



Idaho State University

Welcome Back, Faculty!

Dear Faculty,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you back to the first week of classes!

Four months ago when we started planning for the fall term, we didn't know what to expect. We had the goal of providing students with a face-to-face learning experience while, at the same time, protecting the campus community from COVID-19. It has taken a significant amount of work on everyone's behalf to achieve that goal, and I am so proud of our faculty for their perseverance, energy and innovation. We have provided unprecedented flexibility to our campus during a time of great disruption, and we are able to continue our mission because the Bengal Family met the challenge.

The first week of classes is always an exciting time for faculty and students. Adjusting to a new daily rhythm, getting to know one another and understanding expectations, and transitioning to a new environment all create hope and anxiety. Students are eager to learn, and there is a buzz in the air as they return to campus. We will remember this semester for the rest of our lives due to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please take a moment to do something special for yourself this week.

This semester, more than ever, it will be important to help students connect in class and with each other. To help faculty and students engage and have a successful semester, the Program for Instructional Effectiveness (PIE) produced a document that provides faculty with strategies to successfully build classroom connections in the first four weeks of class. Based on Joshua Eyster's (2018) theory of social pedagogy, these strategies help to create a social classroom environment that relies on (1) cultivating a sense of connection, (2) establishing a classroom organization that encourages learning and positive interaction, and (3) serving as intellectual models for our students to encourage a vibrant learning environment. I highly encourage you to check it out, and you can find the document [here](#).

The Roaring Back committees have created multiple tools to support you this semester. Please look through the [ISU Roaring Back website](#), especially the section with frequently asked questions, and review the [Operational Levels](#). Safety remains our number one commitment and goal. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to my office.

Happy first week of classes, and welcome back, Bengals!

—Laura

Laura Woodworth-Ney
Executive Vice President and Provost

“Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good.”

—Elizabeth Edwards