



**University of Idaho**

Office of the President

**TO:** University of Idaho Faculty, Staff and Students  
**FROM:** Chuck Staben, President  
**DATE:** April 19, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** State Board of Education Approves Athletics Waiver

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It has been an emotional week for many Vandals as the reality of the budget deficit in athletics has taken hold. I assure you, the issue is not new, nor is the discussion of how to navigate it. During a year-long discussion we developed and presented to a committee of the State Board of Education a different way of accounting for revenue, emphasizing that athletics provides an incentive for students to come to U of I and stay at U of I, participating in something they love.

The Idaho State Board of Education today approved a waiver of the policy that prohibits athletics from expending more than a specified amount of general education funds on athletics. This waiver allows us time to address athletics budget challenges and to work with the State Board of Education to develop a long-term solution, supported in policy, that can provide optimal benefit to our student-athletes and to our students.

This waiver takes the immediate reduction of sports off the table as we collaborate with the board on a path forward. That discussion will happen over the next few months and we hope will include consideration of a more holistic view of accounting for overall institutional revenue generated by athletics.

That broader approach could include growing athletic opportunities by adding low-cost and high-interest sports such as women's triathlon, men's swimming, and rifle. Any decision to add sports will be made in collaboration with the Idaho State Board of Education as it reviews its policies. We will also work with the NCAA and Big Sky Conference to ensure we comply with the policies of each as well as with federal Title IX policy.

The opportunities for our students under this new strategy are great. U of I athletics is incredibly important to a residential campus. It is one of many ways our students, as well as our alumni and friends, engage with the university. As we grow our methods of recruitment and focus on retention, providing positive experiences through participation in sports is one compelling way to accomplish this.

It continues to be my goal, and the goal of all at U of I, to provide the best possible experience for all our students, athletes or not, and create appealing ways to be involved in our Vandal community.

*Chuck Staben*  
*President*

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