



Idaho Joint Democratic Caucus House and Senate

Dr. Marlene Tromp, President
Boise State University
1910 University Drive,
Boise, Idaho 83725

Dear President Tromp,

Congratulations on your new position and welcome to Idaho! Your commitment to higher education will continue Boise State University's growth and academic trajectory by improving access, increasing academic achievement, and ensuring every student feels welcome and safe. In fact, Idahoans value the safety and security of our citizens. Your commitment to championing diversity at Boise State University is a reflection of those Idaho values.

Idahoans also value affordable access to life-long learning opportunities. This responsibility is shared between the legislature and Idaho's institutions of higher learning. We are proud that our institutions are doing their part. Idaho's higher education institutions create welcoming environments to serve students from diverse backgrounds who are striving for a better life and more opportunity. This is the "Idaho way."

Traditionally, Idaho is a place where all people come to live a high-quality life. And, colleges like Boise State University helps our citizens (present and future) achieve security for their families by ensuring equal access to world-class educational opportunities and by reducing obstacles for underserved communities.

Multicultural events including the Pow Wow, Rainbow Graduation, Black Graduation, and Project Dream celebrate diversity and drive academic success. Graduate fellowships for marginalized populations reward hard working community members while recognizing the need to close socioeconomic disparities.

Ending gender-based violence is a goal every Idahoan shares, young and old. Boise State University is doing its part by creating a community-coordinated response team equipped to address situations on campus that need care and attention. Additionally, sexual misconduct occurs across campus populations, and proposals like the LGBTQIA+ sexual misconduct prevention program will reduce sexual violence on campus.

Idahoans value fairness. Eliminating hiring biases of any kind is clearly an Idaho value. We applaud the university for taking steps to create fair, unbiased processes at every level. Graduate school preparation courses increase achievement and retention. Underserved students have a disproportionately high dropout rate, and their success is critical to our future. An Idaho value is to help them succeed.

We welcome you to Idaho's higher education system; one that we value. Please carry on Idaho's tradition of providing world-class educational opportunities to Idahoans so that they may ensure the security of their families and live a high-quality life regardless of their background. Exclusion won't make college more affordable, but it will destabilize our economy and threaten our quality of life. Increasing accessibility and making college more affordable will tear down barriers.

Because of the legislature's neglect, tuition costs are rising. You and your colleagues are doing the hard work necessary to increase educational attainment under challenging circumstances. While some Majority legislators don't see the need to effectively fund higher education, our educational leaders, like you, continue to demonstrate creativity in the quest to keep college affordable. Here are just a few worth celebrating:

- Tuition assistance for military members
- Scholarships for undergraduates and graduates that reward students who have high academic achievements (high school GPA, high ACT or SAT scores, etc.)
- A variety of private scholarships through the university that serve to decrease tuition through numerous qualifications
- A program targeted at rural Idahoans that allows for monthly payments toward a reduced-price tuition
- Price lock for students committed to finishing in 4 years

We could keep listing programs that Idaho's universities are implementing to make college more affordable but, to us, it is clear that you are all working incredibly hard to make sure that anyone who wants an education, gets an education.

For our part, we pledge to do everything possible to end the systemic, long-term defunding of higher education. After years of substantially underfunding higher education's budget, our colleagues are now telling you what programs you should and should not offer. Our caucus understands the importance of higher education for ALL students. We appreciate Boise State University's efforts to maximize educational outcomes while ensuring equal and diverse access to Idahoans.

In fact, Idaho is depending on you to develop a world class workforce and an engaged citizenry. We stand steadfast in support of any and all efforts to expand educational opportunities to every Idahoan and look forward to the good you will do for Idaho.

Thank you for all your hard work and welcome to our state.

Sincerely,

Representative Mat Erpelding, District 19, House Minority Leader
Representative Ilana Rubel, District 18, Assistant House Minority Leader
Representative Elaine Smith, District 29, House Minority Caucus Chair
Representative Jake Ellis, District 15
Representative Steve Berch, District 15
Representative Rob Mason, District 16
Representative John McCrostie, District 16
Representative Sue Chew, District 17
Representative John Gannon, District 17
Representative Brooke Green, District 18
Representative Melissa Wintrow, District 19
Representative Muffy Davis, District 26
Representative Sally Toone, District 26
Representative Chris Abernathy, District 29

Senator Michelle Stennett, District 26, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Cherie Buckner-Webb, District 19, Assistant Senate Minority Leader
Senator Maryanne Jordan, District 17, Senate Minority Caucus Chair
Senator David Nelson, District 5
Senator Grant Burgoyne, District 16
Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, District 18
Senator Mark Nye, District 29

CC:

Office of the State Board of Education

Dr. C. Scott Green, President, University of Idaho

Dr. Kevin Satterlee, President, Idaho State University

Dr. Cynthia Pemberton, President, Lewis-Clark State College Dr. Richard MacLennan,
president, North Idaho College

Dr. Bert Glandon, President, College of Western Idaho

Dr. Jeff Fox, President, College of Southern Idaho

Dr. Rick Aman, President, College of Eastern Idaho