recruitment:** Use AI analytics to improve recruitment by identifying high-potential applicants. Coordinated outreach campaigns can enhance enrollment strategies.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Variable. As with AI-enhanced campus visits, this is a rapidly expanding marketplace with many products and many potential applications. Specific recommendations would need to come from SEM.
- **Personalize Communications:** AI-driven tools can create personalized communications for prospective students, enhancing their experience by matching their interests to relevant programs.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Variable. As with other areas, this is a rapidly expanding marketplace with many products and many potential applications. Specific recommendations would need to come from relevant stakeholders within U of I.
- **Early Identification and Support:** AI systems are showing early potential to monitor student performance and engagement to identify potential issues early. Timely interventions can improve retention and academic outcomes. While current systems may be

lacking, this is an area worth monitoring given the fast pace of change.

- ❖ **Cost:** Variable. As with other areas, this is a rapidly expanding marketplace with many products and many potential applications. Specific recommendations would need to come from relevant stakeholders within U of I.

## Low Impact/Low Cost

The following activities from the list above have been identified as having a low cost but also having a low impact. While they are not anticipated to be initial high priority needs for the university, they may provide relatively low-effort/cost wins for the AI Execution Group to pursue:

- **Identify and Highlight Courses Focused on AI:** Showcase a range of AI courses, from introductory to advanced technical levels, to promote formal learning opportunities.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to gather, disseminate, and maintain information.
- **Provide Regular AI Updates:** Share regular AI updates via newsletters, social media, and digital signage. An annual “State of AI at UI” report could summarize progress and outline future goals.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create, disseminate, and maintain information.
- **Highlight Campus Events:** Host AI-focused events like panels and workshops and maintain a calendar of AI learning opportunities. This will promote collaboration and raise awareness.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Low. Reallocation of existing personnel time to create, disseminate, and maintain information.

## Low Impact/High Cost

While the AIWG felt that these activities have both a high cost and a low impact, they are still worthwhile ideas that should be considered by the AI Execution Group:

- **Academic and Social Engagement:** Use AI to recommend resources, events, and organizations tailored to individual students. Personalized reminders can boost engagement and academic success.
  - ❖ **Cost:** High. As with other areas, this is a rapidly expanding marketplace with many products and many potential applications. Specific recommendations would need to come from relevant stakeholders within U of I.
- **Create Internal Seed Grants:** Seed grants can help faculty kickstart AI research and improve competitiveness for external funding, especially for those new to AI.
  - ❖ **Cost:** Variable. Some research could require significant investments in development and/or hardware, while other projects may require smaller investments.



# Appendix: Locally Hosted Generative AI for Administrative Use

## EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GENERATIVE AI

U of I has already deployed a robust computing infrastructure to support locally hosted generative AI applications. The IIDS Generative AI Inference Cluster is a dedicated environment optimized for real-time AI inference that runs within the U of I cybersecurity environment. This cluster consists of seven high-performance servers equipped with a mix of NVIDIA H100, RTX 8000, A5000, and A4000 GPUs. The server is continuously updated with the latest open-source models and currently hosts over

100 large language and multimodal models. It is supported by MindRouter, an AI load balancer custom built by IIDS to provide OpenAI-compatible API bindings. This infrastructure is designed to enable AI-driven solutions for both research and administrative use, providing a scalable, cost-effective, and secure alternative to relying on external AI service providers. The primary benefits of utilizing this infrastructure include:

- **Security and Compliance:** Ensuring sensitive university data remains within institutional control.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Reducing dependency on commercial AI APIs and minimizing ongoing operational costs.
- **Customization and Control:** Enabling fine-tuned AI models tailored to university-specific challenges.
- **Scalability:** Supporting a wide range of AI applications, from research initiatives to administrative automation.



## COSTS OF LOCALLY HOSTED INFRASTRUCTURE

Adding capacity to our on-premises inference server can be done in phases, allowing us to grow alongside increasing demand.

**\$100,000** - Adding a 4-way H200 NVL to our existing infrastructure would bring us to 564 GB of vRAM, allowing us to run the largest open source LLMs with very large context windows.

## EXISTING AI INTEGRATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

U of I is leveraging a \$4.5 million NSF GRANTED award to develop generative AI tools that streamline research administration. Led by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Institute of Interdisciplinary Data Sciences (IIDS), the project focuses on automating grant-related data transfers, reducing administrative burdens, and improving efficiency. By utilizing U of I's advanced AI infrastructure, the team is deploying large language models to enhance accuracy and free administrators for higher-value tasks.

**The Vandalizer:** The Vandalizer is a custom-built AI-powered document-handling framework, designed to integrate seamlessly into research administration workflows. Unlike standalone AI tools like ChatGPT or Claude, which enhance efficiency for individuals, the Vandalizer is built for scalability — enabling robust, repeatable, and secure AI-driven processes across an entire institution. It prioritizes flexibility, adapting to diverse data ecosystems and evolving workflows; accuracy, ensuring precise data extraction and transformation without hallucinations; reproducibility, delivering consistent results across repeated inputs and institutional use cases; and security, aligning with organizational IT policies. By embedding these principles, the Vandalizer provides a sustainable AI solution that evolves alongside advancements in AI models.

The Vandalizer can be deployed outside ORED for similar tasks in the financial area (e.g., extracting data from invoices), admissions (pre-screening admission materials to help students complete their applications), and many more.

### Responding to State Requirements for Contract Transparency:

Current Idaho law requires universities and other state entities to report data on active contracts to the Transparent Idaho reporting system. This required the analysis of thousands of existing contracts across ~60,000 documents. IIDS used our local infrastructure to analyze these documents and extract the required data and created an interactive tool to facilitate this process for new contracts. We are the only university that is currently compliant with the state law.

Initial estimates of impact on this tool are that existing expert staff can process about 5 contracts per hour. The existing tool can process 100 documents in about 1 minute.

**Enhancing the OIT Ticketing System:** IIDS has established a collaborative partnership with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to implement advanced local artificial intelligence infrastructure for the optimization of help ticket routing processes. This initiative leverages existing institutional data while maintaining strict adherence to university security protocols.

The development team has utilized an extensive dataset comprising approximately 85,000 historical tickets from OIT. All data processing has been conducted within the university's secure computing environment. A recent single-day development sprint yielded significant progress in three key areas:

- 1. Functional Workflow Implementation:** A comprehensive Python-based workflow has been successfully developed, featuring operational integration with the TeamDynamix (TDX) API sandbox environment. This implementation supports essential ticketing functions including ticket creation, public and private comment management, and ticket reassignment.
- 2. AI Model Configuration:** Initial prompt engineering and inference testing has been completed using the on-premises inference server. The system can now effectively classify, summarize, and categorize support tickets based on historical TDX data patterns.
- 3. Data Analytics Framework:** Preliminary data analysis tools and interactive visualization capabilities have been developed to monitor system performance and provide actionable insights.

### The next steps of the project include:

- 1. Collaborative Refinement:** OIT personnel will review current results for alignment with the desired routing pattern.
- 2. Synthetic Data Trial:** Conduct expanded testing in the TDX sandbox environment using synthetic ticket data designed to simulate production email support request patterns.
- 3. Limited Production Implementation:** Following successful sandbox testing, implement a controlled production trial wherein the AI system processes live ticket data but only generates private comments visible to support staff. This approach will enable comprehensive evaluation of system performance against real-world support requests without affecting end-user experience.

## COSTS OF INTERNALLY DEVELOPED AI TOOLS AND POTENTIAL ROI

**Vandalizer:** This tool has been developed as a side project within IIDS and it is difficult to estimate its total cost over the past year. A bracket estimate would be between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Existing workflows in Vandalizer can extract critical data from award letters (previously a 20-minute task that now takes 20 seconds), screen grant opportunities for problematic contract terms (previously a 30-minute task that now takes 20 seconds), create custom proposal development checklists from sponsor requirement documents (previously a 60-minute task that now takes 20 seconds), and populate sub-award templates from existing award documents (previously a 2-hour task that now takes ~1 minute). These tasks alone represent an improvement in labor efficiency by ~99%. If a single ORED employee used the Vandalizer 5 times per day for one year, it would amount to a labor savings of 920 hours.

Extending the Vandalizer to other units on campus would require additional investment to support workflow customization, software updates, and upkeep. This could be achieved by hiring more staff (~\$100,000 per year) or by charging usage fees per user.

### Responding to State Requirements for Contract

**Transparency:** IIDS staff developed the framework to extract required data from contracts in about 50 hours. Manual examination of ~65,000 historical documents would have taken between 10,000 and 15,000 person hours (or 4.8 to 7.2 FTE). The ongoing extraction of ~2000 new documents per year would take approximately 1 FTE. IIDS charges clients internal to the U of I \$100 per hour for custom development, meaning this project cost \$5000 to achieve approximately \$480,000 of work for the historical documents (6 FTE \* \$80k per FTE) and will save the U of I approximately \$30,000 per year in labor costs going forward.

## SCALING INTERNALLY DEVELOPED AI TOOLS

IIDS developed a preliminary business plan for scaling AI tool development to other units at the U of I and to external clients. This was conceived as an enterprise software development unit that would operate as a service center within RCDS. The table below provides low and high estimated costs for establishing such a unit.

Investment	Low Est. Cost	High Est. Cost
Project Manager	\$100,000	\$100,000
Full Stack Developer	\$130,000	\$130,000
Full Stack Developer	\$100,000	\$100,000
Data Scientist	\$75,000	\$75,000
RCDS DevOps	\$150,000	\$150,000
PhD Intern IV	\$50,000	\$50,000
IIDS/ORED Admin support	\$60,000	\$150,000
Hardware	\$150,000	\$350,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$1,340,000</b>





## POLICY COVER SHEET

For instructions on policy creation and change, please see  
<https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy>

All policies must be reviewed, approved, and returned by the policy sponsor, with a cover sheet attached, to [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu).

### Faculty Staff Handbook (FSH)

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Minor Amendment

Policy Number & Title: **FSH 3060 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

### Administrative Procedures Manual (APM)

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Interim  Minor Amendment

Policy Number & Title:

\*Note: If revision or deletion, request original document from [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu). All changes must be made using "track changes."

**Originator: Elissa Keim, Director Employee Development & Workforce Diversity**

**Policy Sponsor, if different from Originator:**

**Reviewed by General Counsel**       Yes    No    Name & Date: Karl Klein 4/16/2025

1.      **Policy/Procedure Statement:** Briefly explain the reason for the proposed addition, revision, and/or deletion.

Update to policy to bring into compliance with Executive Order 14173, SB 1198, SBOE Resolutions and university equal opportunity in recruitment and hiring process commitments.

2.      **Fiscal Impact:** What fiscal impact, if any, will this addition, revision, or deletion have?

None.

3.      **Related Policies/Procedures:** Describe other UI policies or procedures related or similar to this proposed change, or that will be impacted by it.

APM 50.01 and 50.02 (currently under revision in collaboration with policy owner) and FSH 3065 (also being updated to be compliant with Executive Order 14173, SB 1198, etc.

4.      **Effective Date:** This policy shall be effective on July 1, or January 1, whichever arrives first after final approval (see FSH 1460 H) unless otherwise specified.

To be effective immediately upon approval.

**UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK**

CHAPTER THREE:  
EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF

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3060

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

LAST REVISION: October 2022 (editorial)

**CONTENTS:**

- A. ~~Statement of Intent on Equal Opportunity~~ **Statement of Intent on Equal Opportunity**
- B. ~~Statement, Statement of Policy on Equal Employment and Educational Opportunity and Affirmative Action~~
- C. ~~Principles of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action~~ **Principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action**
- D. ~~Non-Dilution of Standards~~
- E. ~~Statement, Statement of Responsibility~~

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**A. STATEMENT OF INTENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.** ~~The University of Idaho recognizes that previous discrimination in employment based upon race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran has foreclosed economic opportunity to a significant number of people in the United States. To correct this inequity and to afford everyone the opportunity to participate without discrimination, UI pledges to eliminate all vestiges of policy that tended, intentionally or otherwise, to discriminate on the grounds proscribed by federal and state laws and on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity expression, in order to eliminate all traces of discrimination, to take affirmative action to recruit, employ, and promote qualified members of those groups formerly excluded.~~ **A. Statement of intent on equal opportunity.** ~~The University~~ **University** of Idaho is an equal opportunity employer and educator. ~~It is the intent of the regents that equal opportunity be afforded in education and employment to qualified persons, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. See FSH 3210, 3065, 2200 III-4, 2300 VII and the "Statement of Nondiscrimination." For implementing procedures, see FSH 3065.~~

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**B. Statement of policy on equal employment and educational opportunity AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:**

**B-1.1.** ~~It is UI policy to prohibit and eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. This policy applies to all programs, services, and facilities, and includes, but is not limited to, applications, admissions, access to programs and services, and employment. Such discrimination is prohibited by titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendments of 1978, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, other federal and state statutes and regulations, and university commitments. The University~~ **University** of Idaho provides equal opportunity to all students and employees and does not discriminate or retaliate based on any protected characteristic set forth in the ~~university~~ **University's Prohibited Discrimination and Retaliation Policy** policies on prohibited

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**UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK**

Chapter III: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF  
Section 3060: Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity  
July 2009

discrimination and retaliation and/or state or federal law. This policy extends to all university/University programs and activities, including, without limitation, admissions, financial assistance, educational and athletic programs, course offerings, counseling and guidance services, housing, health and insurance benefits, and access to university/University services or facilities. This policy also applies to terms and conditions of employment including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, working conditions, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and/or training.

**B-2.** It is also UI policy not merely to refrain from employment discrimination as required by the various federal and state enactments but to take positive affirmative action to realize full equal employment opportunity for women, ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and Vietnam-era veterans and to increase substantially the numbers of women and ethnic group members in positions where traditionally they have not been employed:

Consistent with its obligations as a federal government contractor and as required by federal law, the university/University maintains affirmative action plans and programs to proactively address the underrepresentation of protected veterans and individuals with disabilities in employment.

:

**C. Principles of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.** In furtherance of this policy, UI will:

**C-1.** Recruit, hire, train, and promote people in all job classifications without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. (An applicant's sex may be a "bona fide occupational qualification," as that term is narrowly construed pursuant to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Consideration of an applicant's sensory, mental, or physical handicap that would prevent performance of duties essential to a given position is not prohibited.)

**C-2.** Base employment decisions on the principles of equal opportunity.

**C-3.** Ensure that promotion decisions are in accord with principles of equal opportunity by imposing only valid requirements for promotional opportunities.

**C-4.** Ensure that all personnel matters, such as compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, returns from layoff, leave, UI-sponsored training, education, tuition assistance, and social and recreational programs, are administered without regard to the factors specified in C-1.

**C-5.** Ensure that access to and use of facilities are administered without regard to the factors specified in C-1. Such facilities as dormitories, locker rooms, and restrooms must be comparable for both sexes.

**C-6.** Take affirmative action on behalf of women, ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and Vietnam-era veterans to eliminate the continuing effects of past discrimination in employment;

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**UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK**

Chapter III: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF  
Section 3060: Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity  
July 2009

actively recruit members of these groups for employment; ensure that, in the process of recruitment for and appointment to the work force, no permanent appointment will be made until women, ethnic group members, persons with disabilities, and Vietnam-era veterans have been sought out and encouraged to apply; and develop a work force that reflects a distribution of women and ethnic group members consistent with the availability of such persons within the appropriate labor market.

**C-7.** Provide prompt, fair, and impartial consideration of all complaints of discrimination arising in UI.

**C-8.** Identify and analyze problems inherent in employment of women, ethnic group members, and persons with disabilities, and establish result-oriented procedures (including numerical goals when appropriate) for the elimination of such deficiencies; provide a detailed program indicating specific steps toward these ends and timetables for the prompt achievement of the goals in accordance with the spirit of the law; and take affirmative action to eliminate problems and to achieve the goals ("goals" are defined by federal higher education guidelines as "not rigid and inflexible quotas which must be met, but . . . targets reasonably attainable by means of applying every good faith effort to make all aspects of the entire affirmative action program work").

**C-9.** Provide reports on the affirmative action program to the appropriate federal and state agencies and to the university community.

**C-1. Equal employment opportunity**

- A. The university will provide equal employment for all individuals.
- B. All employment practices, including but not limited to recruitment, selection, training, promotion, compensation, and all other management decisions, will provide equal opportunities for all individuals.
  - 1. Equal employment practices mean every applicant and employee receives the same opportunity and is subject to consistent processes that are free from discrimination.
- C. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) will partner with the Human Resources (HR) and respective units to effectuate equal employment opportunity requirements.
- D. The university's commitment to equal employment opportunity applies to all persons involved in its operations and prohibits unlawful discrimination by any employee, including supervisors and coworkers.

**C-2. Discrimination and harassment**

- A. ESH 3200 The Policy of Non-Discrimination d(FSH3200) defines discrimination and harassment and outlines related procedures.
- B. The university ensures prompt, fair and impartial consideration of all complaints of discrimination.

**C-3. Affirmative action planning for protected veterans and individuals with disabilities:**

- A. The university is committed to taking affirmative action consistent with federal and state law.

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**UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK**

Chapter III: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF  
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B. The universityUniversity will make good faith efforts for employment outreach (e.g., ensuring job descriptions and postings are nondiscriminatory and utilizing consistent hiring practices) consistent with federal and state law. The universityUniversity will gather and analyze necessary data pursuant to its affirmative action plans in accordance with applicable law.

C. — B. Affirmative action plans include data for faculty, staff, and employment applicants.

D. — C. EOC will partner with HR and respective units to effectuate affirmative action requirements.

E. — D. Records must be kept consistent with the unit's record-keeping and the universityUniversity records retention schedule, as well as applicable law.

F. — E. EOC will provide reports on the affirmative action program to the appropriate federal agencies and the universityUniversity community.

**C-4. Recruitment and Hiring**

A. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment.

B. All job postings must be posted in accordance with APM 50.1 and APM 50.2, and FSH 3065.

— C. All job postings and advertisements must include the tagline: "The UniversityUniversity of Idaho is an equal opportunity employer, including veterans and individuals with disabilities."

D. Best practices for recruitment, hiring, and job postings will be highlighted on the EOC website and will comply with federal and state equal employment opportunity requirements.

E. Applicants will be provided with reasonable accommodation for known physical or mental limitations. Contact HR for more information on reasonable accommodation.

F. Applicants are encouraged to complete and submit voluntary demographic disclosure information during the application process.

G. The minimum qualifications included in a job posting must be objective and job-related. See the HR website.

H. Search committees, and all others involved in the recruitment and hiring process must comply with this policy to ensure equal opportunity compliance.

**C-5. Compensation and Promotion**

A. Employees have the right to discuss, disclose, and inquire about compensation and related information.

B. EOC will partner with HR as needed to ensure equal opportunity in compensation and promotion.

**C-6. Accommodations.**

The universityUniversity will provide reasonable accommodations for applicants or employees with disabilities to allow them to perform essential job functions in accordance with FSH 6420 Procedures for Accommodations of Disability.

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**C-7. Program Review:**

- A. To provide a university infrastructure that adheres to equal employment opportunity, the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer or designee(s) may review policies, programs, or units of the university to determine compliance with this policy and applicable laws.
- B. Participation from units and unit leaders or designees is essential in completing these reviews.
- C. Following a review or responding to a concern, the unit will partner with EOC to develop and implement an action-oriented plan that will ensure equal opportunity.

**C-8. Training**

- A. All employees who participate in hiring and selection processes must take equal opportunity training as directed by the university.

**D. NON-DILUTION OF STANDARDS.** Nothing in this policy requires UI to eliminate or dilute standards that are necessary to the successful performance of its educational and research functions. The affirmative action concept does not require that UI employ or promote any person who is less qualified than another person with whom he or she is competing for a particular position or promotion. The concept does require, however, that any standards or criteria that have had the effect of excluding women, minorities, or persons with disabilities be eliminated, unless UI can demonstrate that such criteria are conditions of successful performance in the particular position involved.

**DE. Statement of responsibility:**

**DE-1.** Authority and responsibility for implementing, maintaining, and monitoring affirmative action and equal opportunity in employment at UI lie primarily with the president and the affirmative action officer/equal opportunity/affirmative action officer.

**DE-2.** Although the president exercises, in consultation with the equal opportunity/affirmative action officer, ultimate authority and responsibility for affirmative action and equal opportunity at UI, the provost and vice presidents are responsible for monitoring and controlling activities within their respective areas of responsibility to ensure full implementation of this policy and program. Deans, directors, departmental administrators, and other officers are similarly responsible within their areas of jurisdiction/authority.

**E-3.** Ubuntu [see 1640:58] has the major faculty responsibility for monitoring and advancing the affirmative action and equal opportunity programs at UI. The committee works closely with administrative officers and attempts to identify relevant rules and regulations pertaining to specific affirmative action and equal opportunity problems at UI and periodically reports on its activities to the Faculty Senate. In areas in which it appears that discretion is permitted in the implementation, application, or operation of a specific program, the committee makes appropriate recommendations to the Faculty Senate.

**DE-34.** Finally, it is the responsibility of each; and every employee of the university will to share this commitment and cooperate fully in helping the

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July 2009

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~~university~~University meet its equal opportunity and affirmative action objectives. ~~member of the~~ academic community to assist in achieving the aims of this policy and to make equal opportunity a functioning condition of life at UI.

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**Version History**

**Amended August 2025.** Interim policy per FSH 1460 G. Updates throughout to comply with Executive Order 14173, SB 1198 and University equal opportunity in recruitment and hiring process commitments.

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**Amended October 2022.** Editorial changes.

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**Amended July 2020.** Editorial changes.

**Amended July 2009.** Revised sections A, B-1, C-1, and made editorial changes.

**Amended July 2000.** Editorial changes.

**Adopted 1979.**

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## POLICY COVER SHEET

For instructions on policy creation and change, please see  
<https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy>

All policies must be reviewed, approved, and returned by the policy sponsor, with a cover sheet attached, to [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu).

### Faculty Staff Handbook (FSH)

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Minor Amendment

Policy Number & Title: **FSH 3065 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY HIRING**

### Administrative Procedures Manual (APM)

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Interim  Minor Amendment

Policy Number & Title:

\*Note: If revision or deletion, request original document from [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu). All changes must be made using "track changes."

**Originator:** Elissa Keim, Director Employee Development & Workforce Diversity

**Policy Sponsor, if different from Originator:**

**Reviewed by General Counsel**       Yes    No    Name & Date: Karl Klein 4/16/2025

1.      **Policy/Procedure Statement:** Briefly explain the reason for the proposed addition, revision, and/or deletion.

Update to policy to bring into compliance with Executive Order 14173, SB 1198 and university equal opportunity in recruitment and hiring process commitments.

2.      **Fiscal Impact:** What fiscal impact, if any, will this addition, revision, or deletion have?

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APM 50.01, 50.02 (currently under revision in collaboration with policy owner) and FSH 3060 (also being updated to be compliant with Executive Order 14173 and Idaho SB 1198).

4.      **Effective Date:** This policy shall be effective on July 1, or January 1, whichever arrives first after final approval (see FSH 1460 H) unless otherwise specified.

To be effective immediately upon approval.

**UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK**

CHAPTER THREE:

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF

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3065

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN RECRUITMENT AND HIRING**

**LAST REVISION:** July 2020 (editorial)

**CONTENTS:**

A. Policy Purpose

B. Scope

C. Definitions

D. Policy Affirmative Action Process

E. Procedure

F. Contact Information

G. Related Policies

**A. A. POLICY Purpose.** The University of Idaho is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. It is the policy of the regents that equal opportunity be afforded in education and employment to qualified persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran. Sec RGP II.P.1. and RGP II.P.2. It is also the policy of the University of Idaho to not discriminate based on sexual orientation. This policy summarizes how to apply equal employment opportunity ("EEO") requirements in university recruitment and hiring processes.

**A. —**

**B. B. A-1. Scope of this policy.** This policy specifically applies to faculty, classified, and exempt positions. However, a good faith effort to follow and document affirmative action and equal opportunity procedures for all positions should be made, including student and temporary hires. With the exception of students applying for the work study program, postdoctoral fellows, or teaching/research assistants, anyone who is seeking UI employment should be directed to Human Resources website <https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/forms>, to view all available openings. (Applications for work study are taken at the Student Financial Aid Office. Teaching and research assistant appointments are made in the academic units.) For more information on postdoctoral fellowships or exceptions to this policy, contact the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations at (208) 885-4285. The Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations approves all job descriptions for postdoctoral fellows, as well as the recruitment, selection, and offer of all postdoctoral positions. This policy applies to faculty, classified and exempt staff positions at the University of Idaho, ("The University or U of I"). Some types of temporary staff, student and faculty positions may be appointed without an open competitive recruitment and hiring

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process. In these cases, a good faith effort to follow and document a fair and equitable hiring process should be made.

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**B-1. Hire of nNon-U.S. rResidents.** The hiring of non-U.S. residents is subject to specific federal statutes. Questions regarding necessary visas or immigration filing should be addressed by the Office of International Programs.

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**B-2. Temporary positions.** With the exception of students applying for the work-study program, post-docs or teaching/research assistants, anyone seeking U of I employment should be directed to the Human Resources website: <https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/careers> to view all available openings. The academic units make teaching and research assistants and post-doc appointments.

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#### **BC. Definitions.**

**B-1. Open Search.** An open search is defined as a search that is open to all applicants and is publicly advertised for an appropriate time period to allow applicants equal opportunity to apply. Classified searches are posted for a minimum of two weeks and faculty and exempt positions are posted for a minimum of four weeks. The UI has limited criteria for exceptions to open searches or reducing the recruitment period. Hiring departments must contact the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations to determine if there may be exceptions to the open competitive search process, including UI-only searches. Waivers or exceptions to the open competitive process must be in writing from the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations and kept in the search file in the event of an audit.

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**B-2. Affirmative Action.** The UI strives to hire qualified employees through open search processes. Affirmative action procedures document the qualifications of applicants, the extra effort made to recruit women, persons of color, persons with disabilities, disabled veterans and Vietnam-era veterans, and the objective, job-related justification for the ranking of applicants.

**B-3. Minorities and Persons of Color.** The terms "minorities" and "persons of color" refer to members of certain racial and ethnic groups. Persons who are nonresident aliens of Black, Hispanic, or Asian descent are not included in this definition and are not included among the protected group applicants listed on forms required by this policy. For the purposes of this policy, minorities and persons of color are further defined as follows:

a. "American Indian or Alaskan native or Native American"—all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

b. "Black (not of Hispanic origin)"—all persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

c. "Hispanic"—all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

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~~d. "Asian"—all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East (including the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, but not the Middle East).~~

~~e. "Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander"—all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Pacific Islands.~~

~~**B-4. Persons with Disabilities.** The term "disability" refers to the condition of a person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (b) has a record of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment. Federal law may further modify this definition.~~

~~**B-5.** "Status as a Vietnam-era veteran" refers to a person who served on active duty in the armed forces during the period from August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975.~~

~~**B-6. Affirmative Action Coordinators.** Each college or administrative unit has an affirmative action coordinator. The coordinators provide knowledge and expertise to (a) explain affirmative action requirements to members of search committees and others who express interest or concern, (b) help search committees develop the required documentation for recruitment and screening procedures, and (c) brief the Director of Human Rights, Access and Inclusion on issues that arise during the search process related to affirmative action and equal opportunity employment. The Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations may delegate selected responsibilities to affirmative action coordinators.~~

~~**B-7. Search Committee.** The search committee should consist of at least three people, but five to six people are recommended. It is not necessary that all members of the committee be faculty or staff from within the hiring department or unit, but it is important that the search committee be as diverse as possible. Gender balance and racial/ethnic representation are to be attempted if at all possible. The committee composition must be reviewed and approved by the unit/department head and the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations. Further definition of the scope and responsibility of the committee may be determined by the hiring dean or unit administrator.~~

~~**B-8. Forms.** Forms related to the affirmative action hiring procedure and those suggested for use in selection are available electronically from Employment Services. (See <https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/forms>).~~

C-1. Affirmative action. UniversityUniversity's proactive employment efforts to recruit and advance individuals with disabilities or protected veterans, as required by federal contractors.

C-2. Equal employment opportunity. The UniversityUniversity's obligation as a federal contractor to ensure a fair and equitable opportunity to apply for and be selected for jobs, and ensure employees are treated fairly during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or status as a protected veteran. This obligation applies to all terms and conditions, and privileges of employment including hiring, promotion, and termination.

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**C-3. Disability.** The condition of a person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (b) has a record of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment. Federal law may further modify this definition.

**C-4. Protected veteran.** A veteran is a “protected veteran” under the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA), as amended, if he or she they falls into one or more of the following categories: disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, active-duty wartime or campaign badge veteran, or Armed Forces service medal veteran. Federal law may further modify these definitions.

**C-5. Hiring authority.** The departmental administrator responsible for and directly involved in the recruitment and hiring process. They may appoint a search committee chair and committee members and delegate the responsibility to conduct the recruitment and hiring process. Hiring authorities have the responsibility to make a final hiring decision in accordance with federal and state law and university policies and procedures to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment and hiring process. A Hiring Authority may also be a Hiring Manager.

**C-6. Hiring manager.** The immediate supervisor or manager of a position. Hiring managers identify the staffing requirements within their teams, obtain recruitment approvals (if needed), write or update job descriptions and may participate in the recruitment and hiring process. A Hiring Manager may also be a Hiring Authority.

**C-7. Equal Opportunity Representatives.** Each college or administrative area has a designated Equal Opportunity Representative (EO Rep). The EO Rep is appointed by the senior administrator and receives regular training from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance. The EO Rep provides knowledge and expertise to explain equal employment opportunity and affirmative action obligations to hiring authorities, hiring managers, and search committees within their assigned college or administrative area. EO Reps may assist hiring authorities, hiring managers and search committees with developing required recruitment and hiring documentation and may consult with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance as issues arise during the recruitment and hiring process.

**C-8. Search committee.** A role defined by a hiring authority, with the primary responsibility to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment and hiring process. Search committees should consist of at least three people. It is not necessary that all committee members be from within the same unit, but it is important that the search committee be as diverse and inclusive as possible. The Hiring Authority will designate one search committee member as the Search Committee Chair.

**C-9. Search coordinator.** An individual that handles the administrative and logistical aspects of a recruitment and hiring process.

**C-10. Applicant or Candidate.** An applicant is an individual who has applied for a specific position for employment with the university. An applicant becomes a candidate if they meet the required qualifications for the position, are considered by the university for the position, and does not voluntarily remove themselves from consideration for the position.

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**C-11. Open Competitive Recruitment and Hiring Process.** An open competitive recruitment and hiring process is open to all applicants and is publicly advertised for a minimum of three days or longer, depending on the type of employee. Refer to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance for more information.

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**C-12. Forms.** Forms related to equal opportunity in the recruitment and hiring process are available electronically from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

**D. Policy.** The University is an equal opportunity employer. As a federal contractor, and in compliance with federal and state law and university policy, the University has the obligation to make good faith efforts to expand employment opportunities and remove identified barriers to the recruitment and advancement for all applicants and employees, including individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. The University is also obligated to ensure employment processes are non-discriminatory.

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### E. Procedure-

#### E-1. Exemption from the open competitive recruitment and hiring process

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**a. U of I temporary hiring process.** Some types of temporary faculty, staff and student positions may be appointed without an open competitive recruitment and hiring process. Please refer to the University Temporary Hiring Process available on the Human Resources Website.

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**b. Modified open competitive recruitment and hiring process.** A modified recruitment and hiring process may be approved by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance in certain situations. Examples of modified processes may include requests for a shortened recruitment period, or internal to the University searches. Refer to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance website for eligibility criteria.

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**c. Waiver of open competitive recruitment and hiring process.** A waiver of open competitive recruitment and hiring process may be approved by the Office of Equal Opportunity in certain situations. Refer to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance for specific types of waiver and eligibility criteria.

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**E-2. Use of retained or contingent search firms.** The use of a search firm must be approved by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance prior to the start of the recruitment and hiring process. Refer to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance for more information.

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**E-3. Equal opportunity recruitment and hiring process.** The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance oversees the recruitment and selection process for faculty, classified and exempt staff, with formal approval points at the Request to Interview and Request to Hire stages of the process. Human Resources will assist in the development of staff job descriptions, and collection of applications via the electronic applicant tracking system. The Office of the Provost will assist with the development of faculty job descriptions. To ensure compliance with applicable laws and reporting requirements, all open competitive processes must be entered into the electronic applicant tracking system. Recruitment and hiring materials include:

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**a. Job or Position Description.** All jobs require an up-to-date job or position description. The U of I job or position description templates are found within the position management module of the electronic applicant tracking system. A job or position description should include a position summary, major job functions, duties, and responsibilities essential or marginal to the position and the required and preferred qualifications for the position. The Office of the Provost is responsible for administering faculty classification and compensation. Human Resources is responsible for administering staff classification and compensation. The Hiring Manager, in consultation with either Human Resources or the Office of the Provost, will work to define essential marginal functions, required and preferred qualifications and establish the salary range prior to posting each time a new job or position is created or vacated.

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**b. Salary Information.** Salary range is determined when a position description is reviewed by Human Resources (Staff) or by the Office of the Provost (Faculty). Usually, the salary or salary range will be included in the posting.

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**c. Required and Preferred Qualifications.** Required qualifications are also known as minimum or basic qualifications that an applicant must possess to be considered for a position. The required qualifications should be non-comparative, objective and relevant to the performance of the job. Preferred qualifications are desired qualifications beyond the required qualifications that demonstrate additional experience, education, or credentials. An applicant needs to meet all required qualifications but may not meet all preferred qualifications.

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**d. Text of Job Posting or Job Advertisement.** Job postings appear on the Human Resources Careers Website (<https://uidaho.peopleadmin.com/>). Advertisements are brief descriptions that link back to a job posting from an email, website or other media. The job posting is available to each applicant and documents that U of I has communicated the qualifications on which applicants will be judged. Job postings and advertisements must include the statement "the University of Idaho is an equal employment opportunity employer, including veterans and individuals with disabilities." If a background check, education verification or post offer medical screen is required for the position, it must be stated in the job posting.

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**e. Distribution of job advertisements.** The University has adopted a centralized placement of job advertisements. The list of centralized advertising venues is maintained and updated annually by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance. Departments are also encouraged to actively recruit and place additional paid or unpaid advertisements.

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**f. Recruitment Periods.** The University has adopted standard periods of recruitment based on employee type to ensure reasonable time to recruit a qualified pool of applicants. Changes to the recruitment period must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance. Requests for exception to standard recruitment periods are managed within the applicant tracking system.

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g. Application Form and Process. The U of I application form and process are housed within the electronic applicant tracking system.

i. Applicant Self-identification Form. The Applicant Self-Identification and Required Applicant Disclosure Forms are embedded in the electronic applicant tracking system. As a federal contractor, the University is subject to certain governmental record keeping and reporting requirements. To comply with these requirements, the university invites applicants to voluntarily self-identify their sex, race, ethnicity, veteran, and disability status. Completing the form is voluntary. Data received is confidential and when reported, data will not identify any specific individual.

j. Recruitment and Outreach Benchmarks. Federal recruitment and outreach benchmarks exist for Protected Veterans and individuals with disabilities. As a federal contractor, U of I is required to make documented good faith efforts towards these benchmarks.

E-4. Selection Procedure.

a. Screening for Required Qualifications. Initial applicant screening by the search committee is based on the required qualifications and submitted application materials. An applicant must meet ~~All~~ the required qualifications to be considered for an interview or hire.

b. Intermediate Screening – Preferred Qualifications. Intermediate screening for preferred qualifications by the search committee is used to make distinctions among the minimally qualified applicants in the applicant pool and identify the most qualified applicants to consider for interview.

c. Review of Preliminary and Intermediate Screening and Request to Interview. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance must review the search committee’s preliminary and intermediate screening documentation prior to approval of the Request to Interview. Documentation is submitted for review via the electronic applicant tracking system.

d. Review of interview process and Request to Hire. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance must review the search committee’s screening and supporting documentation prior to approval of the Request to Hire. Documentation is submitted for review via the electronic applicant tracking system.

e. Electronic Documentation of Hiring Process. Completion of the screening and interview process will constitute a record of the applicants considered and reasons for elimination from consideration. Supporting documentation uploaded to the electronic applicant tracking system should provide enough detail so that they will stand alone as an explanation for the results in the hiring process. The supporting documentation must be uploaded and submitted via the electronic applicant tracking system to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance prior to approval of the Request to Hire.

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f. Reference cChecks. The hHiring aAuthority or their designee is responsible for checking and documenting references for the selected applicant prior to making a job offer. Information gathered during reference checks should be noted and included in the departmental search files.

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g. Background cChecks. The hHiring aAuthority or their designee is responsible for contacting the potential employee regarding conducting criminal history background checks, education verification and post-offer medical screens, when appropriate. See APM 50.16 and 50.19. For more information, please visit the Human Resources website.

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h. Retention of sSupplemental rRecruitment and hHiring rRecords. Recruitment and hiring records, including job advertisements, selection forms, minutes of meetings in which applicant qualifications are discussed, letters of reference, and interview notes, are to be retained by the hiring department for two years from the effective date of hire or close of the search when no hire is made.

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**C. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROCESS.**

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**C.1. Recruitment.** Recruitment for all positions at the UI must be conducted in full compliance with UI's affirmative action and equal employment opportunity procedures (below) and with the requirements of all applicable immigration and naturalization laws (see FSH 3070). To ensure compliance with applicable laws and reporting requirements, all searches must be entered into the applicant tracking system. The chair of every search committee should be familiar with the affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements of the UI. The chair should also consult with the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations for assistance in conducting a search that maximizes the potential for attracting a diverse pool of applicants. A signed Position Authorization Form, must be obtained from the President, Provost, or Vice President, as applicable, prior to initiating recruitment. The Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations and Employment Services will review and approve all recruitment materials before announcement is made of any position vacancy, including any to be filled on a part-time or temporary basis, e.g., a sabbatical replacement. Failure to secure necessary approvals from the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations or Employment Services will result in nullification of the process and attempted hire. Employment Services will assist with the development of results oriented job descriptions, recruiting, advertising, and collection of applications. Recruitment materials must include:

**a. Search Firms.** When used, search firms are required to comply with all state and federal laws, as well as UI and Regents policies regarding affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The chair of the search is responsible for disseminating the internal policies to the search firm and ensuring they are followed. The positions are recruited in the same manner as similar positions and are subject to the same approvals and documentation.

**b. Salary Range.** An appropriate salary range is defined initially, but need not be advertised to potential applicants.

**c. Text of Announcement and Advertisement.** Vacancy announcements appear in the Idaho

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Register and/or on the Human Resources' (HR) website in the applicant tracking system, as well as in other media and websites. The announcement is made available to each applicant. It documents that UI has communicated to applicants the qualifications on which they will be judged. It is also the basis for the screening forms. The form of the announcement may vary, but it must include the basic components that are noted on the vacancy announcement outline (See <https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/forms>) and shall be consistent with the job description. The "minimum" or "essential" qualifications must be the absolute minimum that would be acceptable in an applicant; once defined, they are inflexible. An applicant who does not possess these qualifications cannot be hired. "Preferred" or "desirable" (or "marginal") qualifications include any and all attributes believed to be desirable for the position. A candidate may not possess all of the "preferred" characteristics; nevertheless, any specific attribute that might be a reason for preferring one candidate over another should be included as a basis for ranking. When applicants self-identify as disabled under the definition of ADA and indicate they can, with reasonable accommodation, perform the essential functions of the position, UI has a duty to attempt reasonable accommodation under the ADA. The announcement must include the statement, "To enrich education through diversity the University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer." If a background check, education verification or post offer medical screen is required for the position, it must be stated in the announcement. The advertisement is an abbreviation of the vacancy announcement and, at a minimum, must contain the job title, closing date, contact information, and the tagline "AA/EOE."

**d. Statement of Distribution of Announcement and Advertisement.** Departments may place paid advertisements in newspapers and journals, and/or mailing announcements to institutions that grant degrees to potential applicants or post on professional society websites or listservs. The hiring department shall send announcements to any known organizations representing the interests of minorities and women within the discipline or field, e.g., Women in Science. Employment Services can assist with the identification of such groups and can assist with the placement of advertisements. Due to the quantity of advertisements placed by the University of Idaho, many times savings can be realized by centralizing the placement of advertisements with Employment Services. Employment Services will provide a standard description of the university and its setting to ensure consistency in advertising.

**e. Dates of Recruitment.** The period of recruitment should be discussed with the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations to ensure that reasonable time is allowed to recruit a diverse pool of candidates. The recruitment period may be shortened, provided that the departmental administrator furnishes the reasons for doing so and assurance that any extra efforts necessary to recruit thoroughly in the time available will be made.

**f. Job Description.** All positions require an up-to-date position description. Standard electronic forms are available for this purpose.

1. The position description for non-faculty positions must be created using the Results Oriented Job Description (ROJD) form available for downloading at the Human Resources website at <https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/forms>. If a description of and the qualifications for the position have not been established, the departmental administrator in consultation with Employment Services will define these and the salary range. An

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~~Employment Services approved ROJD is required prior to the initiation of search proceedings. Faculty positions must have a position description using the format set forth in FSH 3050.~~

~~2. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires job descriptions to identify “essential or non-marginal functions” and “non-essential or marginal functions” of positions. When positions are established or vacant, departmental administrators shall consult with Employment Services to ensure that job descriptions are in full compliance with ADA provisions. This HR review precedes the beginning of the recruitment process.~~

~~**g. Application Form.** The standard UI application form for classified positions is available through the applicant tracking system on the referenced HR website. Those not completing their application materials electronically may submit the equivalent information to the contact listed on the announcement via hard copy, by the closing date. The Required Applicant Disclosure Form and Affirmative Action Form are available from the Affirmative Action Coordinators for those not completing their application materials on line.~~

~~**h. Affirmative Action Form.** The chair of the search committee must ensure that all applicants have access to complete on line or are given or sent the Affirmative Action form inviting applicants to identify themselves as members of protected groups. Applicants may choose not to provide such information, but UI has a responsibility to request it.~~

~~**C-2. Selection.** Screening forms are used to document the comparison of candidates. They are based on the qualifications specified in the announcement. As a result of preliminary screening, the pool of candidates who meet minimum qualifications is established. Forms used for this purpose should show the basis for numerical values assigned to weighting and judgment factors. Both the required and the preferred qualifications should be evaluated, but the weights assigned to various criteria may vary. Selection forms document the date of the evaluation, the signature of the evaluator, and comments that supplement or explain numerical scores and should be completed in ink. The hiring unit may conduct other job related evaluations, after consultation with Employment Services. The Director for Employment Services or designee is responsible for reviewing any supplemental application evaluation material the hiring department wants to use in the screening process.~~

~~**a. Preliminary Screening.** Employment Services conducts preliminary screening for classified positions. All other searches may designate a member of the committee, or other person designated by the committee, to conduct a preliminary screening based on minimum/required qualifications that can be readily and unquestionably assessed on a yes or no basis. The disqualified applications should be made available for review by members of the search committee. In addition, the applications of known protected group members that are disqualified in the preliminary stage will be reviewed electronically by the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations.~~

~~**b. Intermediate Screening.** Intermediate screening is conducted to make distinctions among the qualified candidates in this applicant pool in an adequate manner. Each committee member should complete a screening form for each applicant retained in the pool so that meaningful comparisons can be made. Comments explaining the ratings should be entered on the form. Committee members should work independently without access to the evaluations completed by others and should be cautioned to refrain from making any written comments on the applicants' resumes,~~

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~~reference letters, or other application materials. Following the independent evaluations, it is appropriate that the selection committee meet as a group to compare and discuss the candidates. The final recommendation should reflect committee consensus rather than a mere collection of individual opinions. If new interpretation or insight has resulted from committee discussions, a committee member may change his or her rating forms and such changes should be entered in ink, initialed, and dated on the same form with the original ratings. It is important to record and keep minutes of the committee discussion of applicants.~~

~~**c. Review of Preliminary and Intermediate Screening Procedures.** The Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations will review and approve electronically all screening procedures (see C-1. h) prior to the interview phase. In the case of faculty hiring, the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations cannot approve proceeding to interviews until the Office of the Provost has had an opportunity to review the credentials of all finalists. Completion of these procedures will constitute a record of the applicants considered and reasons for having eliminated protected group members. Reasons given for the rank ordering or elimination of applicants should be directly related to the qualifications listed on the announcement. Though numerical scores or numerically based rank order are a part of the explanation, they should be supported by additional narrative. Reasons should be stated in comparative terms so that differences between candidates are readily apparent. Comments in the applicant tracking system should be complete and detailed so that they will stand alone as an explanation for the results in selection, apart from applicants' folders, which are retained in the hiring department. The completed comments shall be submitted electronically to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations and Employment Services through the Affirmative Action Coordinator. It is recommended that the files, including preliminary and intermediate selection forms, for all finalists and protected group members be available for reference for five years.~~

~~**d. Interviews.** Questions and discussions during interviews must be confined to clearly job related topics; consistency in interviews is important and there must be a procedure for documenting the re-evaluation of candidates on the basis of the interview. Members of the search or screening committee should document their evaluation of each candidate interviewed. Telephone interviews may be conducted provided that they follow a structured outline that provides for rating of the applicant's responses; conference calls should be arranged so that more than one person can take part in evaluating the applicant; also, some of the same evaluators should be involved in all of the interviews. For a list of acceptable and unacceptable interview inquiries visit [www.uidaho.edu/diversityandhumanrights](http://www.uidaho.edu/diversityandhumanrights).~~

~~**e. Reference and Background Checks.** The committee is responsible for checking references and contacting the potential employee regarding conducting criminal history background checks, education verification and post offer medical screens, when appropriate. (See APM 50.16 and 50.19. Employment Services will work with the appropriate resources to conduct the criminal history background checks and education verifications and provide the information necessary for the potential employee to complete a post offer medical screen. If a criminal history background check and/or education verification and/or a post offer medical screen is necessary for the position, the potential employee may not begin the job until Human Resources has received satisfactory results.~~

~~**f. Final Selection.** Completion and on line submission of the final selection to the Director of the~~

## UI FACULTY-STAFF HANDBOOK

### Chapter III: EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION CONCERNING FACULTY AND STAFF Section 3065: Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Hiring

~~Office of Civil Rights and Investigations and Employment Services precedes receipt of approval to offer the position.~~

~~**g. Offer of Position.** The Affirmative Action approval by the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Investigations indicates affirmative action procedures have been completed. After receiving approval to offer from Employment Services, the offer is approved by the hiring college or unit administrator following established procedures in the college or unit.~~

~~**C-3. Retention of Files.** Hiring records, including job advertisements, applications and resumes, selection forms, minutes of meetings in which applicant qualifications are discussed, letters of reference, and interview notes, are to be retained by the hiring department for five years from the effective date of hire or close of the search when no hire is made.~~

~~**F. Contact Information.** Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, [eoc-review@uidaho.edu](mailto:eoc-review@uidaho.edu)~~

#### ~~G. Related Policies:~~

~~[APM 50.01 Hiring Procedures for UI Exempt Employees](#)~~

~~[APM 50.02 Hiring Procedures for UI Classified Staff](#)~~

~~[FSH 3200: Policy of Non-Discrimination](#)~~

~~[FSH 3060: Equal Opportunity](#)~~

~~[FSH 3210: Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)~~

~~[FSH 3215: Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression](#)~~

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#### Version History

~~**Amended August 2025.** Interim policy per FSH 1460 G. Updates throughout to comply with Executive Order 14173, SB 1198 and University equal opportunity in recruitment and hiring process commitments.~~

~~**Amended July 2020.** Made references concordant with Board Policies, and updated office names.~~

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~~**Amended July 2009.** Editorial changes to sections A-1, B-1, B-6, B-7, C-1, and C-2.~~

~~**Amended January 2008.** Substantial revises made to sections A, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-6, B-7, B-8, C-1, C-2, and C-3. Added section A-1, C-1. a, and C-1. f. 1 and 2. Made minor editorial changes to B-3.~~

~~**Amended January 2006.** Revised C-1. e and B-8, and made editorial changes.~~

~~**Amended January 2001.** Revised B-3. b, d, e.~~

~~**Amended July 1997.** Revised C-1. c and d, and C-2. d.~~

~~**Adopted 1979.**~~



### POLICY COVER SHEET

For instructions on policy creation and change, please see <https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy>

All policies must be reviewed, approved, and returned by the policy sponsor, with a cover sheet attached, to [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu).

**Faculty Staff Handbook (FSH)**

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Emergency  Minor Amendment  
Policy Number & Title:

**Administrative Procedures Manual (APM)**

Addition  Revision\*  Deletion\*  Emergency  Minor Amendment  
Policy Number & Title: **APM50.16 Criminal Background Check Procedures**

\*Note: If revision or deletion, request original document from [ui-policy@uidaho.edu](mailto:ui-policy@uidaho.edu). All changes must be made using "track changes."

Originator:

1/21/26

Policy Sponsor, if different from Originator:

Reviewed by General Counsel     Yes     No    Name & Date: Karl Klein; 1/15/26

1.    **Policy/Procedure Statement:** Briefly explain the reason for the proposed addition, revision, and/or deletion.  
       These updates clarify which positions require a criminal background check (CBC) and reinforce our commitment to providing a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students. The only substantive change is the addition of a CBC requirement for work-study positions, a practice already in place in most units. Overall, these updates are intended to improve clarity and ensure consistent compliance with the policy across all units.
  
2.    **Fiscal Impact:** What fiscal impact, if any, will this addition, revision, or deletion have?  
       There could be some minimal impact for those units that don't currently submit a CBC for a work-study position. Most units already do this, so impact should be minimal.
  
3.    **Related Policies/Procedures:** Describe other UI policies or procedures related or similar to this proposed change, or that will be impacted by it.  
       NA
  
4.    **Effective Date:** This policy shall be effective on July 1, or January 1, whichever arrives first after final approval (see FSH 1460 D) unless otherwise specified in the policy.  
       ASAP

## 50.16 - Criminal Background Check Procedures

### Owner:

- **Position:** Director of Human Resources
- **Email:** [hr@uidaho.edu](mailto:hr@uidaho.edu)

**Last updated:** July 1, 2024

**A. Purpose.** This policy sets forth requirements for criminal background checks for employees.

**B. Scope.** This policy applies to all employees.

**C. Policy.** Criminal background checks confirm an individual's fitness relative to the requirements of their employment or volunteer service at the University of Idaho (U of I).

U of I requires criminal background checks for all ~~nonstudent-paid positions, graduate student appointees, postdoctoral scholars, student positions (ST/SF/SI), and temporary help positions (T1, T4, etc.)~~. U of I requires criminal background checks for **student positions (ST/SF/SI)**, interns, **affiliates**, and volunteers only if the work will involve contact with minors (**anyone under the age of 18 years old**) or the hiring authority determines the work to be security-sensitive. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Questions on background check requirements should be directed to Human Resources (HR).

The requirements of this policy also apply to existing employees being considered for changes in position, transfers, and promotions. However, if an existing employee has a previous background check on file within the prior three years with U of I, and that background check is applicable to the change in position, transfer, or promotion, a new background check will not be required (**as determined by HR**). A background check is not required for general faculty promotions in rank pursuant to FSH 3500 where the faculty promotion does not involve an internal or external search.

Noncompliance with this procedure will be communicated to the Office of General Counsel and the appropriate vice president.

**D. Procedure.** The U of I will conduct criminal background checks on the recommended candidate(s) for all **paid positions as noted-listed** in Section C. Hiring authorities must request criminal background checks for **student positions (ST/SF/SI)**, interns, **affiliates**, and volunteers if the work will involve contact with minors (**anyone under the age of 18 years old**) or the hiring authority determines the work to be security sensitive. Security-sensitive work may involve access to restricted facilities, resources, finances, data, confidential information, or research as determined by the hiring authority.

**D-1. Required notification of criminal background checks.** All advertisements, notices, and postings for paid positions ~~listed in Section C~~ must state: “This position is subject to the successful completion of a criminal background check.” No candidate for a paid position ~~listed in Section C~~ shall commence employment until a satisfactory criminal background check has been received by HR. Any offers associated with these positions must be made contingent on a satisfactory criminal background check.

For ~~student (ST/SF/SI)~~, intern, affiliate, and volunteer positions ~~for which a search was not necessary or was waived~~, the hiring authority will provide the candidate or volunteer with written notice of the criminal background check requirement prior to offering the position. The ~~candidate or intern, affiliate, or~~ volunteer can only be offered the position opportunity contingent on a satisfactory criminal background check. The ~~candidate or affiliate, intern,~~ or volunteer must not begin work or begin the new responsibilities until a satisfactory criminal background check has been received by HR.

**D-2. Required authorization for criminal background check.** The hiring unit must submit a Department Request for Criminal Background Check via the online request for background check ~~as soon as possible, but not earlier than three months prior to the anticipated start date~~. The request shall include the following information: candidate’s legal name, ~~and~~ email address, position title/action number, budget number, and unit. The candidate will receive an email from the background check vendor to initiate the background check. The candidate must submit the required personal information at a secure website and electronically sign the Disclosure and Authorization forms. The candidate will then receive a summary of rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), and the background check will begin. The third-party consumer reporting agency will provide the background check results to HR. HR will review the background check’ results to determine whether the candidate meets the criteria for the position. HR will notify the hiring authority of the results of the background check. Costs associated with criminal background checks will be charged to the hiring unit.

**D-3. Contingent offer of employment.** If circumstances require that a job offer be made prior to the completion of the background check, the hiring unit must use the approved contingent offer letter template found on the HR website, which includes the following language: “This offer is contingent upon the completion of a satisfactory criminal background investigation and other pre-employment requirements.” Although a contingent offer may be made, the employee may not begin work in any capacity, including attending orientations or trainings for the unit or University, without a completed satisfactory background investigation and other pre-employment paperwork. It is recommended that a

written offer not be made until the satisfactory criminal background check has been completed and confirmed by HR.

**D-4. Prior criminal background check qualifies.** If a candidate is being rehired or reappointed into the same position, has in the prior three years met the background check requirement for that position, and the break in service is less than one year, the background check requirement may be waived at the discretion of the senior HR executive, or designee.

**D-5. Day care centers must comply with I.C. § 39-1105.** Employees or volunteers at day care centers who have direct contact with children are subject to the criminal history check procedures set forth in I.C. § 39-1105, which are conducted by the day care centers in conjunction with the appropriate state agencies. The procedures set forth in this APM 50.16 do not apply these individuals.

**D-6. College of Agricultural and Life Sciences unique requirements**

**a. Non-4-H volunteers.** The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) has implemented additional criminal background check procedures for volunteers who have significant contact with minors. Students and volunteers of CALs may be subject to additional screening requirements pursuant to those procedures.

**b. 4-H volunteers.** Volunteers through the 4-H programs who have direct contact with children are subject to the criminal history check procedures set forth in the 4-H Youth Development Policies and Procedures.

**D-7. Successful applicants recruited through an authorized search firm.** When an authorized search firm is used to recruit for key leadership roles, where the service provided includes a background check that is no less comprehensive than that conducted by the U of I, the senior HR executive or designee may approve the use of the search firm background check for purposes of employment in that position. All background checks are to be sent to HR and not provided to search committees, etc. to maintain consistency in process.

**E. Procedures for criminal background checks for security purposes.** If the senior HR executive or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee or volunteer represents an immediate threat to the safety and security of the U of I community, HR may conduct a criminal background check through the Idaho State Police or other appropriate agency. The written authorization of the employee to conduct this check will be obtained in most cases. However, in certain circumstances, it may not be possible or feasible to obtain written authorization. In those cases, a limited background check may be performed through the Idaho State Police or other appropriate agency. Any information obtained

through this process will be used solely for the purpose of maintaining the safety and security of the U of I community and will be shared strictly on a “need to know” basis.

## **F. Results of criminal background checks**

**F-1. Applicants new to U of I.** If the criminal background check identifies a conviction, with the exception of F-3 below, determinations of fitness for employment will be made by Human Resources, and may include consultation with appropriate hiring authority, based on the nature and details of the conviction, date of the conviction, how the crime relates to the job in question, evidence of rehabilitation, and other relevant factors.

**F-2. Current employees.** When a current employee with a conviction is considered for changes in position, transfers, or promotions, the determination of whether to exclude the candidate will be made by the senior HR executive or designee, and may include consultation with the appropriate hiring authority.

If, pursuant to this procedure, a criminal background check is conducted on a current employee and an event is uncovered that was not previously considered, U of I may initiate personnel action against the employee. In these cases, the senior HR executive or designee in consultation with ~~the Risk Management Officer~~ appropriate offices and other applicable personnel, will determine what action, if any, should be taken. The senior HR executive or designee may ask the employee for a ~~n written~~ explanation of the offense(s).

**F-3. Disqualifying employment convictions.** A record of any of the following convictions will generally result in automatic exclusion of the candidate or termination of a current employee:

- a.** Conviction of any crime against a child or vulnerable adult (including but not limited to child abuse, abandonment, neglect, and statutory rape);
- b.** Conviction of any crime of violence;
- c.** Conviction of any crime of a sexual nature, including but not limited to lewd conduct, sexual battery, sexual exploitation, rape, and statutory rape;
- d.** Conviction of any crime involving unlawful use or possession of a weapon or firearm.

**F-4. “Conviction” defined.** For purposes of this procedure, the term “conviction” will be interpreted broadly and will include pleas of no contest, deferred adjudications, and similar dispositions. If a criminal history report indicates pending criminal charges that, if a conviction resulted, would result in exclusion from employment, the candidate will be excluded from employment until final disposition of the charges.

## **G. Communication of results and employee rights**

**G-1. Consumer reporting agency.** Procedures when the report has been provided by a consumer reporting agency (e.g., Verified Credentials) shall be as follows:

a. If a determination has been made that a candidate should be excluded, or that adverse action should be taken against a current employee, based on an unsatisfactory criminal background check, HR shall, prior to taking any adverse action against the individual, provide a Pre-Adverse Action Disclosure that (1) notifies the individual in writing of the unsatisfactory result, (2) provides the candidate or employee with a copy of the report, and (3) provides the candidate or employee with a written description of their rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

b. After the adverse action has been taken, HR will provide the candidate with an Adverse Action Notice, which includes (1) the name, address, and phone number of the consumer reporting agency that supplied the report, (2) a statement that the consumer reporting agency that supplied the report did not make the decision regarding the adverse action and cannot provide the reasons for the adverse action, and (3) a notice of the individual's right to dispute the accuracy or completeness of any information the agency has furnished, and their right to an additional free consumer report from the agency upon request within 60 days.

c. A candidate or employee who has received an initial unsatisfactory result and who has sought correction of their report under the Fair Credit Reporting Act is not eligible for a listed position until the senior HR executive, or designee has confirmed the correction and determined that the result is satisfactory. The U of I has no obligation to hold a position open to allow a candidate or employee to correct their report.

**G-2. Government reporting agency.** Procedures when the report has been provided by a governmental agency (e.g., Idaho State Police) shall be as follows:

If a decision has been made to exclude a candidate, or initiate action against a current employee, based on an unsatisfactory background check, HR shall (1) notify the individual in writing of the unsatisfactory result, and (2) provide the candidate or employee with a copy of the report.

**H. Record keeping.** Criminal history information collected under this procedure shall be kept electronically with the third party vendor or in accordance with record retention requirements (see [APM Chapter 65](#)). The information will be used solely for the purpose of maintaining the safety and security of the U of I community and will be disclosed only as permitted or required by law.