



Higher Education Connector Training: Phase 1



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENDED STUDIES

Developed by

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Idaho Educational Partnership for the

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Program Overview

The Idaho Learning Partnership Program’s mission is to develop a network of library staff who can expand awareness of educational opportunities for those living in Idaho’s rural communities.

Through this network, Idaho’s rural residents will ultimately enhance their career options and economic opportunities. This Program will assist you as a “higher education Connector,” to increase awareness of higher education programs, facilitate basic advising, and function as a local resource for veterans, parents, traditional students, nontraditional students, and underrepresented residents of rural Idaho.

This training is strategically designed to ensure all Connectors are able to guide community members using current data, best practices, information specific to individuals’ circumstances, and consistent delivery of high quality services.

Design

The program is delivered in 3 Phases

- **Module 1: Understanding Higher Education**
- **Module 2: Higher Education in Your Community**
- **Module 3: The Unique Opportunities of Each University**

Phase 1 - Understanding Higher Education

Welcome to Phase 1 of the Higher Education Connector Training! We are excited you've decided to become a Connector/mentor in your community. This training will give you the tools and resources necessary for you to guide others in your community to start their Higher Education path.

Class Mission

To train Higher Education Connectors in Idaho communities to help guide individuals seeking higher educational opportunities within the Idaho university system

By the end of Phase 1 you will be able to:

- **Summarize** the program's mission- What is a Higher Educational Connector?
- **Compare** the different types of opportunities available throughout Idaho and support available to rural communities
- **Interpret** the different policies related to admissions criteria and financial aid available
- **Employ** the above skills and engage with the community and have meaningful conversations about higher education

Introductions

What comes to mind when you hear the word “Connector?”

Higher Education Connectors

Higher Education Connectors are forward-thinking individuals who are trained on higher education policies and practices. They act as a guide within their communities and assist community members to start and/or continue working on their higher education goals.

Characteristics of a Higher Education Connector

- Excited _____
- Passionate _____
- Attentive _____
- Knowledgeable _____
- A Problem-solver _____
- Capable _____

The “Why”

Why is your role as Higher Education Connector important?

What is a Degree?

A degree is a _____ given to students of a higher learning institution who have _____ the requirements in a specific area(s)

Types of Degrees

Associates

- Associate of Arts (A.A.)
- Associate of Science (A.S.)
- Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S)

Bachelors

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.)
- Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)

Next respond to the scenario on the slide:

Types of Institutions

- 2-Year/Community Colleges
- 4-Year Institutions
- Private vs. Public Institutions

Accreditation - What is it?

“The goal of accreditation is to ensure that the education provided by institutions and/or programs of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.” Source: U.S. Department of Education

“Institutions and/or programs that request an agency's evaluation and that meet an agency's criteria are then ‘accredited’ by that agency.” Source: U.S. Department of Education

Types of Accreditation

- Regional Accreditation
- National Accreditation
- Programmatic

Higher Education in Idaho

“The role of Idaho’s public higher education institutions is to provide a wide variety of educational, training, research, continuing education and service programs to meet personal and professional needs of Idaho citizens and employers.” Source: Idaho State Board of Education, 2018

Institutions Overseen by the Idaho State Board of Education

Boise State University College of Southern Idaho College of Eastern Idaho College of Western Idaho	Idaho State University Lewis-Clark State College North Idaho College University of Idaho
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Let’s explore

Select an institution, find a major, certificate, or minor, and find the following:

1. Admissions Criteria
2. How many years or credits to complete
3. Cost

Admissions Criteria

- Community Colleges

- Idaho Universities

Components of a Degree

- General Education
- Elective Courses
- Core Courses
- Minimum Credit Requirements
 - B.A., B.S. or B.A.S. = 120 credits minimum
 - A.A., A.S., or A.A.S. = 60 credits minimum

Economics of a Degree

- College is worth more today
- There is a cost of not going
- Those who go believe it was worth it
- Those who go have experience greater job satisfaction
- It is an investment that positively impacts others

Funding Opportunities

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Others?

Let's Review

So far we've learned and discussed...

- Why this program important to you and your community
- What a degree is and its types
- The various institutions and accreditation standards
- The different Idaho institutions
- The components of a degree
- Basic admissions criteria
- The economics of a degree

Let's Practice

Scenario 1 Dewey

Dewey Deci attended Brigham Young University back in the 1980's where he earned about 74 credits. He works full-time and is married, and has three teenage kids. He wants to advance in his job, but needs a degree to apply for any management level positions. He's thinking about going back to school, but doesn't know what degree he should look into or where to start. He would like to complete a degree as fast as possible and doesn't have a preference on the type of degree.

Think about:

What would you suggest?

What is one important piece of information you could give Dewey?

Scenario 2 Charlotte

Charlotte is a 32-year old Administrative Assistant caught in the web working at the local insurance agency for the past 10 years. She's looking for a career change. Charlotte is a single mother and has a supportive family. She hasn't attended college previously but did complete high school. Charlotte's main concern is the cost of getting a degree since her budget is already pretty tight.

Think about:

What would you suggest?

What is one important piece of information you could give Charlotte?

Next Steps

- **Marketing – Spreading the Word (See Appendix B)**
- **Phase 2: Resources and Strategies**

APPENDIX

Appendix B

Spreading the Word in Your Community

As Higher Education Connectors, one of your mandates is to increase awareness of higher education programs, facilitate basic advising, and function as a local resource for veterans, parents, traditional students, nontraditional students, and underrepresented residents of rural Idaho. To help you increase awareness, we've created some guidelines.

Messaging framework

A messaging framework helps explain the purpose and focus of the program by understanding who our target audience is and communicating to their needs. As you plan any events or plan your social media campaigns, keep this “Framework” in mind.

Target Audience – Who are they?

The target audience for the Idaho Learning Partnership Program is Idaho residents living in rural communities. This audience may also share one or more of the following characteristics:

- Individuals with some college but no degree
- Individuals with no college experience
- First-generation individuals (i.e., one or more parents/guardians did not complete a four-year degree)
- Working individuals
- Individuals with families (spouse, children, and/or extended family members in the home)
- Veterans and current service members

What experiences might they have in common?

What are some of the educational experiences and/or roadblocks to their educational goals.

- Having to leave college for personal reasons (e.g., having a baby, military deployment)
- Having to leave college for financial reasons (e.g., needing to work to support a family)
- Having to leave college for academic reasons (e.g., poor academic performance)
- Never having been to college before
- Fear of not being able to balance work, life, and other commitments while in school
- Fear of not being able to afford school
- Fear of student debt
- Fear of not being able to perform academically
- Fear of being “too old” to go back to school
- Fear of the cost of a degree not being “worth it”
- Motivated to graduate to fulfill a personal goal
- Motivated to graduate to set an example for their family
- Motivated to graduate to improve career options and/or opportunities for advancement
- Motivated to graduate to change careers
- Motivated to graduate to better contribute to their community and/or family

The Key Message We Want to Get Across

Idaho Learning Partnership Program empowers library staff to help rural Idahoans learn more about Idaho's higher education opportunities.

The Values that Guide Learning Partnership Program

- **Nonjudgmental:** *The Idaho Learning Partnership Program is nonjudgmental:* Program Connector and materials do not judge community members' previous educational experience(s) or current life situation(s); instead, they focus on helping individuals pursue their future educational and career goals.
- **Supportive:** *The Idaho Learning Partnership Program is supportive.* Connectors in the program deliver information, programs, and other resources in a helpful, friendly, and warm way.
- **Idaho centric:** *The Idaho Learning Partnership Program is Idaho centric.* The Program and its Connectors will present information on Idaho's higher education opportunities that is directly and uniquely relevant to rural Idahoans.
- **Individualized:** *The Idaho Learning Partnership Program is individualized.* When Idaho's rural residents interact with the Program, the advice and resources they receive will be specific to their individual goals, challenges, and life circumstances.
- **Reliable:** *The Idaho Learning Partnership Program is reliable.* Individuals will come to depend on the Program's information and resources as consistently accurate, current, relevant, and helpful.

Social media

Each library, community organization, or other resource will develop their own unique style of posts to create, how often to post, and what kinds of materials to share. This is all perfectly fine; the content should look like it comes from your individual library or organization. This toolkit has been created in an effort to keep program participants' social media efforts relatively similar--but not exactly the same. These resources can help make your efforts more strategic and consistent. The toolkit essentially provides some context in which you can create your own social media plan and activity.

Events

-You know best what your community would like to see in events. We encourage you to make an annual plan for events, hosting at least one per quarter.

How to plan campaigns

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about social media is that it should be a means, not an end, to a goal for your organization. For example, your goal should not be to post three times a week. Instead, your goal could be to increase awareness about and attendance at an upcoming event. In order to do that, you may decide to post three times a week prior to the event. It is always important to keep social media content and strategy on topic, engaging, and useful to your audience. Social media should be a means by which you reach your goals, not a goal in and of itself.

Content Themes	Description	Code	Example
Deadline	Post notifies audience of an upcoming deadline or time-specific event.	D	Boise State's application deadline is Friday, January 1. We're here to help answer questions, submit forms, and otherwise assist!
Engagement	Post encourages engagement of audience by asking for stories to be shared, advice to be given, a question to be answered, a quiz to be taken, etc.	E	What's the main motivating factor behind your desire to explore earning your degree or certificate? Family? New job? Better options? We love hearing from you so we know how we can best help!
Fun	Posts that add a spirit of play. These should still be directly related to program goals and identity.	F	Learning about your college options is extra cozy today! Visit between 2:00 and 4:00 to talk to our librarians and hang out with these two adorable service dogs, Jake and Max.
Informative	Posts that share information relevant to the target audience.	I	Did you know you don't have to decide what you want to major in before you begin your college journey? We can help you figure out which degree program might be a smart fit for you.
Lift	Posts that highlight something positive--a success story, a celebration, a milestone, an important date, or another accomplishment.	L	Sometimes, it's the little accomplishments that are truly the most meaningful. A community member came by today to show us his new college ID card. It's never too late to go back to school and pursue your dreams! Congrats, Joseph!
Relationships	Posts that build relationships with key partners and community members.	P	The library staff really enjoyed meeting with ABC Nonprofit today. What a great resource for our community! Learn more about them at (url).
Resources	Post shares an internal or external resource that can be helpful for the audience.	R	Did you know the Idaho State Board of Education has a list of scholarships? Check 'em out at https://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/ .

Spotlight	Post shares a profile, story, or other information that highlights a person, program, institution, or other resource.	S	You may know Maddie Johnson as a helpful volunteer when you come to visit. But did you know she just returned to school, too? Come on by to talk to her about what taking online college classes is really like and whether it's a good fit for you.
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Recommended Hashtags

The following hashtags can be helpful in connecting your posts to bigger conversations and a wider audience. You may also want to explore what hashtags are being used in your local community (e.g., name of your city, name of your county).

Idaho-specific	General	Financial
#idedu	#highered	#FAFSA
#Idaho	#FAFSA	#FormYourFuture
#BoiseState	#college	#financialaid
#WeBringTheBlueToYou	#IApplied	#scholarship
#UIdaho	#students	#scholarships
#GoVandals	#student	#grants
#IdahoState	#education	
#LCState	#postsecondary	
#TheWarriorWay	#STEM	
#MightyCWI	#GED	
#NIC	#graduate	
#NorthIdahoCollege	#graduation	
#NorthIdaho	#classof2020 (etc.)	
#NextSteps	#school	
	#study	
	#studying	
	#finals	