

# New UI chief acknowledges high expectations

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By Jessie L. Bonner The Associated Press

**Today is the first day of Duane Nellis' career as 17th president of the University of Idaho**



Duane Nellis...

MOSCOW - The new University of Idaho president said Tuesday he is well aware of the high expectations tied to his new job, but is convinced he's the right person to lead the 12,000-student school.

Duane Nellis, a 54-year-old geographer, will officially start as the 17th president of the state's oldest public university today.

"I think the expectations are high," Nellis said. "I also think the search committee, the state Board of Education and the university chose me for a reason."

Faculty and students have already drafted a list of expectations for their new leader, a former provost and senior vice president at Kansas State University.

Faculty expect him to repair the last of the damage left over from a botched land deal in Boise several years ago and improve the school's ties with the state education board. Student leaders want him to get more outside funding so the school doesn't have to rely so much on fee increases to make up for state funding shortfalls.

Nellis said he wants the university to be more aggressive in recruiting out-of-state students and minorities and more actively reach out to alumni and seek corporate sponsorships and grants.

He said he plans to build on a strategic plan put in place by former president Tim White, who led the school through one of its most turbulent financial times before resigning last year to accept a position at the University of California, Riverside.

One of five finalists a university search committee named earlier this year, Nellis quickly emerged a front-runner because of his experience at other land-grant institutions, said Tom Bitterwolf, a chemistry professor who was on the search committee.

Nellis has ties to the region, being born in Spokane and raised in Montana. He has a cabin near Glacier National Park in Montana.

Nellis, who cited too little money when turning down the job earlier this year, accepted the position in April after influential Vandal boosters urged state officials to sweeten the deal.

Nellis and his wife, Ruthie, expect to move out of a Moscow hotel and into their university residence on Thursday, after the university completes \$97,000 in repairs and asbestos abatement. He will begin a weeklong tour of the state on Monday to hear from alumni and others, and make stops in Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, Coeur d'Alene and Boise.