



University of Idaho presence continues to grow North

University of Idaho Coeur d'Alene offers both a beautiful view of Lake Coeur d'Alene and the most visible symbol of a growing University of Idaho commitment to outreach in northern Idaho. A modern building perched on the Spokane River's shoreline and adjacent to the North Idaho College campus unites the university's academic efforts and UI Extension for Kootenai County and District 1.

The university and City of Coeur d'Alene signed a 5-year lease for the 29,000 square-foot Harbor Center nearly a year ago. The goal is to eventually establish a 100-acre multi-college campus that will include UI, NIC and Lewis-Clark State College.

For UI the move's accomplishments are already tangible. The building brings together for the first time Kootenai County and UI Extension with the university's academic programs. UI Vice President for Outreach and College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean Larry Branen also is based there, as well as maintaining workspace in the Jacklin Science and Technology Building in the UI Research Park at Post Falls.

"The thing that I think is unique here," Branen said, "is that it really made a difference having the county extension office here. This brings it into the whole concept of bringing education from the university to the community because the traditional extension role is synergistic with our other offerings."

The educational menu offers both undergraduate and graduate classes

and academic degrees. Extension offerings range from family and consumer science to forestry and agricultural programs. The UI Research Park plays an important role in the outreach effort as well. Branen works with colleagues in the UI Center for Advanced Microelectronics and Biomolecular Research to develop revolutionary biosensors.

The Post Falls building complements academic efforts at Coeur d'Alene by providing a place for lab-based engineering classes. "The work we do here helps tie the two communities more closely together," he added. The number of degree-seeking students is growing as the region becomes more aware of the university's offerings, said UI Coeur d'Alene Dean Jack Dawson. Enrollment grew by nearly 6 percent to 531 graduate and undergraduate students this spring. The academic offerings provide opportunities for Coeur d'Alene-based students to continue their educations.

UI and Kootenai County Extension's programs round out the university's commitment to the community by providing a wide range of formal and informal educational opportunities, Branen said.

Vickie Parker-Clark, UI Extension District 1 director, notes that outreach in northern Idaho reaches beyond Kootenai County. Educators in other counties are working hard to provide educational programs from the university to meet local needs.



UI photo

Students enjoy a comfortable, high tech environment at the Harbor Center in Coeur d'Alene

Benewah County, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and UI have partnered to expand traditional extension programs at St. Maries to the tribal headquarters at Plummer with the addition of Extension educator David Clark there. Extension educator Valdasue Steele at St. Maries and Clark joined forces to offer a popular horse program for youth countywide.

"I'm seeing more going on outside of Coeur d'Alene to bring UI programs to communities than has happened in the past," Parker-Clark said. It's a two-way street, too. County extension educators are joining with Moscow-based instructors to bolster education efforts there.

