



# HERE WE HAVE IDAHO

A State Report Card on Public Higher Education

American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
with the Idaho Freedom Foundation



## Here We Have Idaho

You've heard of the wonders our land does possess,  
Its beautiful valleys and hills,  
The majestic forest where nature abounds,  
We love every nook and rill.

And here we have Idaho  
Winning her way to fame.  
Silver and gold in the sunlight blaze,  
And romance lies in her name.

Singing, we're singing of you,  
Ah, proudly too. All our lives thru,  
We'll go singing, singing of you,  
Singing of Idaho.

There's truly one state in this great land of ours,  
Where ideals can be realized.  
The pioneers made it so for you and me,  
A legacy we'll always prize.

*Idaho State Song: Written by McKinley Helm and Albert J. Tompkins, Composed by Sallie Hume-Douglas*

# **HERE WE HAVE IDAHO**

A State Report Card on Public Higher Education

American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
with the Idaho Freedom Foundation

January 2011

## **Acknowledgments**

This report was prepared by the staff of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, primarily by Heather Lakemacher and Eric Markley, in conjunction with the Idaho Freedom Foundation. ACTA thanks the staff members of IFF for their assistance.

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is an independent non-profit dedicated to academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Since its founding in 1995, ACTA has counseled boards, educated the public, and published reports about such issues as good governance, historical literacy, core curricula, the free exchange of ideas, and accreditation. ACTA has previously published *At a Crossroads: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Minnesota*, *For the People: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Illinois*, *Show Me: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Missouri*, *Shining the Light: A Report Card on Georgia's System of Public Higher Education*, and *Governance in the Public Interest: A Case Study of the University of North Carolina System*, among other state-focused reports.

The Idaho Freedom Foundation is a non-profit educational and research organization that develops and advocates the principles of individual liberty, personal responsibility, private property rights, economic freedom, and limited government. The Foundation generates research and data on key issues and recommends the findings to opinion leaders, policymakers, media and the citizens of Idaho. For further information, please contact:

### **American Council of Trustees and Alumni**

1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202.467.6787

Fax: 202.467.6784

[www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org) • [info@goacta.org](mailto:info@goacta.org)

### **Idaho Freedom Foundation, Inc.**

P.O. Box 2801

Boise, ID 83701

Phone: 208.467.9257

Fax: 208.965.8111

[www.idahofreedom.net](http://www.idahofreedom.net) • [wayne@idahofreedom.net](mailto:wayne@idahofreedom.net)

# Contents

	1
INTRODUCTION	
	3
CHAPTER I GENERAL EDUCATION	
	7
CHAPTER II INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY	
	13
CHAPTER III GOVERNANCE	
BOARD STRUCTURE AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATIONS	
BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
	27
CHAPTER IV COST AND EFFECTIVENESS	
	38
APPENDIX A SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES	
	39
APPENDIX B STUDENT SURVEY METHODOLOGY	



## Introduction

**THE STATE SONG “HERE WE HAVE IDAHO” GETS IT RIGHT.** Proclaiming the joys and benefits of the Gem State, it depicts a state where “ideals can be realized” and where citizens will have a legacy to prize. Surely, a strong educational system is central to realizing those ideals, and it is with that goal in mind that ACTA offers this report, the sixth in a series of report cards on state higher education systems around the country.

This report examines Idaho’s undergraduate-degree-granting colleges and universities. We focus on what students are learning (the curriculum), whether the marketplace of ideas is vibrant (intellectual diversity), how the universities are run (governance), and what a college education costs (affordability). In each case, we evaluate Idaho institutions in light of issues, studies, and national best practices, awarding a Passing or Failing grade.

Are students learning the things they need to know? Is there a healthy exchange of ideas? Are trustees upholding the public trust? Are taxpayers getting good value for their money? These are the kinds of questions to which the people of Idaho deserve answers. It is the goal of this report card to provide answers and to help Idaho’s leaders—including the governor, the state legislature, and the trustees—find the way forward at this challenging time. Our hope is to help Idaho become a national standard bearer for excellence, accountability, and efficiency in higher education.

The first section focuses on **general education**—those courses, usually completed within the first two years of a bachelor’s degree program, that ensure a broad education and college-level skills critical to workforce participation. We found that Idaho’s institutions of higher education neglect many foundational subjects. Some campuses require crucial subjects such as mathematics, English composition, literature, natural science, and foreign language, but others do not; and none of Idaho’s institutions requires a foundational class in economics or U.S. government or history.

In the second section, we focus on **intellectual diversity**, a value that lies at the very heart of the educational enterprise. In the simplest terms, intellectual diversity means the free exchange of ideas. According to a scientific survey of students we commissioned, it is in trouble in Idaho. Students report violations of professional standards—including perceived pressure to agree with

professors' views in order to get a good grade—and exhibit a lack of awareness of their rights and how to ensure those rights are respected. Many institutions across the country have taken responsible action in recent years to guarantee intellectual pluralism. Idaho's institutions should join them.

The third section turns to **governance** and actions by the Idaho State Board of Education. Board members are responsible for the academic and financial well-being of the state's institutions and for safeguarding the public interest. Our examination of board minutes and other publicly available materials suggests that, generally, the board has done a satisfactory job of following best practices in governance structure. The board meets regularly, discusses substantive issues, and has formulated long-term plans. However, there is room for improvement in their handling of such practical matters as the presidential hiring process, general education, intellectual diversity, and cost—and we hope the board will take action.

Finally, we take a look at **cost and effectiveness**. This is an area of real concern. On average, increases in tuition and fees at the institutions we assessed outstripped inflation by nearly 20 percent between 2004 and 2009—and too much of that increase is going to administrative costs, instead of instruction. Measures of effectiveness reveal an alarming picture and the need for greater focus on educational quality: Three of Idaho's institutions posted a six-year graduation rate of 30 percent or lower, well below the national average. One in three students is dropping out after just one year of college.

Idahoans depend on their universities to ensure students have a functional knowledge of core subjects. They depend on these universities to be places where ideas and opinions are expressed freely and explored with academic integrity. And they depend on the Board of Education to govern prudently and to use resources wisely so that, in the words of the state song, “ideals can be realized” and Idahoans can be ensured a legacy of informed citizenship and lifelong learning.

Our hope is that Idaho's leaders—including the governor, the state legislature, and board—will use this report card toward those important ends.

Anne D. Neal  
 President  
 American Council of Trustees and Alumni



CHAPTER I:

Overall Grade	<b>GENERAL EDUCATION</b>
<b>F</b>	Institutions have solid general education requirements in some core subjects. However, large numbers of Idaho students can graduate without a strong base of knowledge in Literature, U.S. Government or History, and Economics.

**“GENERAL EDUCATION” OR THE “CORE CURRICULUM”** refers to required undergraduate courses outside the student’s specialization or major. Traditionally, these courses have been subject to two limits. First, they are relatively few in number, and, second, they are general in scope. These courses—usually completed within the first two years of a bachelor’s degree program and typically comprising about a third of the total number of undergraduate credit hours—are supposed to ensure a common intellectual background, exposure to a wide range of disciplines, a core of fundamental knowledge, and college-level skills in areas critical to good citizenship, workforce participation, and lifelong learning.

To assess the state of general education in Idaho, we looked at all four of Idaho’s public four-year institutions: Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho. Using the most recent online course catalogs for the university, we examined whether these institutions require their students to take general education courses in seven key subjects: Composition, Literature, Foreign Language, U.S. Government or History, Economics, Mathematics, and Natural or Physical Science. Of course, arguments can be made for requiring any number of additional topics, but a core curriculum that fails to require most of these seven key subjects will not satisfy the basic demands of general education.

Simply having requirements called Literature or Mathematics does not in fact mean that students will study those subjects in a manner appropriate for general education purposes. Many colleges give the appearance of providing a core curriculum because they require students to take courses in several subject areas other than their major—often called “distribution requirements.” However, within each subject area, it is not uncommon for students to have dozens or even hundreds of courses from which to choose—many of them

on narrow or trendy subject matters. Therefore, to be counted in this report, a course must be a true general education course—broad in scope, exposing the student to the rich array of material that exemplifies the subject. Furthermore, if a course that qualifies for credit were one of several options that also included courses that do not meet the specifications for general education credit, the institution did not receive credit for the subject. For further details on the criteria used, please see Appendix A.

After researching the institutions, we assigned a Passing (P) or Failing (F) grade for each subject. Every Idaho graduate should ideally be exposed to all of the broad areas outlined above; however, if a majority of the institutions surveyed (three or more) required the subject, a grade of P was awarded to the state. If two or fewer of the institutions surveyed required the subject, a grade of F was assigned.

On the whole, the state of Idaho earned an F, and only one out of the four schools surveyed required a majority of the seven core subjects.

<b>GENERAL EDUCATION</b>	
Composition	<b>F</b>
Literature	<b>F</b>
Language	<b>F</b>
U.S. Government or History	<b>F</b>
Economics	<b>F</b>
Mathematics	<b>F</b>
Natural or Physical Science	<b>P</b>
<b>OVERALL GRADE:</b>	<b>F</b>

Commendably, three of the four institutions received credit for Science. However, at least two of the four did not receive credit in Composition, Literature, Foreign Language, and Mathematics, and not a single one received credit for U.S. Government or History or for Economics. While it is possible for students to study these subjects, exemptions, as well as the number and variety of courses that satisfy existing distribution requirements make it easy for students to graduate with large gaps in their knowledge.

The only institution surveyed that required a majority of the seven subjects was LCSC. It requires solid coursework in Composition, Literature, Mathematics, and Natural or Physical Science. However, it failed to require

coursework in U.S. Government or History and in Economics. LCSC does require students receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree to study four semesters of Foreign Language. However, most majors at LCSC offer students the option of earning a Bachelor of Science degree, thus students can avoid the language requirement.

BSU has the weakest general education program in the state. Students may exempt out of Composition. The rest of the subjects are combined into several large distribution categories. Students select a handful of classes from each with only minimal guidance provided by the curricular structure. The result is that there is not a single course that BSU requires of all its students—and therefore no material that a BSU student will be certain to learn.

In order to be good stewards of their resources and to ensure their students acquire the knowledge they need, Idaho public institutions should proceed on two fronts. First, they should retain the excellent requirements they already have. Second, they should strengthen their other requirements so that students will achieve intermediate competency in foreign language, learn basic economic principles, and take broad courses in literature and U.S. government or history.

The Board of Education's 1996 Articulation Policy provides guidance to Idaho higher education regarding academic expectations for general education. Regrettably, the policy allows schools to substitute vague distribution requirements in place of specific core requirements in certain key academic areas. Its criteria for fulfilling the mathematics requirement, however, are rigorous, and Idaho's institutions would do well to follow them carefully.

Notably, in recent years, BSU, ISU, and UI have all had “common reading” programs, in which all freshmen were required to read the same book in order to create a campus-wide shared learning experience. This is a laudable practice and can be expanded. A coherent core ensures students study a common set of foundational subjects, providing a shared learning experience that is far greater than a single book.

Trustees, given their ultimate responsibility to the people of Idaho, can and should play a central role in this process.

The following chart summarizes our research.

## GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS BY INSTITUTION

INSTITUTION	Gov/						
	Comp	Lit	Lang	Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
Boise State University							
Idaho State University	√		√				√
Lewis-Clark State College	√	√				√	√
University of Idaho			√			√	√
<b>GRADES</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>

*Notes:*

*Boise State University: No credit given for Composition because students may test out of the English Composition requirement through SAT or ACT scores. No credit given for Mathematics because the Mathematics section of the Natural Science and Mathematics requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the Natural Science and Mathematics requirement may be satisfied by courses with little science content.*

*Idaho State University: No credit given for U.S. Government or History because the Goal 9 requirement includes, but does not specifically require, a survey in American government or history. No credit given for Mathematics because the Goal 3 requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.*

*University of Idaho: No credit given for Composition because students can test out of the entire Written English requirement through SAT or ACT scores.*

CHAPTER II:

Overall Grade	<b>INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY</b>
<b>F</b>	Despite well-advertised commitments to academic freedom and free expression, speech codes, recent freedom of expression controversies, and survey results suggest that the intellectual atmosphere on Idaho’s campuses is less than ideal.

**“IN ANY EDUCATION OF QUALITY**, students encounter an abundance of intellectual diversity.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the position of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)—a respected national organization whose members include the University of Idaho—which issued this statement in 2006.

In order to experience intellectual diversity, the AAC&U explained, students should be exposed to “new knowledge, different perspectives, competing ideas, and alternative claims of truth.” They should learn to think critically—so that they understand “the inappropriateness and dangers of indoctrination... see through the distortions of propaganda, and...[can] assess judiciously the persuasiveness of powerful emotional appeals.”<sup>2</sup>

To make this possible, the AAC&U maintains that students “require a safe environment in order to feel free to express their own views.” They “need the freedom to express their ideas publicly as well as repeated opportunities to explore a wide range of insights and perspectives.” And as part of this process, the AAC&U noted, faculty play a critical role in helping students to “form their own grounded judgments.”<sup>3</sup>

These sentiments are not new. In 1940, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) wrote in its Statement of Principles that faculty “should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject,”<sup>4</sup> and its 1915 Declaration of Principles is even more to the point:

---

1 Association of American Colleges & Universities, “Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility,” a statement from the Board of Directors (2006), 2.  
 2 Ibid, 2-3.  
 3 Ibid.  
 4 American Association of University Professors, “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments” <[http://www.higher-ed.org/resources/AAUP\\_1940stat.htm](http://www.higher-ed.org/resources/AAUP_1940stat.htm)>.

The teacher ought also to be especially on his guard against taking unfair advantage of the student's immaturity by indoctrinating him with the teacher's own opinions before the student has had an opportunity fairly to examine other opinions upon the matters of question, and before he has sufficient knowledge and ripeness in judgment to be entitled to form any definitive opinion of his own. It is not the least service which a college or university may render to those under its instruction, to habituate them to looking not only patiently but methodically on both sides, before adopting any conclusion upon controverted issues.<sup>5</sup>

All of Idaho's public institutions have published statements regarding students' rights to free expression as well as statements indicating that faculty are not permitted to use the classroom as a platform for airing personal views.

For example, the University of Idaho says that, "Students and student associations shall be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express their opinions publicly or privately, subject only to civil and criminal law."<sup>6</sup> Idaho State University says that, "Instructors should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression among their students in their quest for knowledge."<sup>7</sup> And Lewis-Clark State College says that, "Students have the right to exercise their full rights as citizens without interference or fear of College disciplinary action," and that faculty "must insure [sic] students the right to raise relevant issues, doubts, or alternative opinions during classroom discussion without concern for academic sanctions."<sup>8</sup>

Yet there is ongoing controversy over whether Idaho's public universities are honoring these commitments. In the spring of 2010, UI brought disciplinary charges against a student because he "violated the rights of the University community" when his political comments were deemed "statements denigrating an ethnic group." The same student's political speech at a parade led to charges for "shouting hostile and offensive statements" and for "intentionally walking

5 General Report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure (1915), 1 AAUP Bull 17 (1915), cited in *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy*, William W. Van Alstyne, Editor (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 402.

6 "Faculty Staff Handbook," University of Idaho, accessed 22 December 2010 <<http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/fsh/2200.html>>.

7 "Faculty/Staff Handbook," Idaho State University, accessed 22 December 2010 <[http://www.isu.edu/fs-handbook/part6/6\\_10/6\\_10a.html#1](http://www.isu.edu/fs-handbook/part6/6_10/6_10a.html#1)>.

8 "Online Catalog," Lewis-Clark State College, accessed 22 December 2010 <<http://www.lcsc.edu/Catalog/2012/ss/dean.htm>>.

into” a (never-identified) person with intent to intimidate. After civil-liberties groups took notice of the case and got involved, all charges relating to offensive speech and intimidation were eventually dropped.<sup>9</sup>

Another ongoing case concerns the speech rights of faculty. In 2009, Habib Sadid, an award-winning professor of 22 years’ tenure, made comments critical of ISU’s administration. Shortly afterwards, he was suspended, barred from campus, and eventually terminated. Richard Jacobsen, dean of the ISU College of Engineering, indicated that Dr. Sadid was guilty of “insubordination” and “lack of collegiality.”<sup>10</sup> The latter charge—that Sadid had failed to cooperate with his peers—is undercut by the finding of ISU’s Faculty Senate that the actions against Sadid were “without merit.”<sup>11</sup> Sadid’s case has now entered the courts and is currently being appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court. The case is a significant part of a larger conflict between ISU’s faculty and administration, a dispute that has so far led to a vote of no confidence in the provost, and most recently, a no-confidence vote in the president which lost by only a few votes.<sup>12</sup>

To gain further insight, ACTA commissioned the Pert Group, a national firm with offices in Hartford, Kansas City, and Pittsburgh, to perform a survey of students at the state’s flagship university, the University of Idaho. The survey was administered in December 2010.

Mostly, we asked the students questions that correspond to four key indicators of intellectual diversity as outlined by the AAC&U: offering competing ideals, differing perspectives, and alternate claims of truth; teaching students to think critically; offering a safe environment for students; and ensuring professional responsibility in the classroom. In order to assign grades, we used a standard cut-off of 64 percent as a Passing grade (P). If fewer than 36 percent of students reported problems for each indicator, then Idaho received a P. If more than 36 percent reported problems, Idaho received a Failing grade (F) for that indicator.

---

9 “University of Idaho: Student Charged with Discrimination and Harassment for ‘Offensive’ Speech,” The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, accessed 22 December 2010 <<http://www.thefire.org/case/831.html>>.

10 Nick Gier, “The Constitution, the University, and Free Speech,” *New West Politics*, 26 October 2009 <[http://www.newwest.net/topic/article/the\\_constitution\\_the\\_university\\_and\\_free\\_speech/C37/L37/](http://www.newwest.net/topic/article/the_constitution_the_university_and_free_speech/C37/L37/)>.

11 “Resolution Passed by Idaho State University Faculty Senate Regarding Habib Sadid,” *Idaho State Journal*, 9 November 2009 <[http://www.journalnet.com/news/local/article\\_96681c3a-ca37-11de-a4a6-001cc-4c002e0.html](http://www.journalnet.com/news/local/article_96681c3a-ca37-11de-a4a6-001cc-4c002e0.html)>

12 “\$72,415 raised for Habib Sadid case,” *Idaho State Journal*, 30 November 2010 <[http://www.journalnet.com/news/local/article\\_80663f3e-fcbd-11df-a97c-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.journalnet.com/news/local/article_80663f3e-fcbd-11df-a97c-001cc4c002e0.html)>.

ACTA has used similar questions and grading standards for previous report cards on other states. The results for Idaho are summarized in the following table; a methodology report is available in Appendix B. The full results are available online at <http://www.goacta.org/publications/PDFs/IdahoSurveyFull.pdf>.

Overall, the results are troubling. Significant percentages of students reported course readings and panel discussions that are one-sided or unfair, professors injecting politics into class when it was not relevant, and pressure to agree with a professor's views—either concerning the topic at hand or on other issues—in order to get a good grade. Few students reported being aware of procedures in place to lodge a complaint about such concerns, and a substantial number reported that they would feel uncomfortable doing so even if they had a good reason. And while the results indicate that students believe they find a better intellectual atmosphere outside the classroom, over a third of the students believed that the student newspaper would get in trouble if it criticized the administration.

It is also notable that while Idaho students overwhelmingly knew that the First Amendment protects their free-speech rights, they were largely unaware that their campuses had in place restrictive speech codes, which effectively ban certain types of expression. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, which maintains a comprehensive database of such policies, has concluded that restrictive policies are in place at three of Idaho's four public institutions: ISU, LCSC, and UI.<sup>13</sup> Taken together, the evidence indicates that Idaho's public universities need to take steps to ensure a free exchange of ideas—as institutions in Georgia and Missouri have done in response to similarly negative findings.<sup>14</sup>

---

13 "Institutions in Idaho," The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, accessed 22 December 2010 <<http://www.thefire.org/spotlight/states/ID.html>>.

14 The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas: How Trustees Can Advance Intellectual Diversity on Campus*, 2009 <<https://www.goacta.org/publications/downloads/ProtectingFreeExchangeofIdeas.pdf>>, 11-15 ; Phyllis Palmiero, *Shining the Light: A Report Card on Georgia's System of Public Higher Education*, 2008 <<https://www.goacta.org/publications/downloads/GAFinalReport.pdf>>, 7-10; The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *Show Me: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Missouri*, 2008 <<https://www.goacta.org/publications/downloads/ShowMeFinal.pdf>>.



**KEY INDICATORS OF INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY**

<b>OFFERING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, COMPETING IDEAS, AND ALTERNATIVE CLAIMS OF TRUTH</b>	<b>GRADE: F</b>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, some courses have readings that present only one side of a controversial issue.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      57.5 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, some panel discussions and public presentations on social or political issues seem totally one-sided.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      51.8 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, some courses present social or political issues in an unfair and one-sided manner.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      38.2 percent agreed</p>
<b>TEACHING STUDENTS TO THINK CRITICALLY</b>	<b>GRADE: F</b>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, some professors use the classroom to present their personal political views.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      41.3 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, there are courses in which students feel they have to agree with the professor’s social or political views in order to get a good grade.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      35.7 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, there are courses in which students feel they have to agree with the professor’s views on the topic at hand in order to get a good grade.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      43.5 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, some professors frequently comment on politics in class even though it has nothing to do with the course.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      34.4 percent agreed</p>
<b>OFFERING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS</b>	<b>GRADE: P</b>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “On my campus, there are certain topics or viewpoints that are off limits.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      38.4 percent agreed</p>
<p><b>QUESTION</b>                      “Students feel free to state their social or political views through social media, such as Facebook or MySpace, without getting in trouble on my campus.”</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b>                      5.5 percent disagreed</p>

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“On my campus, students feel free to state their social or political views outside the classroom without getting in trouble.”	7.9 percent disagreed

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“On my campus, the student newspaper is free to criticize the university administration without getting in trouble.”	39.9 percent disagreed

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“On my campus, some aspects of freshman orientation programs force students to reveal what they think about controversial social, political, or religious issues.”	21.9 percent agreed

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“On my campus, some aspects of freshman orientation programs tell students what they should think about controversial social, political, or religious issues.”	23.3 percent agreed

---

**ENSURING PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM** **GRADE: F**

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“Do you know the procedure on your campus for lodging a complaint about social, political, or religious bias by a professor?”	83.3 percent said no

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“How comfortable would you feel lodging a complaint about social, political, or religious bias by a professor if you felt you had just cause?”	33.4 percent said somewhat or very uncomfortable

---

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
“Do the student evaluation forms of the faculty at your campus ask about a professor’s social, political, or religious bias?”	67.4 percent said no

---

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

CHAPTER III:

Overall Grade	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Board Structure and Transparency of Operations</b> The State Board of Education is well structured to do its work and is generally transparent in its operations.
<b>I</b>	<b>Board Accomplishments</b> The trustees display an active interest in assessment and a willingness thoughtfully to disagree. However, much work remains to be done to ensure quality and affordability.

**TRUSTEES MUST BE CARETAKERS** of the public interest, ensuring that colleges and universities provide high-quality and affordable education. They need to support their institutions but also be prepared to question the status quo if necessary. Trustees need to work with the president and the administration but should also be able to exercise their authority independently. Even in a world of shared governance, it is ultimately the trustees who are vested with the responsibility for the academic and financial health of their institutions.

The purpose of lay governance in higher education is to bring the viewpoint of informed citizens to bear on the running of the university. However, it is often the case that lay boards do not live up to the promise of effective citizen governance. Some boards simply function as “rubber stamps” for administrative recommendations, while others are actively involved in working with administrators and other constituencies and are willing to exercise the authority needed to make tough choices.

The preeminence of our system of higher education can be ensured only if there is informed leadership from those who are vested with the financial and academic health of our colleges and universities—namely, college and university trustees. This section of the report examines the effectiveness of the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE).

**Part I** examines the effectiveness of the board’s structure and the transparency of its operations, based on elements viewed as effective governance practices by such organizations as Independent Sector, ACTA’s Institute for Effective Governance, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Committee on

Finance of the United States Senate. These metrics include: availability and accessibility of trustees' names and contact information; meeting frequency; member attendance; board size; the board's periodic review of its bylaws and/or policies; member engagement in professional development; transparency of the board's activities and actions; the board's committee structure including its use of an executive committee; the board's role in presidential searches and its assessment of the president; and the board's involvement in the development and monitoring of a long-range plan.

**Part II** examines each board's actual outcomes with particular emphasis on system-wide academic quality and fiscal accountability. Elements examined include actions the board has taken to improve academic quality, assess student learning, and control costs. This part also examines whether the items brought by the administration to the board were ever rejected and whether action items ever received dissenting votes. Both criteria are designed to assess whether board members are asking questions and engaging issues thoughtfully as opposed to simply "rubber-stamping" administrative and staff recommendations.

To summarize, Part I examines how well the board is structured to do its work, while Part II examines what the board has accomplished during a given period.

The analysis covers board actions from July 2008 to November 2010. Board meeting minutes, meeting materials, policies and bylaws, other SBOE documents, and media reports were consulted.

Grading is on a Pass/Fail basis. The board received a Passing grade (P) if its formal actions demonstrated good governance practices. If not, then the board received a Failing grade (F). If the information available did not clearly indicate either, the board received an Incomplete (I).

**PART I: BOARD STRUCTURE AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATIONS**

According to its website, “The Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE) is the policy-making body for all public education in Idaho ... [It] serves as the Board of Trustees for state-sponsored public four year colleges and universities and the Board of Regents for the University of Idaho.” The Idaho Code specifies, “The state board of education shall consist of the state superintendent of public instruction, who shall be an ex officio voting member ... and seven (7) members appointed by the governor, each for a term of five (5) years.” The governor’s appointees must be confirmed by the state senate.

The Idaho Code further specifies, “Appointment to the board shall be made solely upon consideration of the ability of such appointees efficiently to serve the interests of the people, and education, without reference to locality, occupation, party affiliation or religion.”

**Governance**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Names and contact information of board members publicly available and easily accessible	<p><b>To hold a board accountable, the public needs to know and have access to its members.<sup>15</sup></b></p> <p>The website for the board contains the names, photographs, biographies, and current terms of service for all board members. However, the public cannot contact the trustees directly, as in other states, since communications are directed through the Office of the State Board of Education.</p>
<b>Grade: F</b>	
Board meets frequently	<p><b>A board should meet as often as necessary to conduct its business.<sup>16</sup> While the necessary number of meetings to conduct business will vary, meeting regularly, at least quarterly, and calling other meetings as necessary, is a good general practice.</b></p>
<b>Grade: P</b>	<p>The board bylaws state, “The Board holds at least four (4) regular meetings annually,” and “The Board will maintain a 12-month running meeting schedule.” Documents indicate there were 36 meetings during the 29-month period reviewed: 16 regular meetings and 20 non-regular meetings such as retreats, executive sessions, special meetings, and teleconferences.</p>

15 Martin Anderson, *Impostors in the Temple* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1996), 202.

16 *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice: A Guide for Charities and Foundations* (Washington, DC: Panel on the Nonprofit Sector, 2007), 13.

**Governance**

Element	Evaluation
<p>Board members attend regularly</p> <p><b>Grade: P</b></p>	<p><b>A board that meets to conduct business cannot be effective if a majority of the board members are not present or members fail to attend regularly.</b><sup>17</sup></p> <p>The board bylaws state that a quorum—a simple majority of the trustees—must be present in order for the board to conduct business. Although the board governing documents do not outline any procedures for dealing with absences, the Idaho Code does allow the governor to remove a board member for “malfeasance in office or incompetency.” During the period reviewed, attendance at regular board meetings averaged more than 90 percent.</p>
<p>Effective board size</p> <p><b>Grade: P</b></p>	<p><b>While there is no magic number for the size of a governing board, an effectively functioning board should generally be no fewer than seven nor greater than 15.</b><sup>18</sup></p> <p>As outlined previously, the board has eight members. This is an appropriate number of trustees to allow for meaningful discussion and committee work. Having an even number of board members is unusual because of the possibility of split votes. However, the board requires a majority vote in favor for a motion to pass.</p>
<p>Periodic review of bylaws and/or policies</p> <p><b>Grade: P</b></p>	<p><b>Periodic review of bylaws and policies helps boards ensure that they are abiding by the rules they have set for themselves.</b><sup>19</sup></p> <p>The board bylaws delegate responsibility for the “review and revision of Board policies, administrative rules and education-related statutes” to the Planning, Policy and Governmental Affairs Committee. The full board then votes on recommended changes. Both the bylaws and the board policies also outline procedures for amending the respective documents. The policies themselves and meeting minutes reflect periodic revision of the board’s governing documents. This is excellent practice.</p>

17 “Best Practices in University Governance,” expert testimony by ACTA’s Institute for Effective Governance at U.S. Senate Finance Committee Roundtable Discussion, March 3, 2006.

18 “Ensuring Quality Trusteeship in Higher Education,” expert testimony by ACTA at U.S. Senate Finance Committee Roundtable Discussion, March 3, 2006.

19 *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice*, 18.

**Governance  
Element**
**Evaluation**

Pre-service training and/or professional development

**Grade: P**

**Trustees should be oriented in their new role and receive expert advice from inside and outside the institution throughout their board service.**<sup>20</sup>

The board's policies and meeting minutes are silent on formal orientation. In response to a telephone inquiry, a representative in the board's office stated that orientation sessions are held. The meeting documents indicate that two retreats occurred during the period reviewed. Official minutes are not available on the board's website, but the agendas indicate that both retreats had two parts. First, the board was scheduled to meet in executive session to evaluate the university presidents. Second, the board was scheduled to discuss topics such as accreditation, strategic planning, strategic finance, and institutional roles and missions with speakers from outside the university. The board's Master Planning Calendar also indicates that the board performs a self-assessment each September, as required by its Policies and Procedures. Although an explicit orientation policy for new trustees would be consistent with national best practices, the board's regular self-assessments and on-going efforts to hear outside advice merit a Passing grade.

Transparency of board activities and actions

**Grade: I**

**The ability of the public to see how the board operates and what it is doing is a critical element to a board's success.**<sup>21</sup>  
**Transparency helps the board communicate with the university community at large and build trust and confidence in the university's overseers.**

The board gives advance notice online of all of its regular meetings. Regular meeting minutes from 1999 to the present are available on the board's website, and agendas, committee reports, and other supporting documents are generally available. The board's bylaws and policies are also posted on the website.

However, meeting minutes for some special meetings appear to be missing. The board also does not appear consistently to give advance notice online of its special meetings. For these omissions, the board receives an Incomplete.

<sup>20</sup> *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice*, 12.

**Governance  
Element**

**Evaluation**

Functioning committee structure

**For a board to conduct its work effectively and delve into issues in meaningful ways, it should have standing committees with specific roles and duties.<sup>22</sup>**

**Grade: P**

The board bylaws describe specific roles and duties for five committees: Planning, Policy and Governmental Affairs; Instruction, Research and Student Affairs; Business Affairs and Human Resources; Audit; Executive. The board president is responsible for appointing trustees to the committees and for designating one trustee as the committee chairperson. Each committee currently has two to four trustee members. Several of the committees also include an administrative staff member whose work is related to the work of the committee. The bylaws outline that the Audit Committee, which received its board charter during the period reviewed, must include several members “who are familiar with the audit process” but who are not board members or university employees. This intentional effort to seek advice from qualified people outside the institutions is exemplary.

The board bylaws allow for ad hoc committees to be formed at the board’s discretion, and the board does appear to make use of this provision as evidenced by its formation of an Accountability Oversight Committee in February 2010. The bylaws prohibit any committee, whether standing or ad hoc, from acting on behalf of the full board unless that authority has previously been delegated to it. As outlined in the bylaws and evidenced by meeting minutes, the standing committees of the board make regular reports to and request action from the full board during regular meetings.

In addition to its committees, the board is aided in its work by the Office of the State Board of Education. According to the bylaws, these staff members are employed “for the purpose of carrying out the administrative, financial, and coordinating functions required for the effective operation of the institutions and agencies under the governance of the Board. The staff of the Office of the State Board is under the direction of an executive director responsible directly to the Board.” Additionally, meeting

22 “Best Practices in University Governance.”



**Governance**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

minutes indicate that the board reviews the performance of the executive director at the same time it reviews the performance of the institution presidents. Having staff members who are accountable directly to the board is an excellent practice.

Executive Committees

**Grade: P**

**Executive Committees are typically responsible for developing meeting agendas, planning board activities, reviewing compensation and reappointments, and monitoring committee work. In some cases, they also act on emergency or other items when the full board cannot convene. Given the important issues the Executive Committee frequently addresses, it is important that it not represent a quorum so that its actions are not binding on the full board.**<sup>23</sup>

The board has an Executive Committee which, according to the bylaws, is responsible for “discharging [the Board’s] responsibilities ... when it is impracticable for the full Board to meet and act.” The Executive Committee consists of four members, which is less than a quorum, and includes the current board president, vice president, secretary, and the most recent past board president. The board’s executive director—an administrative staff member who reports directly to the board—supports the committee and is responsible for working with the board president to prepare the agenda for each meeting of the full board.

The bylaws prohibit the Executive Committee from acting on matters where authority is expressly reserved to the full board or one of its other standing committees. However, the full board is not required to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee does not appear to maintain meeting minutes. Instead, the executive director is responsible for communicating with board members who are not on the Executive Committee about its actions. To ensure transparency, the board ought to require the Executive Committee either to keep meeting minutes or bring its actions to the full board for ratification, thus ensuring that a good structure is not misused.

23 “Best Practices in University Governance.”

**Governance****Element****Evaluation**

Involvement in presidential search committees

**Grade: F**

**Selecting a president is a board's most important decision. While boards should seek input from higher education's varied constituencies, they should always maintain control over the search process and ultimately the candidates from which they will make their selection. Boards must remember that they hire, fire, and evaluate the chief executive and to delegate or abdicate their most important fiduciary duty is not good governance practice.<sup>24</sup>**

The board conducted a presidential search for the University of Idaho in 2008-09 and is currently conducting a presidential search for Lewis-Clark State College. Press releases indicate that, for UI, the board appointed a presidential search committee comprised of two trustees as committee co-chairs and fourteen campus and community representatives. The committee reviewed resumes and recommended five candidates to the full board. Two candidates then visited the campuses and interviewed with the full board before the board voted to hire Dr. Duane Nellis.

For LCSC, press releases indicate that the board chose not to hire a search firm because of budgetary concerns. The board instead appointed a trustee to chair a presidential search committee. Another current trustee and a former trustee were also appointed to the committee along with eight other campus representatives. According to the board's website, the committee is currently reviewing resumes and "is charged with delivering a list of five finalists to the Board. The Board will determine how many of the five will be interviewed and brought in for campus visits."

The board's decision not to hire a search firm and to have trustees on the presidential search committees reflects the trustees' awareness of the importance of the search process. However, having trustees compose only a small minority of the search committee delegates too much authority to non-board members. Selecting a president is the most important decision a board ever makes. Accordingly, a search committee should consist solely or primarily of trustees. Thus a Failing grade.

<sup>24</sup> *Selecting a New President: What to do Before You Hire a Search Firm* (Washington, DC: ACTA's Institute for Effective Governance, 2004).

**Governance**

Element	Evaluation
<p>Renewal of presidential contracts based on regular evaluation</p> <p><b>Grade: P</b></p>	<p><b>Regular evaluations of the president prior to compensation adjustments and contract renewals or reappointments are important to ensure that board goals are being achieved.</b><sup>25</sup></p> <p>The board’s Policies and Procedures indicate that each university president “serves at the pleasure of the Board as an at-will employee.” The board may, at its discretion, choose to codify this employment through an “employment agreement for a term not to exceed five (5) years that documents the period of appointment, compensation, and any additional terms.” The Policies and Procedures also state that the board is to evaluate each president’s performance annually. Meeting minutes indicate that this is typically done at the board’s annual retreat in May.</p> <p>The presidents’ performance reviews are conducted in executive sessions, which are not open to the public. It does not appear that the board provides a public summary of the reviews after the fact. However, the reviews do seem to inform compensation decisions. In both 2009 and 2010, presidential compensation was set at the regular public meeting immediately following the reviews. In 2009, one trustee commented that he would be voting against the proposed compensation packages, not because the presidents did not deserve raises but because many other public employees who also deserved raises had not received them due to budget constraints. The board is to be commended for tying performance to compensation. A greater level of transparency, however, about the general results of and the criteria being used in performance reviews would be consistent with national best practices.</p>

25 *Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice*, 15; *Assessing the President’s Performance: A “How To” Guide for Trustees* (Washington, DC: ACTA’s Institute for Effective Governance, 2006).

**Governance****Element****Evaluation**

Development of a long-range plan

**Grade: P**

**Trustees, working with the university stakeholders, have a responsibility to clarify the mission, articulate the vision, and set broad strategic goals for the institution in achieving that vision. Once approved, the strategic plan should become the guiding plan that drives decision-making and evaluation processes.**<sup>26</sup>

The board's 2011-2015 Strategic Plan—which is posted on the board's website—was developed during a series of meetings in late 2009. The plan is a four-page document that outlines three goals: a well-educated citizenry; critical thinking and innovation; and transparent accountability. Each goal is further explained through objectives, performance measures, and benchmarks. The board's Master Planning Calendar demonstrates that strategic planning is an ongoing activity for the board. Each year the board conducts a self-assessment and updates its strategic plan as needed. The board's Policies and Procedures state that the individual institutions are then expected to review and update their campus level strategic plans based on the goals the board has outlined. The institutions' strategic plans are also available on the board's website, and meeting minutes indicate that the board regularly hears progress updates from the institutions.

---

**OVERALL GRADE: P**

<sup>26</sup> *Strategic Planning and Trustee Responsibility* (Washington, DC: ACTA's Institute for Effective Governance, 2005).

**PART II: BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Governance**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

Actions to improve academic quality

**Grade: F**

According to the board bylaws, the Instruction, Research and Student Affairs Committee “is responsible for developing and presenting recommendations to the Board on matters of policy and procedure concerning instruction, research and student affairs.” One of the objectives in the board’s strategic plan is “Quality Instruction and Educational Experience.” However, the performance measures and benchmarks for this goal all relate to K-12 education, for which the board is also responsible. The board has spent time discussing issues related to academic quality such as alternate teacher accreditation programs, opportunities for online education, and aligning high school graduation requirements with college entrance requirements. However, all of these topics have been largely focused on K-12 education.

As outlined in Chapter I, the general education programs at the state’s public, four-year institutions allow students to graduate with significant gaps in their education. While its attention to academic quality at the K-12 level is commendable, the board needs to expand its focus to include a proactive examination of the state’s colleges and universities.

Actions to assess student learning

**Grade: P**

One of the goals in the board’s strategic plan is “Transparent Accountability.” Toward this end, the board is working to “create a P-20 and workforce longitudinal data warehouse with the ability to access timely and relevant data and provide reporting for use by all stakeholders” by 2015. During the period reviewed, the board provided strategic guidance on how staff members should proceed with implementation including approving a grant proposal for special funding and directing specific staff members to investigate integration issues between existing K-12 and post-secondary databases. Once completed, the board intends to use the longitudinal data to perform value-added assessments, identify high schools that are graduating students who subsequently need remediation, and tracking workforce placement.

Although the final results remain to be seen, the board’s commitment to transparency and improving academic quality on the basis of precise data is exemplary and should serve as a model for other institutions. For this promising and important effort, the board receives a Passing grade.

**Governance****Element****Evaluation**

Actions to control costs and increase efficiency

**Grade: I**

During the period reviewed, the board took several steps to control tuition costs for students including a policy change that allowed institutions to reduce the number of credits required for graduation from 128 to 120, an accreditation agreement between two community colleges, and a request for a report on transfer policies after individual board members received complaints from students about problems transferring between schools within the system. For the 2011 and 2012 fiscal years, the board provided the institutions with short lists of funding priorities to guide their budgeting process. The board also prohibited the institutions from asking the legislature for major capital project funding in 2011, instead directing them to prioritize repairs to existing buildings.

The board also voted down several tuition increases that were requested by the institutions. For the 2009-10 academic year, the board approved a 7 percent increase instead of 9 percent at LCSC, a 6.5 percent increase instead of 8.4 percent at ISU, and a 6.5 percent increase instead of 8.5 percent for UI. For the 2010-11 academic year, the board approved an 8.7 percent increase instead of 8.75 percent at LCSC, a 9 percent increase instead of 9.5 percent at ISU, and a 9.5 percent increase instead of 12 percent at UI.

The board's response is a good start, but these tuition increases are still well above the rate of inflation. As outlined in Chapter IV, tuition and fees have risen between 18 and 21 percent in recent years even after adjusting for inflation, and administrative spending has risen at three of the four universities surveyed. While the board's efforts to control costs are promising, there is still much work to be done to keep tuition affordable. Thus, an Incomplete.

**Governance**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<p>Avoiding the rubber stamp</p> <p><b>Grade: P</b></p>	<p>Complete meeting minutes were available for 26 meetings during the period reviewed. At these meetings, the board voted on more than 800 motions and approved more than 90 percent of them unanimously. However, the pattern of the non-unanimous votes indicates that the board culture encourages engagement and thoughtful dissent.</p> <p>At five meetings, a trustee requested that one or more items be removed from the consent agenda. Fourteen motions failed, several unanimously, over the course of eight meetings. An additional 53 motions passed with dissenting votes over the course of 14 meetings. In total, 15 of the 26 meetings had at least one dissenting vote, meaning that a “No” vote was cast every other meeting or so. Perhaps most importantly, during the period reviewed, every single trustee voted against a motion at least once, and three trustees voted against more than 20 motions.</p> <p>Additionally, the motions that failed or earned dissenting votes demonstrated trustee engagement on substantive issues. For example, the board voted down motions that would have allowed a student group to host an on-campus event that served alcohol, changed the board policies to increase the amount that administrators could spend without board approval, increased the scope and cost of a capital project that was already in progress, increased tuition and fees, and approved an out-sourcing agreement with a dormitory management company. The trustees are to be commended for taking seriously their responsibility to guide the universities on important matters.</p>

---

**OVERALL GRADE: I**





CHAPTER IV:

Overall Grade	<b>COST AND EFFECTIVENESS</b> Undergraduate tuition and fees in the state of Idaho have been outpacing inflation in recent years. Meanwhile, retention and graduation rates remain below national averages.
<b>F</b>	

**PRICES OF PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES** across the country rose more rapidly between 1998–99 and 2008–09 than in the preceding decade, and tuition and fee levels at four-year public colleges increased 18 percent in just five years—after adjusting for inflation.<sup>27</sup> Faced with these increases, according to a 2010 report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 83 percent of people believe that students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education.<sup>28</sup> On average, a family at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile of income today would have to spend 38 percent of its annual income<sup>29</sup> for one child to attend a public four-year college, compared with 13 percent in 1980.<sup>30</sup>

According to the Lumina Foundation for Education, “Rising prices are the tip of the iceberg. The amount of money that colleges and universities spend to provide education to their students is rising faster than consumer prices and health care costs.”<sup>31</sup>

With costs out of control, many question the effectiveness and cost management of the higher education enterprise. Four out of ten Americans surveyed in 2007 considered waste and mismanagement major factors in driving up higher education costs.<sup>32</sup>

27 College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2008*, 11.

28 John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play 2010: Continued Public Anxiety on Cost, Harsher Judgments on How Colleges Are Run*, a report prepared by Public Agenda for The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Washington, DC: 2010), 6.

29 *Trends in College Pricing 2008*, 11 and 16.

30 The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Losing Ground: A National Status Report on the Affordability of American Higher Education* (Washington, DC: 2007), 5.

31 Lumina Foundation for Education, *Hitting Home: Quality, Cost, and Access Challenges Confronting Higher Education Today* (2007), 3.

32 John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play: How Parents and the Public Look at Higher Education Today*, a report prepared by Public Agenda for The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Washington, DC: 2007), 23.

Given these numbers, it is imperative that higher education regain the confidence of the public in the use of funds.

This section examines the four-year public colleges and universities governed by the Idaho State Board of Education: Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho.

This section of the report asks several broad questions. How much are students paying for college? What are the universities spending that money on? What are students getting in return? To answer these questions, the report looks at trends in tuition and fees and how those trends compare to median household income. It looks at trends in university expenditures. It looks at whether the universities are successful in retaining full-time freshmen after their first year of study and whether those students go on to graduate in a timely fashion. In addition, this section evaluates the handling of unproductive programs and whether institutions use performance as a criterion in funding allocations.

The period of evaluation is generally five years. However, periods of measure vary based on data availability and the specific measure. The most recent year for which data is available is consistently between 2007 and 2009.

Grading is on a Pass/Fail basis. The following describes the various elements used to evaluate the universities and explains the grading criteria.

**Trends in in-state undergraduate tuition and fees.** This measure assesses the commitment of the universities to keeping tuition and fee increases at reasonable levels. If during the period reviewed, tuition and fees increased at a rate equal to or less than the rate of inflation (using the Consumer Price Index), the institutions received a Passing grade. If, however, tuition and fees increased more rapidly than the rate of inflation, the institutions received a Failing grade.

**Undergraduate tuition and fees as a percentage of median household income.** This measure indicates whether the universities have kept higher education affordable relative to median household income. If the percentage of median household income required to pay for tuition and fees decreased or remained relatively unchanged from the base year, the universities received a Passing grade. Conversely, if tuition and fees required a greater percentage of a family's income, the universities received a Failing grade.

**First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen.** This measure examines the percentage of first-time, full-time students enrolled as freshmen who continue the following year as sophomores. In effect, this is the first-year drop-out rate. It is an important measure for two reasons. First, remaining after

the first year is an indicator that the student is more likely to complete his or her degree. Second, it can also suggest—especially to an institution that has a large drop-out rate after the first year—that the students were not sufficiently prepared (either academically or socially) to succeed. Both are important indicators for board members to examine. If the first- to second-year retention rates were less than 64 percent, then the universities received a Failing grade.

**Baccalaureate graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen.** This measure examines the current four- and six-year graduation rates for each institution. While ideally 100 percent of first-time, full-time freshmen should graduate in four years and certainly by six years, we have applied a 64 percent benchmark—a typical grading scale used to assess students’ Pass/Fail rate. If less than 64 percent of students graduated within six years, the institution received a Failing grade. The national six-year baccalaureate graduation rate of 57.6 percent<sup>33</sup> is unacceptable, and is not used as a standard for grading purposes.

**Instructional vs. administrative spending.** This measure assesses the commitment of the institutions to instructional spending versus administrative spending. It examines the percentage change in instructional and administrative spending relative to the base year. It also examines instructional and administrative expenditures as a percentage of Educational & General Expenditures (E&G) during the period surveyed. If the percentage increase in instructional spending was equal to or higher than the percentage increase in administrative spending—signifying that instruction was a priority—the universities received a Passing grade. If the opposite were true, the institutions received a Failing grade. Athletic expenditures obtained from a different source and for a shorter time period are also included for informational purposes.

**Ratio of new programs to closed programs.** This is an efficiency and cost measure that attempts to assess how well the universities are monitoring program growth through approval of new and closure of old programs. If a university established twice as many or more programs than it closed, it received a Failing grade.

**Performance as a criterion for funding.** Rewards and incentives for good outcomes can lead to better results. This measure ascertains whether or not the universities use, either in part or fully, performance as a criterion for funding. If performance is used as a criterion, the institutions received a Passing grade. If not, they received a Failing grade.

33 “Performance across the 1,576 Colleges on CollegeMeasures.org,” American Institutes for Research, accessed 23 December 2010 <<http://collegemeasures.org/reporting/national/>>.

**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

Trends in in-state undergraduate tuition and fees

Inflation-adjusted tuition and required fees increased significantly throughout Idaho during the period reviewed. From 2004 to 2009, in-state tuition and fees increased by double-digit percentages at every institution. Although tuition rates remain low compared with national averages, rapid increases make it difficult for students and their families to plan for college expenses. Thus a Failing grade for each institution and the state as a whole.

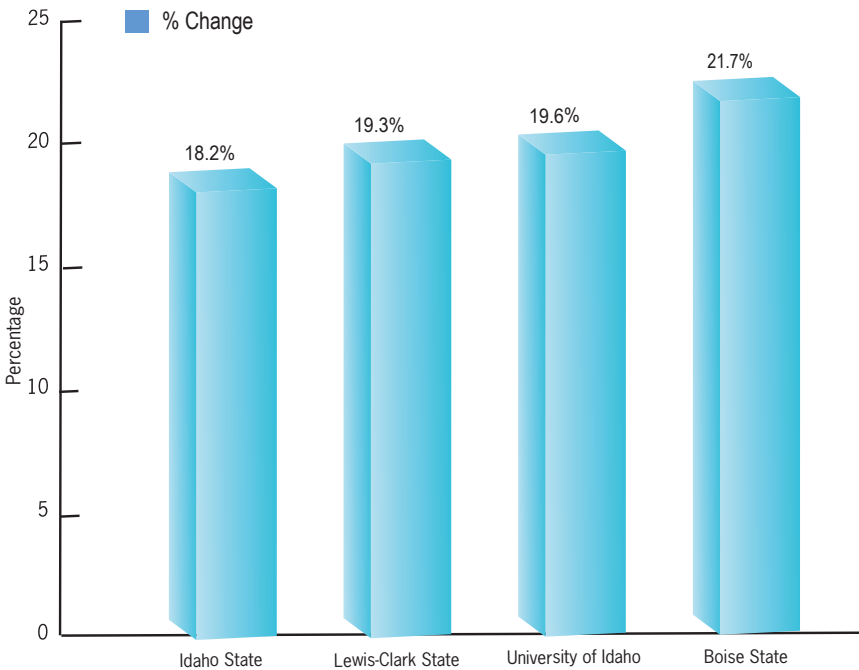
**Grade: F**

**TRENDS IN UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES**

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2009-10	% Change	GRADE
Boise State University	\$3,998	\$4,864	21.7%	F
Idaho State University	4,202	4,968	18.2	F
Lewis-Clark State College	3,852	4,596	19.3	F
University of Idaho	4,125	4,932	19.6	F

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

*Source: IPEDS; Note: 2004-05 dollar amounts are expressed in 2009 inflation-adjusted numbers.*



**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

Undergraduate tuition and fees as a percentage of median household income

**Grade: F**

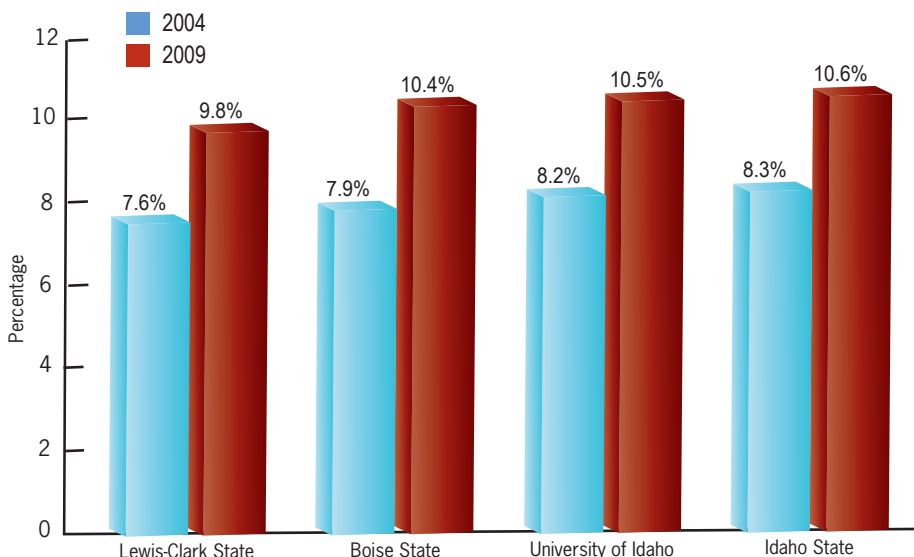
In 2009, annual in-state undergraduate tuition and required fees at all four universities surveyed required a greater percentage of median household income than they did just five years earlier. In 2004, Idaho families could expect to pay an average of 8.0 percent of their household income for annual in-state tuition and fees. In 2009, an average of 10.3 percent of median household income was required. This represents an average increase of nearly 29 percent during the period reviewed, even after adjusting for inflation. Thus a Failing grade for each university and for the state as a whole.

**UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2009-10	Change in % Points	% Change	GRADE
Boise State University	7.9%	10.4%	2.5%	31.0%	F
Idaho State University	8.3	10.6	2.3	27.3	F
Lewis-Clark State College	7.6	9.8	2.2	28.5	F
University of Idaho	8.2	10.5	2.3	28.8	F

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

Source: IPEDS and U.S. Census Bureau; Note: 2004 dollar amounts for tuition & fees and median income were based on 2009 inflation-adjusted numbers.



**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen

**Grade: F**

From 2003 to 2008, only BSU consistently increased its percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who returned the next fall for their sophomore year, gaining a total of 6 percentage points during the period reviewed. In contrast, LCSC’s retention rate has been falling steadily since 2005, losing a total of 9 percentage points. Retention rates at the two remaining institutions fluctuated both up and down during the period reviewed.

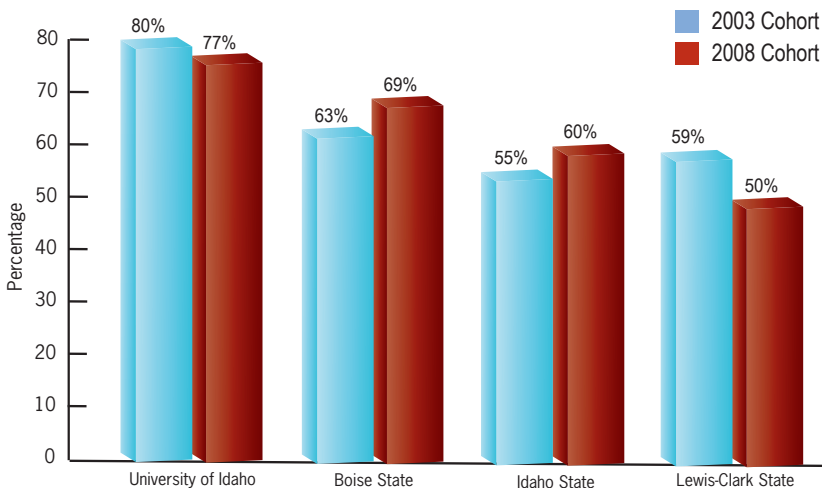
There is much work to be done, since between a quarter and a half of Idaho students are not returning to college for their sophomore year. Since a majority of the institutions surveyed do not meet the criteria of having at least 64 percent of their freshmen return for a second year, the state receives a Failing grade.

**FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN**

INSTITUTION	2003 Cohort	2008 Cohort	Change in % Points	GRADE
Boise State University	63.0%	69.0%	6.0%	P
Idaho State University	55.0	60.0	5.0	F
Lewis-Clark State College	59.0	50.0	-9.0	F
University of Idaho	80.0	77.0	-3.0	P

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

Source: IPEDS; Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.



**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

Baccalaureate graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen

During the period reviewed, three of the four institutions surveyed improved their six-year graduation rates. Most significantly, ISU increased its six-year graduation rate by nine percentage points.

**Grade: F**

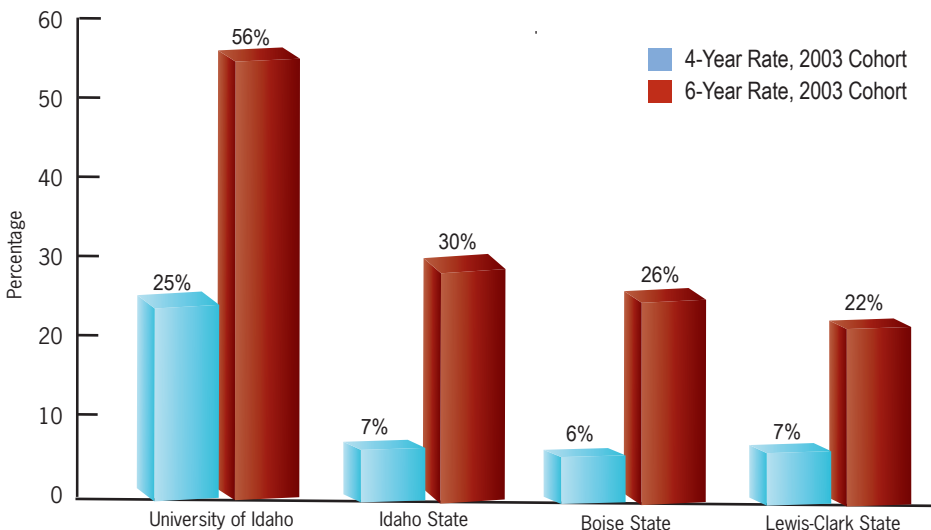
Although the trend is headed in the right direction, there is still a great deal of work to be done as graduation rates throughout the state remain unacceptably low. Depending on the institution, between half and three-quarters of the students who entered Idaho universities in 2003—expecting to graduate in 2007—had still not earned a degree by 2009. Thus a Failing grade for each institution and the state as a whole.

**BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN**

INSTITUTION	1998 COHORT		2003 COHORT		CHANGE		GRADE
	GRADUATION RATE		GRADUATION RATE		IN % POINTS		
	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year	
Boise State University	9.0%	24.0%	6.0%	26.0%	-3.0%	2.0%	<b>F</b>
Idaho State University	4.0	21.0	7.0	30.0	3.0	9.0	<b>F</b>
Lewis-Clark State College	12.0	29.0	7.0	22.0	-5.0	-7.0	<b>F</b>
University of Idaho	20.0	54.0	25.0	56.0	5.0	2.0	<b>F</b>

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

Source: IPEDS; Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.



**Cost/Effectiveness****Element****Evaluation**

Instructional vs. administrative spending

**Grade: F**

In 2003, spending on Instruction at the four institutions surveyed ranged from 32.4 percent to 62.7 percent of each institution's respective Educational and General (E&G) expenditures. In that same year, spending on Administration ranged from 9.1 percent to 15.0 percent of E&G.

In 2008, Instruction as a percentage of E&G declined for three of the four institutions examined. Spending on Instruction ranged from 37.8 percent to 61.2 of E&G. Meanwhile, two of the institutions increased their spending on Administration as a percentage of E&G. Spending on Administration ranged from 10.0 percent to 11.3 percent of E&G.

BSU is to be commended for cutting its spending on Administration while substantially increasing its spending on Instruction. UI increased spending on Instruction at a greater rate than it did Administration, but it should be noted that its spending on Administration still far exceeded that of the other universities. Additionally, spending on Administration at both ISU and LCSC increased in relation to Instruction. With the exception of BSU, spending on Administration increased by double digit percentages during the period reviewed. Thus, a Failing grade for the state.

Universities are not required to report their spending on Athletics to the U.S. Department of Education, so a direct comparison with spending on Instruction is difficult. However, it is informative to note that data obtained by *USA Today* through a Freedom of Information Act request indicates that spending on Athletics rose significantly in recent years at all three of the NCAA Division I universities in the state.



**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

**INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING**

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY	2007-08 FY	\$ Change	% Change	GRADE
Boise State University	<i>Instruction</i>	\$ 85,309,889	\$109,912,409	\$ 24,602,520	28.8%	P
	<i>Administration</i>	20,819,265	19,621,287	-1,197,978	-5.8	
Idaho State University	<i>Instruction</i>	74,228,830	103,204,621	28,975,791	39.0	F
	<i>Administration</i>	11,251,828	18,665,374	7,413,546	65.9	
Lewis-Clark State College	<i>Instruction</i>	17,787,026	22,658,892	4,871,866	27.4	F
	<i>Administration</i>	3,088,818	4,193,959	1,105,141	35.8	
University of Idaho	<i>Instruction</i>	75,801,367	104,891,529	29,090,162	38.4	P
	<i>Administration</i>	24,912,091	27,586,152	2,674,061	10.7	

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY as % of E&G	2007-08 FY as % of E&G	Change in % Points	% Change	GRADE
Boise State University	<i>Instruction</i>	61.6%	56.2%	-5.4%	-8.8%	P
	<i>Administration</i>	15.0	10.0	-5.0	-33.3	
Idaho State University	<i>Instruction</i>	59.9	58.4	-1.5	-2.5	F
	<i>Administration</i>	9.1	10.6	1.5	16.3	
Lewis-Clark State College	<i>Instruction</i>	62.7	61.2	-1.5	-2.3	F
	<i>Administration</i>	10.9	11.3	0.4	4.1	
University of Idaho	<i>Instruction</i>	32.4	37.8	5.4	16.7	P
	<i>Administration</i>	10.7	10.0	-0.7	-6.6	

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

**ATHLETIC SPENDING**

INSTITUTION	2004-05 FY	2007-08 FY	\$ Change	% Change
Boise State University	\$16,852,312	\$25,607,867	\$8,755,555	52.0%
Idaho State University	7,872,156	9,783,294	1,911,138	24.3
Lewis-Clark State College	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
University of Idaho	11,835,622	15,610,442	3,774,820	31.9

Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/ncaa-finances.htm>, updated 02 April 2010

Note: USA Today filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the above data. However, they only requested information from NCAA Division I schools, thus excluding Lewis-Clark State College.

**Cost/Effectiveness**

**Element**

**Evaluation**

Ratio of new programs to closed programs

**Grade: P**

According to meeting minutes, the board took a variety of actions related to program approval and closure between July 2008 and November 2010. They approved the initial program offerings of the newly created College of Western Idaho, examined the State Department of Education’s findings regarding existing teacher education programs, expanded several existing programs to new locations, and approved programmatic and departmental restructurings.

Since this metric is concerned with the ongoing evaluation of resource allocation, the initial approval of the program offerings at the College of Western Idaho was not counted. During the period reviewed, the board approved nine new academic programs and discontinued 22. For this attention to efficiency and costs, the board receives a Passing grade.

Performance as a criterion for funding

**Grade: F**

Although meeting minutes indicate that Idaho has some performance-based compensation for its K-12 teachers, there do not appear to be comparable programs for its colleges and universities. Greater attention ought to be paid to performance during budgeting sessions, and the board should consciously incorporate performance elements into its funding allocations. Thus a Failing grade for the state.

**OVERALL GRADE: F**

# Appendices

**APPENDIX A** SELECTION CRITERIA FOR  
CORE COURSES

**APPENDIX B** STUDENT SURVEY  
METHODOLOGY

## Appendix A

### SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES

Distribution requirements on most campuses today permit students to pick from a wide range of courses that often are narrow or even outside the stated field altogether. Accordingly, to determine whether institutions in fact have a solid core curriculum, ACTA defines success in each of the seven subject areas as follows:

#### Composition

A college writing class focusing on grammar, style, clarity, and argument. These courses should be taught by instructors trained to evaluate and teach writing. “Across-the-curriculum” and “writing intensive” courses taught in disciplines other than English do not count if they constitute the only component of the writing requirement. Credit is not given for remedial classes or if students may test out of the requirement via SAT or ACT scores or departmental tests.

#### Literature

A literature survey course. Narrow, single-author, or esoteric courses do not count for this requirement, but introductions to broad subfields (such as British or Latin American literature) do.

#### Foreign Language

Competency at the intermediate level, defined as at least three semesters of college-level study in any foreign language, three years of high school work, or an appropriate examination score.

#### U.S. Government or History

A course in either U.S. history or government with enough breadth to give a broad sweep of American history and institutions. Narrow, niche courses do not count for the requirement, nor do courses that only focus on a particular state or region.

#### Economics

A course covering basic economic principles, preferably an introductory micro- or macroeconomics course taught by faculty from the economics or business departments.

#### Mathematics

A college-level course in mathematics. Specific topics may vary, but must involve study beyond the level of intermediate algebra. Logic classes may count if they are focused on abstract logic. Computer science courses count if they involve programming or advanced study. Credit is not given for remedial classes or if students may test out of the requirement via SAT or ACT scores.

#### Natural or Physical Science

A course in biology, geology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, or environmental science, preferably with a laboratory component. Overly narrow courses and courses with weak scientific content are not counted.

## Appendix B

### STUDENT SURVEY METHODOLOGY



#### Idaho Public Schools Campus Climate Survey Report December 2010

*A project sponsored by:*  
**American Council of Trustees and Alumni**  
**[www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org)**

*Research conducted by:*  
The Pert Group

The Pert Group was contracted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) to conduct campus climate surveys with students at the University of Idaho. The foremost objective was to use a professionally-designed survey instrument that was similar to several previous studies conducted to gather quality information that would inform higher education policy.

Findings are based on a sample of undergraduate students (freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) amassed through in-person data collection of 337 completed surveys conducted during the week of December 6, 2010, at the Moscow campus of the University of Idaho.

#### Methodology

---

##### Questionnaire Design

The survey instrument was based on the instrument used in the 2004 ACTA survey of students at the top fifty colleges and universities in the United States, as well as instruments used in Missouri and Georgia in 2007 and in Minnesota and Illinois in 2009. The instrument includes a series of questions on student perception of political and social issues on campus as well as demographic questions that were used to ensure the sample accurately represented the student population. The survey instrument was pre-tested to ensure the questions were properly constructed and understood by respondents.

##### Data Collection

The Pert Group researchers have previously determined that in-person interviewing is the most effective method of interviewing large numbers of college students at a single institution. This method has the lowest level of coverage error and previous experiments revealed it to be an efficient and representative methodology.

Students were intercepted at various times of day and at several places of high student traffic on or adjacent to the campus to ensure randomness. Times of day ranged from 9am until 9pm. A few examples of both indoor and outdoor places of high student traffic that could be utilized, depending on the school, included eateries, coffee houses, exercise facilities, student centers, and major walkways. The process took place for multiple days per campus until sufficient completed interviews were achieved. Respondents are guaranteed anonymity, as names and contact information are not recorded with the dataset.

### Respondent Selection

Second stage sampling and respondent selection was accomplished through the following steps. After the selection of the individual schools, operations staff collected demographics, population statistics, and geographic maps for each school. Dormitory and other residential student data, as well as classroom buildings and other data germane to establishing traffic flow estimates were assembled. A list of preliminary sites was selected based on these estimates. Survey supervisors verified site suitability upon reaching each campus. They established flow at selected locations and verified that key traffic flow areas were not inadvertently omitted. Following the verification, a final selection of sites was determined and specific times and locations for a given target number of completes for each intercept location was selected based on the flow data gathered. Different times were used at each location, based on traffic flow counts. Sampling ratios at individual sites varied by traffic volume and school size to accommodate target completes. A ratio was established for respondent selection and every nth person was verbally asked the screening question of "Are you a student at (college)?" and a verbal follow up of "Are you a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior?" The questionnaire repeated the undergraduate screening question. Refusals were replaced with the next available person. Data collection continued over multiple days until the total number of completes were collected. Demographic questions were used to monitor potential bias on contact rates and did not reveal any issues.

### Verification Methods

A systematic, multi-level verification process was used to ensure error rates were well within acceptable norms and provide assurance of high quality data. The numerous, rigorous quality control measures include, but are not limited to:

- 1) **Manager Field Training**  
Data collection managers on this survey have all received extensive training and conducted multiple campus surveys. They have participated in extensive training that included mock interviewing, human subject treatment and other training.
- 2) **Manager Verification**  
Every survey received by a manager is hand-checked so that questionnaires with potential problems, such as incompletes, incorrect class status, or erroneous data entries, are not included in final submissions.
- 3) **Data Cleaning Procedures**  
The dataset is further scrutinized for irregularities using statistical diagnostics. Further observations are removed from the dataset if incompletes, incorrect class, statistical irregularities, or other such items are present.

### Weighting

Data was weighted by gender, race and class. Enrollment data was gathered from the school website as well as from the National Center For Education Statistics' (NCES) restricted Peer Analysis System (IPEDS).

Weighting factors for the University of Idaho at Moscow = .26 to 1.63

### Sampling Error

Sampling error for 337 completed surveys is +/-5.3%





**ACTA**  
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF  
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 1-888-ALUMNI-8 or 202-467-6787

Fax: 202-467-6784

Email: [info@goacta.org](mailto:info@goacta.org) • Website: [www.goacta.org](http://www.goacta.org)