





# OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO BUILT A WAVE OF MOMENTUM.

Bucking national trends, the U of I has posted eight straight semesters of enrollment growth. This year, the university became the first and only institution in the state to earn Carnegie R1 research status, and it set a new record with \$141 million in research expenditures for 2024. And eight months before the end of the capital campaign, the U of I topped its \$500 million goal. The Brave. Bold. Unstoppable. campaign is already the largest fundraising effort in state history.

These accomplishments highlight the hard work of employees and dedication of the Vandal Family. They also put the university in excellent position to plan for the future.

The University of Idaho's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan will carry the institution through a critical time. Challenges like the enrollment cliff and a shifting research landscape loom. But through sound planning, embracing technology and holding steadfast to the university's mission, vision and values, the U of I will lead our state into the future.

Artificial intelligence is embedded in each pillar of the strategic plan as a tool to elevate student success, partner with Idaho industry, accelerate discovery, enhance operational excellence and extend the university's impact.

The U of I community is excited for the years ahead and has built a remarkable legacy of service over the past 135 years. Loyal alumni, innovative faculty, enterprising students and a supportive community look forward to reaching greater heights over the next five years.

C Scor Fren

**President Scott Green** 













# **MISSION**

The University of Idaho will shape the future of Idaho and beyond through innovative research, education and community engagement.

# **VISION**

The University of Idaho will prepare students to thrive by reimagining the role of experiential learning in the student experience and by transforming how and where education is delivered. We will drive economic growth and improve quality of life in Idaho and communities we serve by building strategic partnerships and by conducting research that provides sustainable solutions to complex problems.



The university's strategic plan was shaped with input from a broad range of community members throughout its development.

## Current state analysis

In Fall 2024, over 100 community members—including employees, students, alumni, regional center CEOs, employer partners and donors—engaged in interviews and focus groups to better understand the university's current state.

# Mission, vision and values survey

In January, we received more than 860 responses to a community survey in which respondents shared feedback related to the university's mission, vision and values.

# Thematic focus groups

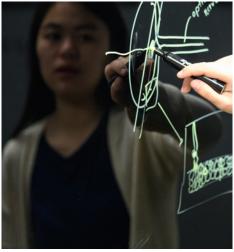
In Spring 2025, Strategic Planning Council members facilitated a series of thematic focus groups where dozens of employees shared ideas for potential initiatives to be considered in the planning process.

## Plan socialization

In early May, U of I leadership hosted a town hall to share the strategic plan outline with over 500 members of the U of I community. The plan was also posted online, and we incorporated feedback from the U of I community.









## IGNITE STUDENT SUCCESS

We are transforming undergraduate, graduate and continuing education by leveraging advanced technologies, data-driven insights and personalized approaches to enhance the learning experience. Our commitment to innovation includes using emerging tools such as AI to create customized recruitment, retention and academic support strategies. By integrating cutting-edge solutions, we empower every student to thrive.

#### Signature initiatives

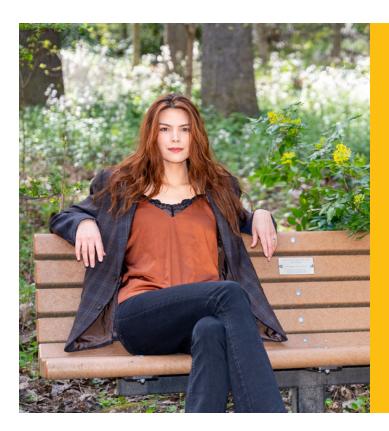
A1. Provide a high-impact education with a focus on delivering the best value in the West: Ensure all qualified Idaho students can pursue an education at the University of Idaho with superior outcomes—including the opportunity to earn competitive regional wages.

- A2. Reimagine the first-year experience with technology-enhanced support: Transform the first-year experience by integrating existing onboarding programs, cohortbased engagement, mentorship and learning communities with Al-powered tools that deliver personalized, data-driven experiences, feedback and timely interventions to strengthen student connection, retention and long-term success.
- A3: Teach students how to apply AI in their disciplines and their lives: Invest in AI programs to produce an informed and capable workforce and citizenry by teaching all undergraduate and graduate students how to effectively and ethically leverage benefits of AI in their education, careers and lives. While the promise of AI includes everything from producing

- operational efficiencies to rapidly conducting research that will improve the human condition, we will also include topics such as data privacy and intellectual property in our curriculum.
- A4. Foster a welcoming campus experience that prioritizes connection, engagement and student well-being: Create a campus atmosphere where students can thrive by expanding access to social, cultural and athletic activities — such as concerts, theater, academic symposiums and student organizations— while strengthening services and expanding spaces that support mental and physical health.

- The University of Idaho is the Best Value Public University in the West, as ranked by U.S. News and World Report, for five years running. The ranking recognizes the quality of the university's programs in relation to the net cost to students. U of I first earned its best value ranking in 2021 and has remained No. 2 nationally, only behind the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- U of I's Housing and Residence Life programs earned national recognition for student

- engagement, campus involvement, residential programming and national engagement. U of I's Residence Hall Association was named the 2025 School of the Year by the National Association of College and University Residence Halls.
- U of I includes students in the Vandal Family well before they arrive on campus through tools like ZeeMee. The social engagement platform is designed to connect prospective and admitted students, providing a dedicated space for students to build community, ask questions and begin forming relationships prior to meeting in person. The Fall 2025 ZeeMee community grew 63% over 2024, to 3,519 students.
- U of I professor Tim Boester led the redesign of Math 143, a key gateway course for many undergraduate students. The student-centered redesign helps students engage with the material on a deeper level and prepares them for more advanced courses later in their careers. The results are improved grades and retention. The university is now undertaking similar course redesigns for entry level classes in communications and writing.



# From the fashion runway to communication scholar

After her career as a fashion model, Celilo Miles graduated with honors in 2025 with a bachelor's in communication and won the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences' prestigious Lindley Award.

The Lapwai High School graduate is also a wildland firefighter on a Nez Perce tribal crew. She is pursuing a graduate degree at U of I, working with Travis Paveglio, professor of natural resource sociology. Miles would like to work toward a position as a public information officer in her community.

"I decided I needed to work on myself intellectually," Miles said. "I had spent several years modeling, and it wasn't intellectually stimulating, so I always knew education would be my next step."









# DRIVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

We believe that learning goes beyond the classroom. Our commitment to "Learn by Doing" ensures that 100% of students — regardless of program and modality — participate in hands-on experiences that complement their academic journey. Whether through internships, co-op programs, undergraduate research, study abroad programs, creative projects or community engagement, experiential learning prepares our students to think critically, solve problems and thrive in disparate professional environments. Next-generation tools like AI and advanced digital platforms are increasingly woven into these opportunities - supporting student learning and enhancing real-time feedback. This approach not only deepens academic understanding but

also equips students with the skills, adaptability and confidence to succeed in their careers and communities.

#### Signature initiatives

■ B1. Expand research learning opportunities:

Provide students with meaningful experiences beyond the classroom by increasing participation in faculty-guided and self-directed research. These opportunities equip students with practical skills and prepare them to contribute responsibly to their professions and communities. By connecting academic learning with real-world problem-solving, we help students become thoughtful leaders who are ready to meet Idaho's needs.

- B2. Strengthen workforce and community-based partnerships and student support:
  Broaden access to meaningful, career-building experiences by expanding partnerships with employers and connecting students to community-based projects and study abroad programs. Enhance student preparation, advising and career services to ensure high-quality placements across all disciplines, while scaling up opportunities for internships and co-ops.
- B3. Build the systems to deliver 100% student participation in experiential learning: Develop the policies, infrastructure and technology including AI-powered platforms for tracking, scaling and supporting experiential learning. Invest in central systems and services that support college and unit efforts to coordinate faculty, employer and community partnerships, and provide real-time data to ensure every student is connected to a personalized, impactful hands-on experience by graduation.

■ In 2024, the Chobani Scholars program awarded \$80,000 to four students who are pursuing careers in agriculture, including its first two recipients from the College of Engineering. Chobani Scholars awards \$20,000 scholarships distributed over four years, granting priority to students from the Magic Valley who intend to pursue a career in food production and the dairy

- industry and may not have the financial means to attend college on their own.
- U of I's capstone courses provide students the opportunity to collaborate with companies and community organizations on real-world projects. In the College of Art and Architecture, the design-build program worked with university partners on the Vandal Healing and Memorial Garden and constructed affordable housing in Moscow. In the College of Engineering, students work with NASA, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories and others to tackle projects with the guidance of mentors in their respective industries.
- Each fall, U of I holds a one-week police mini academy, operated by the Moscow Police Department and U of I's criminology program. It's an initiation for a handful of students who want to see what it's like to be a cop. It is also the preamble for student cadets on the Moscow force to learn the basics of police work. The immersive experience began in 2022 and often leads to law enforcement-related internship opportunities for students.
- A team of U of I business students made history in 2025, becoming the first group to place first at the Chartered Financial Analyst Society's Spokane Research Challenge. The annual competition provides university students with intensive training in financial analysis and professional ethics. Spring 2025 is the first time a U of I team has placed in the local competition.



# Stafford explores aquatic insects as indicator species

U of I undergraduate Jack Stafford's research shows the breadth of projects funded by INBRE — the IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence — to promote public health.

Stafford's U of I curriculum and research are outdoor focused, and not usually associated with white lights and lab coats, but the INBRE grant will help pay for his research projects in the College of Natural Resources. One of the studies includes identifying aquatic insects that are an indicator species of healthy rivers.

"If these insects are found in rivers and streams, it shows the water is good quality, and their absence can mean there's a problem like a type of pollution that may also affect communities and people living alongside the river," said Stafford, who is from Sandpoint.









## ADAPT THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL

We recognize our role in preparing learners for success in a rapidly changing world. To do that effectively, we are reimagining educational experiences to be more flexible, accessible and aligned with the needs of today's learners — from traditional undergraduate and graduate students to working adults and lifelong learners. As workforce needs in Idaho shift and new industries emerge, we are designing pathways from K-12 through higher education that respond quickly and effectively to these changes. By rethinking our educational approaches in response to technological disruption, designing adaptable program formats and prioritizing skills that matter, we are creating a learner-centric model where students thrive wherever they are and wherever they are going.

#### Signature initiatives

- C1. Deliver the Vandal experience to all learners: Regardless of modality, timing, location or the pathway they choose to pursue their educational goals, all students will have access to experiential learning, advising, tutoring, targeted professional development and Alenabled support systems, as well as social events through online and regional communities.
- C2. Expand academic reach and regional impact through targeted investment: Advance the University of Idaho's impact by investing in regional centers, as well as online, hybrid and place-based learning opportunities that meet

student demand and support Idaho's economic development. We will also prioritize programs with strong internal return on investment and demonstrated alignment with workforce and industry needs across the state. Growth areas will be identified based on student interest and clear pathways to long-term sustainability.

- C3. Develop a transfer pathway network: Create a transfer pathway network by deepening articulation agreements and 2+2 agreements with Idaho community colleges and explore 4+1 partnerships with other regional institutions.
- C4. Expand continuing and adult education to focus on in-demand careers: Build on the University of Idaho's Continuing, Adult and Professional Education (CAPE) programming and offer stackable credentials for Idaho's evolving workforce in areas like precision agriculture, forestry management, energy technologies and more. Opportunities will be evaluated by peer and aspirational benchmarking, as well as demand surveys of potential students and industry partners.

#### Foundational work

■ Launched in 2024, the Continuing, Adult and Professional Education (CAPE) initiative aims to develop and support technologies and workflows designed explicitly for non-academic and non-traditional programming. The goal of CAPE is to enhance the performance

- of our current programming portfolio and encourage the development of new programs by reducing the overhead and administrative burdens on university units that offer these programs. By lowering the barriers to delivering non-traditional programming, CAPE intends to promote creativity, experimentation and educational variety to meet the needs of our community.
- Independent Study in Idaho (ISI), a statewide program led by University of Idaho, redefines access to higher education through flexible, affordable and self-paced learning opportunities. With more than 100 college-level courses available online or in print, ISI serves a wide range of learners, including traditional college students, high school students, working professionals and incarcerated individuals, by removing barriers related to cost, location and scheduling.
- Expanding opportunities for transfer students is a key goal in University of Idaho's long-term enrollment plan. In 2024, U of I alumnus Todd Schwartz joined the U of I staff to help strengthen relationships with our state's community colleges and improve pathways for transfer students coming to University of Idaho. Schwartz is already improving data sharing, coordinating closely with Idaho's community colleges and creating smoother pathways for students seeking four-year degrees.



## A new path to the logging workforce

Maria Kinne, from Sandpoint, was among the first students to enroll in the University of Idaho's two-year forest operations and technology program, which covers logging equipment operation, timber sale planning, logging safety and business skills. Kinne has a temporary job lined up with the state of Idaho after graduation but is also getting offers from logging companies.

"I knew I didn't want to go to school for another four years, and since this associate degree could be completed in two years, I could continue to do what I loved — being in the woods and working in the timber industry," Kinne said.

Taking advantage of the 10,000-acre U of I Experimental Forest as an outdoor classroom, she learned to operate equipment, including a log processor, grapple skidder and feller-buncher. She hand-felled trees with a chainsaw and learned how to cruise timber, or measure trees in a stand to determine the quantity and quality of timber available for harvest.









# HARNESS RESEARCH INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Our commitment to the state of Idaho is unwavering. Everything we do is for Idaho — from conducting research that delivers practical, sustainable solutions for our industries and communities to forming strategic partnerships with government agencies, educational institutions and the private sector. Not only does our research, extension and scholarship serve our state, but they also provide solutions to complex national and global challenges. By fostering economic growth, improving quality of life and advancing knowledge, we strengthen Idaho and communities far beyond. As we integrate AI and other advanced technologies, we are enhancing our ability to analyze complex problems, speed innovation and deliver targeted solutions. Through our expertise,

outreach and groundbreaking research, we are committed to creating a more resilient, prosperous future for Idaho and the world.

#### Signature initiatives

■ D1. Establish high-impact research focus areas: Continue support in current areas of research strength, while establishing a focus on emerging areas identified through future analysis, peer benchmarking and the potential for impact to the university and the state. Investments in emerging areas will have a demonstrated return on investment for the institution and state, as well as a plan for long-term sustainable solutions.

- D2. Invest in research infrastructure and support: Build and enhance research infrastructure including a secure research facility, increased computing and capacity for generative AI and updated lab space to support emerging research focus areas. Strengthen the training of post-doctoral scholars and graduate students as partners in the research enterprise.
- D3. Strengthen coordination with industry partners: Build on existing efforts to coordinate internships and applied research across divisions and continue to drive curriculum alignment with major regional and national employers.
- D4. Increase collaborations with Idaho agencies, the Legislature and educational institutions to serve Idaho: Identify, pursue and track partnerships and initiatives that align with funding sources and make progress to solve Idaho's challenges.
- D5. Address Idaho's health care worker shortage: Leverage Idaho IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), MD program and medical research in the state to address the dire shortage of health care providers across Idaho.

 The University of Idaho is the first and only Idaho university to join the top research institutions in the United States after earning R1

- designation in the 2025 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. This classification is the gold standard for research excellence, given to less than 4% of all U.S. higher education institutions, and it recognizes the university for "very high research activity" and its transformative contributions to science, innovation and education.
- Established in 1963, U of I's Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI) is one of the nation's 54 water research and technology centers. IWRRI conducts and directs research to support the water resource needs of the state, the northwest region and the nation.
- Moderate cattle grazing on public lands does not reduce sage-grouse nest success, according to a 10-year University of Idaho study. The findings suggest sage-grouse and cows can coexist on the same land in southern Idaho.
- The University of Idaho and Idaho National Laboratory are deepening collaborative research and development projects toward long-term viability of nuclear power, protecting national security and building a resilient and low-carbon energy future for Idaho and the nation. U of I and INL signed a five-year Strategic Understanding for Premier Education and Research (SUPER), expanding more than 75 years of collaboration focused on advancing the safe, efficient and sustainable use of nuclear energy.



#### U of I professor takes aim at reducing dementia

There are 55 million people worldwide diagnosed with dementia, a number expected to triple by 2050. But what if that rise could be stalled?

Dementia is caused by diseases that destroy nerve cells and brain function. By analyzing public health data and studying brain scan images, University of Idaho professor Thomas Farrer discovered that addressing certain risk factors can lead to a reversal of cognitive decline.

"Alcohol and opioid pain medication abuse is common in middleaged and older adults," Farrer said. "That substance abuse causes cognitive decline. If you were to get the necessary treatments and stop using those drugs, you can see improvement in cognition."









## OPTIMIZE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Operational excellence is the cornerstone of building a strong and resilient workforce while advancing our mission and vision. We are dedicated to creating efficient, data-driven processes that enhance the student and employee experience. This supports informed decision-making and streamlines operations. By responsibly integrating AI and advanced technologies, we will improve access to real-time data, automate routine tasks to free up time for meaningful endeavors and personalize support for students and employees. Through an institutional culture of excellence and continuous improvement, we empower our team to deliver high-quality services that drive student success and strengthen institutional effectiveness.

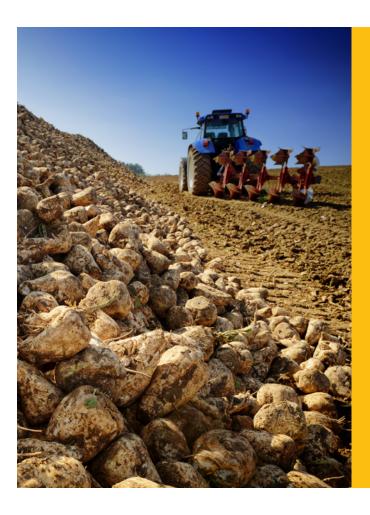
#### Signature initiatives

- E1. Create a data warehouse: Consolidate data across campus and develop consistent quality, access, security and governance protocols to inform best-in-class institutional decision making. The warehouse will provide the foundation for the data integrity necessary to connect systems, automate business processes and leverage emerging technologies to scale efficient operations over time.
- E2. Simplify and automate processes through AI: To improve the work experience for employees, we will review, simplify and automate routine processes to save time and redeploy employee efforts to more meaningful tasks.

- E3. Attract, retain, reward and support the best faculty and staff: Create an ecosystem that supports the signature Vandal experience by attracting and retaining the best employees through a seamless onboarding experience, career pathways, professional growth, mentorship and excellence in their roles.
- E4. Build a culture of efficient collaboration and execution around projects: Standardize project management communication processes, provide support to operational leaders and highlight project performance by centralizing oversight.

The University of Idaho was awarded a \$4.5 million grant leveraging generative artificial intelligence to streamline administrative processes and drive efficiency in research management. The project represents a transformative step toward reducing

- administrative burdens. U of I's project is led by the Office of Sponsored Programs, and is funded through the National Science Foundation's (NSF) GRANTED program. The goal is to enhance the U.S. research enterprise by improving administration support infrastructure, increasing service capacity and broadening participation by developing institutions across the national research landscape.
- In 2023, the College of Science hired four researchers to investigate aspects of sustainable solutions — including questioning fundamental ways we use land and the impacts of tools we wield. They study everything from how we make important chemicals and use antibiotics to how plants use water and how effectively we diagnose disease.



### U of I team using AI to assist Amalgamated Sugar

Sugar beets are a major commodity in Southern Idaho and U of I faculty, students and extension specialists are working with companies like Amalgamated Sugar to use AI in their operations.

Amalgamated Sugar is one of the Treasure Valley's largest employers and their sugar beet processing is a precise science. By measuring the moisture content in the sugar beets, an AI algorithm is able to predict potential issues in the factory as the pulp is processed. The information allows the company to make timely adjustments and avoid costly factory shutdowns and delays thanks to this predictive model.

This is just one of many examples of our Al research helping Idaho agriculture eliminate issues, save money and optimize revenues.

# STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE MEASURES ESTABLISHED BY THE IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STUDENT ACCESS -

U of I annual enrollment (Source: PSR 1 Annual Enrollment Report)

					BENCHMARK	
					FY 2026	FY 2030
Annual enrollment headcount	12,479	13,007	14,025	14,290	14,380	14,470
Annual enrollment FTE	8,812	8,854	9,175	9,561	9,651	9,741

# STUDENT RETENTION

Measured by the percentage of degree seeking first-time, full-time fall-enrolled students who are retained in the following fall on the IPEDS Fall Enrollment Report.

	CURRENT DATA				BENCHMARK	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2026	FY 2030
First-time, full-time fall to fall retention	75%	74%	75%	76%	77%	78%





# STUDENT SUCCESS

Measured by the percentage of degree seeking first-time, full-time freshmen graduating within 150% of time on the IPEDS Graduation Report.

	CURRENT DATA				BENCHMARK	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2026	FY 2030
First-time, full-time 150% graduation rate	59%	61%	61%	57%	59%	61%

# STUDENT AFFORDABILITY -

Measured by the U.S. News & World Report Best Value Schools Rankings

	CURRENT DATA				BENCHMARK	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2026	FY 2030
U.S. News & World Report Best Value Schools Rankings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

# CRITICAL INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR THE IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# POST-GRADUATION SUCCESS

Measured by average starting salary of recent graduates as reported on the First Destination Survey

	CURRENT DATA				BENCHMARK	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2026	FY 2030
Starting salary of recent graduates	\$47,525	\$48,860	\$52,000	\$52,000	\$52,800	\$53,600

## RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

Measured by research and development expenditures as reported on HERD Survey (Dollars in millions)

	CURRENT DATA				BENCHMARK	
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2026	FY 2030
Research expenditures	105.9	115.6	135.9	140.4	130.0	140.0



#### **Definitions**

Headcount Enrollment refers to the total number of students enrolled in a postsecondary institution for a specific reporting period, typically a 12-month period, without counting any student more than once. This means that if a student is enrolled in multiple courses or for multiple terms within that period, they are still counted as one student for headcount purposes.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment is a measure of student enrollment that normalizes student activity to allow for comparisons across institutions. It represents the number of students who would be attending full time if all part-time students were enrolled full time.

A First-time Full-time Student is an undergraduate student who is attending a postsecondary institution for the first time and is enrolled in a full-time course load.

Retention Rate measures the percentage of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students who return to the same institution for the following fall.

150% Graduation Rate refers to the percentage of full-time, first-time degree or certificate-seeking students who complete their program within 150% of the normal time to complete their program of study. For four-year institutions, 150% of normal time is equivalent to taking six years to complete the bachelor's degree or equivalent.















# **VALUES**

Excellence

Respect

Integrity

Perseverance

Sustainable Solutions





# **U OF I VALUES IN ACTION**

# U of I professors earn elite researcher status for contributions to fisheries and global health

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) named two University of Idaho faculty members — Professor Shirley Luckhart and Professor Emerita Christine Moffitt — to its 2024 class of fellows.

The distinguished lifetime honor recognizes individuals whose efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications are scientifically or socially distinguished. AAAS is more than 150 years old and is among the world's largest general scientific societies, publishing the Science family of journals.

"These two scientists represent the best of U of I — curiosity, collaboration and a deep dedication to making a difference in the world," said Torrey Lawrence, U of I's provost and executive vice president. "Their work has not only advanced science but has transformed lives and communities."

Luckhart was recognized for her contributions to malaria research. She has a joint appointment as a professor in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the College of Science.

Moffitt, professor emerita of fishery resources in the College of Natural Resources, was honored by AAAS for her contributions toward understanding fish habitats and the effects of the environment on fish.



#### **Meyer stewards U of I grounds**

Karl Meyer can't help but grin when he talks of his work on the U of I Moscow campus where he is charged with achieving and maintaining several of U of I's sustainable solution goals for long-term campus use.

Meyer's efforts include earning an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program certification for the Vandal golf course that ensures the course protects the environment, conserves water and preserves the natural heritage of the game of golf while enhancing natural areas and wildlife habitats.

Planting indigenous Palouse Prairie vegetation in and around the course is part of the effort and it's where Meyer's expertise flourishes.

Meyer learned about the Palouse Prairie ecosystem as a student at the College of Natural Resources where he earned a degree in natural resource conservation. Afterwards, he worked for the Palouse Land Trust and his devotion to preserve what remained of the prairie was cemented into his psyche.

# CONCLUSION

The University of Idaho's overriding success over the past half decade sets the stage for a promising future. The 2026-2030 Strategic Plan provides distinct priorities and clear direction as the university aims to deliver on its land grant mission.

The university intends to invest in executing the plan, backing strategic priorities and supporting units to carry out their respective roles within the plan. Through the use of AI and technology, the university will become more efficient and effective, while equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in the new economy.

As Idaho's R1 research institution, U of I is well positioned to lead our state through the last half of the decade and beyond.







