Dear colleagues,

Even while we navigate this tumultuous time, we must continue to look forward. Our university will serve students, our community and the world long past this time and, indeed, long past any single individual's time in service to our important work.

Boise State's enduring and extraordinary mission to change lives must be supported and fostered. Perhaps a time of challenge and change is the best time to look ahead, to imagine our best selves anew, to chart the course for our next evolution.
We are embarking on the creation of a new strategic plan, and I invite each one of you to share your insights, ideas and visions as we develop the road map for the university Boise State will become as it heads toward its second century. You are the people who brought the university to this amazing place, and your participation going forward will be critical, even if that takes a different form than we might have imagined a few short months ago.

Our strategic planning efforts will be spearheaded by the Provost’s Office, as they have been historically. As we know, a truly engaged and cooperative effort will position Boise State to continue the unique trajectory that has marked our growth and development from a community college to a four-year university to the research institution that we have become.

Our current strategic plan, Focus on Effectiveness, has greatly bolstered our momentum, earning us high praise from our accrediting body and driving our growing national reputation as one of the most innovative public universities in the country. But just as our then-master’s level university once envisioned the audacious goal of becoming a “metropolitan research university of distinction,” it is time to look toward the opportunities of the future.

I have every expectation that we will do this in true Boise State fashion — with nimbleness, creativity and care for our community. With your voices engaged, we will seek to complete a process, begun by our Provost Office’s collaboration with the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) last fall, by the end of December 2020.

Unlike institutions that completed their planning a year or two ago, we will have the benefit of designing our future goals and approaches knowing the ways in which the world and the institutions in it have changed. I am confident that our strategic planning effort will benefit from the same collaborative, positive, and energetic spirit with which you have tackled the challenges before us today.

Around 40 leaders, faculty, staff and student representatives will be participating in a pre-planning workshop on May 11-12 with the advisement of the professionals at SCUP. This group will help implement the strategic plan across all units on campus after its design and development.

We also want to ask all of you about how you would like to contribute to the process, how you prefer to get information throughout this effort, and how you would like to share your insights and ideas. Please complete this linked survey to help direct how we will work with campus throughout this process.
Many of our conversations will take place in the fall — look in August for ways to engage. By November, we expect to have a rough draft of the plan to share across campus for feedback and improvements.

Even before I arrived at Boise State, I came to see those things about which our community is justly proud. Over the last eight months, I have also seen the way in which you have focused so much energy into those efforts. I have sought to capture these below, in conversation with your leaders from every area of campus. My hope is that these will help focus our planning process over the coming months and spur creative and innovative thinking about how we can best keep this momentum at the pace that is garnering attention to Boise State from across the country. I know we can build upon our university’s strengths and the vital work that has already been done. Amplifying the unique strengths that already characterize Boise State, we will:

**Advance the research mission of the university.**
Boise State was re-classified by the Carnegie Foundation in 2019 as a Doctoral Research University, High Research Activity (commonly designated as “R2” status). The energy generated by this phenomenal accomplishment will help fuel future efforts to grow at Boise State. We will strive to leverage the strengths of our existing research enterprise and to develop those areas that show the most promise for the future. We recognize the ways in which research fosters not only our service to the world, but our teaching with our students, engaging them in the critical work of knowledge production and helping them to become innovative leaders and thinkers.

**Care for all members of our community.**
We are developing new ways to help all members of our community — our staff, faculty, and students — see the value of their contributions to one another and to the state and the world beyond. Utilizing all the tools at our disposal, including professional development, engagement, outreach, and support, we will seek to help people grow and thrive, so their contributions can be felt more powerfully and that their impact in the world outside the university can be enhanced.

**Pursue innovative strategies in teaching, research, and service.**
In 2019, Boise State was ranked No. 42 on the U.S. News and World Report’s list of Most Innovative Universities in the nation, moving up seven spots from the previous year. Innovation is in the DNA of Boise State; our intention is to amplify that bold trailblazing spirit and lead the nation in modeling new ways to
serve its community and the world. Rather than mimicking other models in higher education, we can develop one that others will want to duplicate because of its success in the full range of ways that universities serve.

**Serve rural Idaho students.**
Boise State has become a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction, but that does not confine our work to the urban area. Rural populations around the country have been underserved by universities, and our state, with its significant rural population, deserves the best that Boise State can offer. The impact Boise State has made on the lives of individuals in Boise and on the economy and vitality of Idaho can also be brought to our rural communities in new ways. In addition to the Community Impact Program, which collaborates with rural communities to develop the best programs for them, we are developing new internships and hands-on opportunities for rural students to apply their university-acquired skills and competencies in their home regions.

**Enhance and foster pathbreaking interdisciplinarity.**
Complex problems are not solved by looking at them through the narrow scope of any single field. Even when they acknowledge this important fact, most research universities collapse back into traditional academic silos. Boise State has resisted this pitfall and has, in fact, created truly transformative interdisciplinary doctoral programs — a goal that eludes most institutions. Not only do such programs provide fresh insights into complex problems, they are also brilliantly efficient, leveraging strengths in a variety of departments and aiding students and faculty to engage more meaningfully across traditional boundaries.

**Increase the impact of the university.**
We must grow our impact on our students and graduates; on our city, state and region; and on public higher education across the country. We offer lifelong, hands-on career and experiential learning and pair intentional career preparation with competencies such as problem solving, critical thinking and an ability to work effectively as a team. We play a unique role in the economy and culture of the larger community, and are committed to being an impactful partner of business, civic and community organizations in shaping a vibrant future for all of Idaho. Boise State can provide new national leadership in public higher education.

We will be charting our strategic planning efforts online at [boisestate.edu/strategicplan](http://boisestate.edu/strategicplan). Thank you all for the incredible work that you do. I look forward to the bright future that we will build together.
Sincerely,
Dr. Marlene Tromp
President

This message has been approved for mass email distribution in accordance with Boise State Policy 8100.