

# UI to take alcohol sales request to board of ed again

## Idaho State Board of Education to meet Thursday in Coeur d'Alene

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### **Mary Stone/Lewiston Tribune**

Vandal football fans told the University of Idaho they want the option to purchase alcohol at games, so school officials are again asking their governing body for permission to allow liquor sales.

The request will be made Thursday during an Idaho State Board of Education meeting at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene. The state board oversees higher education in Idaho and serves as UI's board of regents.

The board declined to allow UI to include alcohol sales at its Fan Zone pre-game events last year, citing board policy that requires alcohol to be served on campus only when written invitations have been issued. A similar request by Boise State University was rejected as well.

Thursday's request will be to reinstate an area within the Fan Zone where fans age 21 and older can purchase alcoholic drinks from UI's official food service provider, Sodexo. That setup worked well in 2015, UI spokeswoman Jodi Walker said.

"Our fans have reached out and said they enjoyed that," Walker said. "That was fun for them."

The board also said no last year to alcohol consumption in university parking lots for pre-game tailgating activities. Walker said UI will ask for "a clarification of the policy to allow alcohol in the tailgating area, so local police can focus on monitoring behavior."

Despite the lack of official permission for alcohol during tailgating last year, many pre-game revelers brought beer and other drinks to the parking lots anyway. The Moscow Police Department said its officers would be watching fans' behavior and asking them to pour out alcoholic drinks if necessary - but no incidents occurred during the season.

University officials argued the school traditionally has allowed drinking during tailgating, and this latest request will reflect that, Walker said.

"We want our fans to be able to have an amazing game day experience in a safe environment," she said.

The fan experience is what drove the school to resurrect the Fan Zone appeal as well, Walker said. In the scenario described in UI's request to the board, a game ticket would be enough to grant fans of drinking age access to a designated area where they could purchase drinks.

"We want an area where you don't have to have a formal invitation," Walker said. "(Where) being a ticket holder - a fan coming to the game - is enough to get you in."

Board policy has not changed since last year, but Walker said UI officials hope the board will return to its 2015 interpretation of the rules. Boise State and Idaho State University also are asking the board for home football game alcohol permits at Thursday's meeting.

"It's been on their radar for a year now, and we're hopeful that they will support all the institutions being able to provide a great game day experience," she said.

Not all alcohol permits were denied by the state board last year. The UI's annual request to provide alcohol service in the Litehouse Center/Bud and June Ford Club Room, the Kibbie Dome's premium seating, has been granted yearly since 2011. That request will be renewed Thursday.

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