

PLANNING, POLICY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
JUNE 29, 2020

SUBJECT

Digital Campus Update

REFERENCE

June 10, 2020

The Board approved and forwarded a request to the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee for \$4M to support development of a system-wide digital campus for postsecondary education.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

In May 2020, a working group was formed to explore the concept of a “digital campus” that would deliver low-cost, high-quality, online postsecondary educational experiences to Idahoans regardless of their location. A digital campus would also provide means for Idaho students to secure work that is both financially and personally fulfilling long-term, enabling them to play an enhanced role in their communities across the state. In an effort to design a digital campus that is sufficiently viable, feasible, and desirable as a postsecondary innovation in Idaho, the working group consulted prominent online and continuing education leaders and models from aspirational institutions/systems, as well as the accumulated knowledge of Idaho’s academic community.

Two visions have emerged for launching an impactful digital campus in Idaho. While some strategic overlap exists between the two visions, they differ in important ways. One pursues the idea of a digital campus as a separate postsecondary institution that operates independently from existing institutions and is wholly responsible for its own students, faculty, curricula, and institutional outcomes. The other, while also operating with independent governance, seeks to address the online education needs of Idaho citizens by consolidating necessary courses, degrees, services, and resources of our current institutions into a digital campus that adapts to the needs of faculty and students.

The first vision, called “New U”, would prioritize the delivery of specific course content and stackable credentials that are not otherwise offered in Idaho. As an online-only 9th public postsecondary institution, New U would deliver exclusively online content to students via curated offerings from national/global institutions and via private/public industry partnerships with online program managers (e.g. Coursera, EdX, etc.). This institution may also deliver content from other Idaho institutions, insofar as these institutions would be willing to partner with New U.

The second vision, called “Idaho Online”, emerged with the recognition that new efficiencies for delivering high-quality online courses may result from consolidating and fortifying the current efforts of Idaho’s postsecondary institutions. Culminating in a state-level portal for online course sharing (a “marketplace”), the services and resources of Idaho Online would be federated to meet the unique needs of every institution in four focus areas: (1) the statewide scaling of technology-enhanced instruction and learning analytics via a robust portfolio of common digital

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technologies, (2) the advancement of Board priorities for promoting student success (e.g., open educational resources, Complete College Idaho, prior learning assessment, dual credit, etc.), (3) the development of faculty-owned standards for ensuring the continuous improvement of online courses/instruction, and (4) the expansion of student/faculty opportunities to pursue high-need skills and credentials beyond the traditional classroom. The Idaho Online model could also build on a statewide inventory of online degrees, programs, and services currently offered by Idaho institutions. This inventory has recently been developed by the Presidents Leadership Council, with particular leadership from Lewis-Clark State College.

While both models would be designed to deliver low-cost, high-quality, online postsecondary educational experiences to Idahoans regardless of their location, the New U model would attempt to disrupt the status quo of Idaho's postsecondary system in a way that could lead to increased access for citizens who are not currently captured by or satisfied with other postsecondary options in Idaho. The Idaho Online model would attempt to promote and augment the efficacy of Idaho's current postsecondary institutions regarding online education to ensure more reliable access and improved outcomes for all students, current or prospective.

IMPACT

The Idaho Online model would meet U.S. Treasury Department guidelines for funding from the Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC). The New U approach would not meet criteria for CFAC funding. As such, the details of the Idaho Online approach were presented to CFAC on June 26 as part of the Board's proposal for \$4M to begin development of a digital campus in Idaho. CFAC voted unanimously to support the request.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Comparing Digital Campus Models

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Board staff have been directly involved in the development of the overall vision of a digital campus in Idaho, and have been the primary designers of the Idaho Online model. Successful models of digital campuses in other states, including New York, Florida, Texas, and Georgia, have greatly informed the Idaho Online model. These other models provide empirical evidence that developing a next-generation digital learning environment and online marketplace are powerful methods for increasing access and success for more students. Additionally, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, key aspects of the Idaho Online model could benefit our academic community by the end of the calendar year. These key aspects include a statewide course sharing platform, access to an alternative enterprise learning management system, professional development programs/resource to help faculty transition to hybrid/flexible instruction, and the expansion of dedicated wrap-around services for online students. These investments in online education would ensure greater continuity of course delivery in times of crisis and would prove

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relevant to any form of instruction (online, in-person, or otherwise). Looking to the example set by other states, the Idaho Online model could, in the long term, become increasingly independent by pursuing its own accreditation, developing its own courses, and curating content from other sources. Like those peer examples, however, any long-term vision should be contingent on the needs of Idaho's academic community. Staff recommends the Board pursue the Idaho Online model as a postsecondary digital campus for Idaho.

BOARD ACTION

This item is for informational purposes only.



Toward a Digital Campus

Prospective Models for Improving Educational Access in Idaho

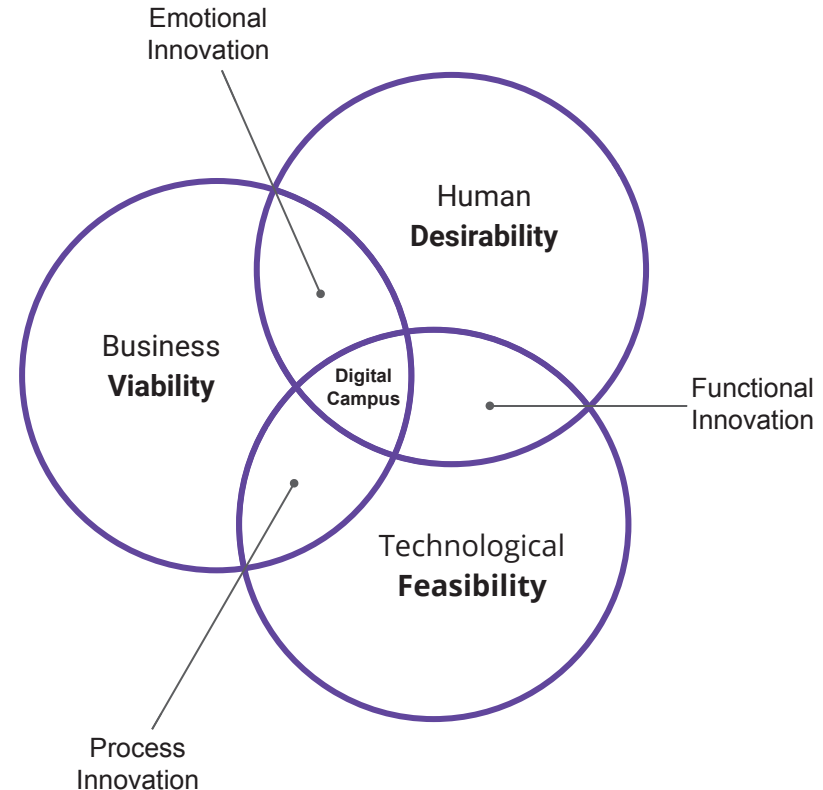
Context

The [Idaho State Board of Education \(SBOE\)](#) recently formed a working group to explore the concept of a “digital campus” that would deliver a low-cost, high-quality, online educational experience to Idahoans regardless of their location.

A digital campus would also provide means for Idaho students to secure work that is both financially and personally fulfilling long-term, enabling them to play an enhanced role in their communities across the state.

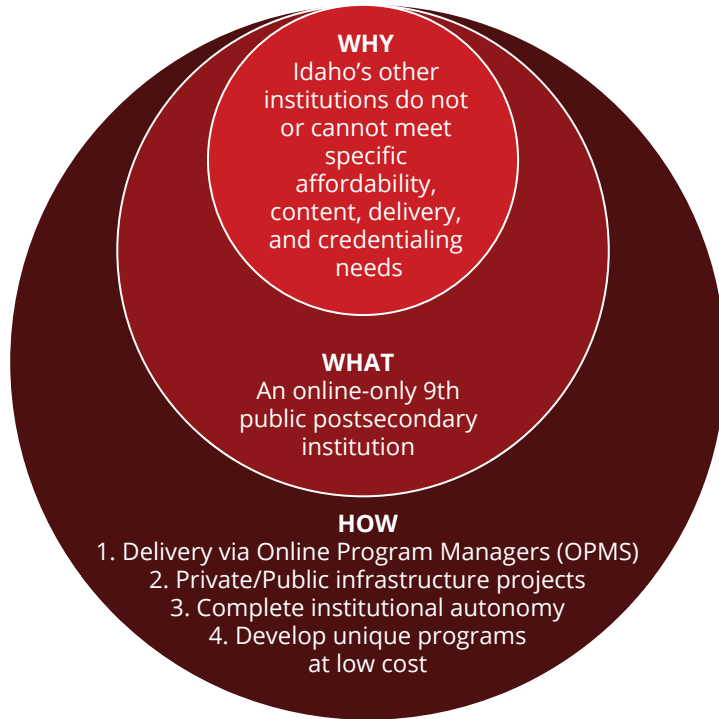
In an effort to design a digital campus that is sufficiently viable, feasible, and desirable as a Higher Education innovation in Idaho, members of the SBOE, SBOE staff, and Boise State’s College of Innovation and Design consulted prominent online and continuing education leaders and models from aspirational institutions/systems as well as the accumulated knowledge of Idaho’s academic community.

The following pages offer two visions for how Idaho’s public institutions may find additional resilience and excellence in uncertain times. The most pronounced difference is that one conception pursues a digital campus as an separate 9th public postsecondary institution while the other positions online learning in Idaho as a [complex adaptive knowledge enterprise](#).

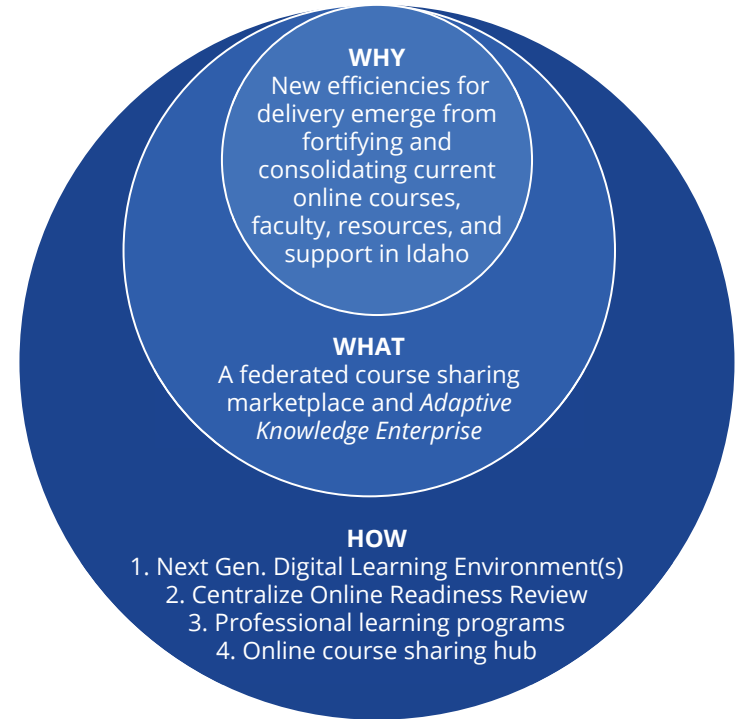


Emergent models

New U



Idaho Online



NEW U

A new, online public postsecondary institution built specifically for the changing and unique needs of all Idahoans

"It's easier to create Tesla than to retrofit and reorganize existing auto manufacturers."

NEW U
PRIORITIES

ACCESSIBLE & TARGETED

- **Built for the unique geography** of Idaho by allowing any Idaho resident to learn where they live and work - rural or otherwise.
- **Flexible for unique life-stages** that many Idahoans find themselves in.
- **Designed for all Idahoans** both traditional aged, finishers, and adult-learners.

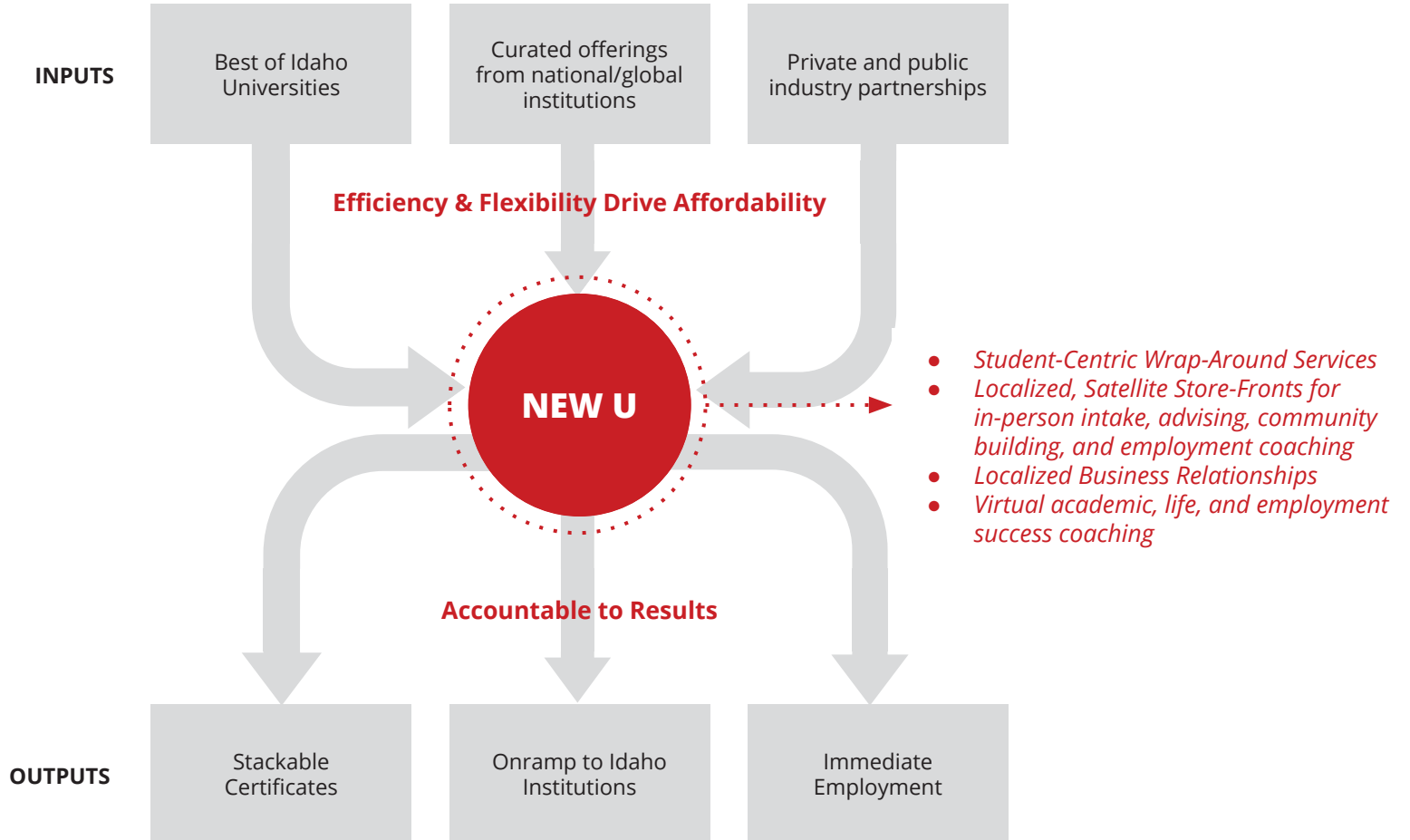
AFFORDABLE

- **Inviting Idaho institutions to contribute** academic content both general education & other academic content.
- **Acquiring best-in-class content from other institutions and private sector** to meet modern demands and ensure competitive costs for Idaho students.
- **Institutional autonomy** for the ability to manage costs and align investment.

ACCOUNTABLE

- **Stackable certificate model** to deliver immediate employability/value and encourage continued progress.
- **Flexible credits to onramp** to our Idaho institutions for further education - specifically General Education and AA degree offramps.
- **Immediate employability** by focusing course design on employable outcomes and potentially to incorporate greater access for rural employer participation and support.

NEW U
DESIGN



NEW U
STRATEGY

INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

The institutional autonomy to manage costs, align investment to content and services, and build private/public industry partnerships.

PURPOSE-BUILT

Built with purpose from the beginning to ensure accessibility, affordability, and accountability optimizing the employability of all students.

STACKABLE MODEL

Every student earns credentials and stackable certificates along the way, therefore delivering immediate value on their way to an A.A. or B.A.

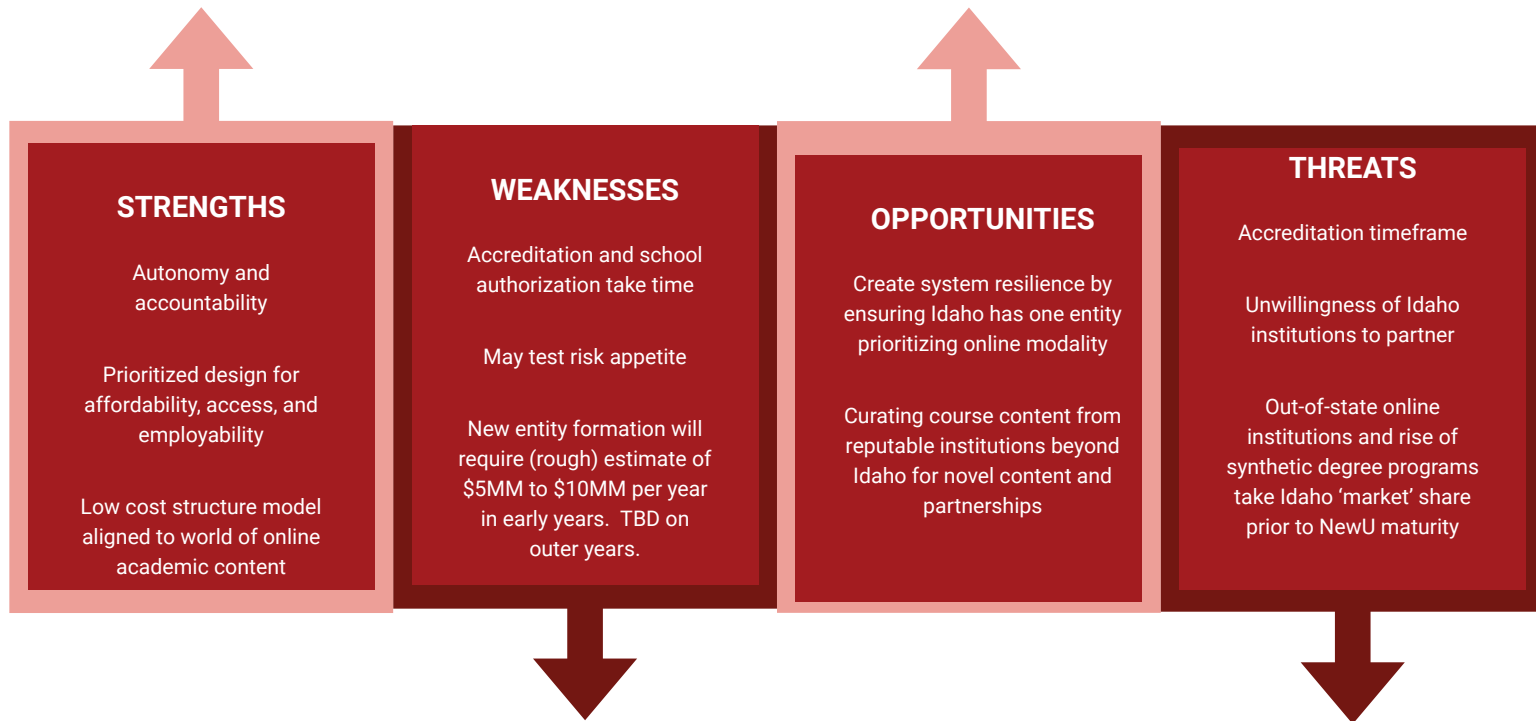
ENHANCE RESILIENCE

Building the future of online learning to enhance resilience and create deliberate onramps to our Idaho institutions.

FAST-TO-LAUNCH

Launch with non-credit credentials and for-credit gen-ed courses. A.A.'s within 1-2 years.
Select B.A.'s within 2-3 years.

NEW U SWOT



IDAHO ONLINE

A Course Sharing Marketplace and Knowledge Enterprise

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."
-African Proverb*

IDAHO ONLINE
PRIORITIES

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

- **Use a digital-first design** that leverages strategic personnel distributed across all Idaho institutions.
- **Deliver online and flexible courses and technology services** that benefit the entire academic community.
- **Design for all Idahoans**, prioritizing accessibility and inclusive design principles.

AFFORDABILITY

- **Reconcile the price of online learning across all Idaho institutions** via a statewide marketplace for sharing online courses/programs.
- **Increase efficiencies in delivery and support** of online education through consolidation of duplicative licenses and services.

VALUE

- **Streamline the student experience** through inter-institutional pathways to degrees, stackable credentials, credit transfer, student advising, quality assurance, open educational resources, and prior learning assessment.
- **Provide immediate and fully accredited courses and programs** providing direct onramps into Idaho's higher education institutions and to immediate employment.
- **Engineer learning across a lifetime in Idaho** through consolidation of key data systems, including workforce data and learning analytics.

IDAHO ONLINE
DESIGN

Consortial Services

Academic Community

- Personalized student services
- Applied learning experiences for faculty/students
- Comprehensive faculty support for online instruction
- OER development and publishing support

Public Institutions

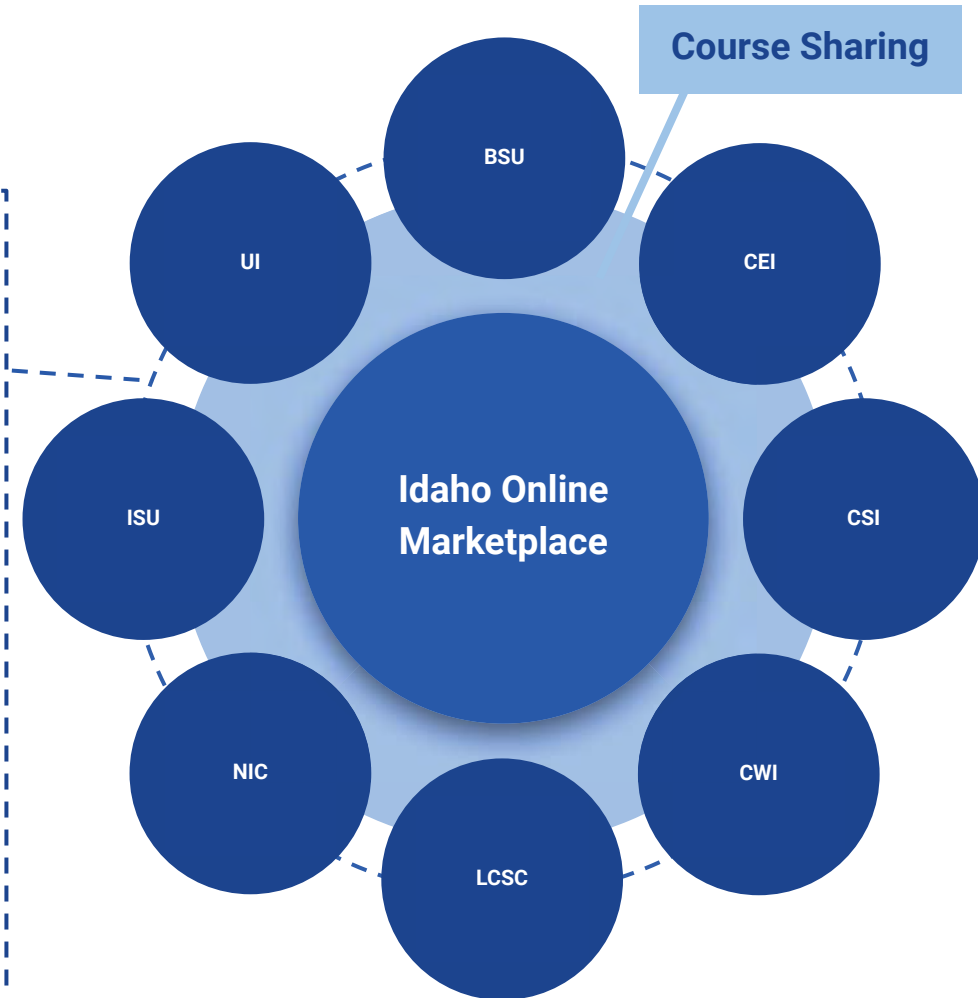
- Promotion and marketing of online courses/programs
- A shared, robust academic technology portfolio
- Statewide student and workforce data analytics

Local/Regional Employers

- Statewide co-ops/internships/externships/apprenticeships
- Continuing ed. and workforce development partnerships
- New program/curriculum development with institutions

The Public

- Open access to resources, programming, and research
- Advising, documentation, and data to better inform Idahoans' decisions about higher education



IDAHO ONLINE
STRATEGY

ONLINE LEADERSHIP

Ensure independent board oversight to reconcile the cost of online course offerings across public institutions.

**ADAPTIVE ONLINE
MARKETPLACE**

Deliver online courses via federated course sharing as a scalable means of meeting programmatic needs.

ASSURED COURSE QUALITY

Establish and maintain high standards for online readiness and content quality for marketplace inventory.

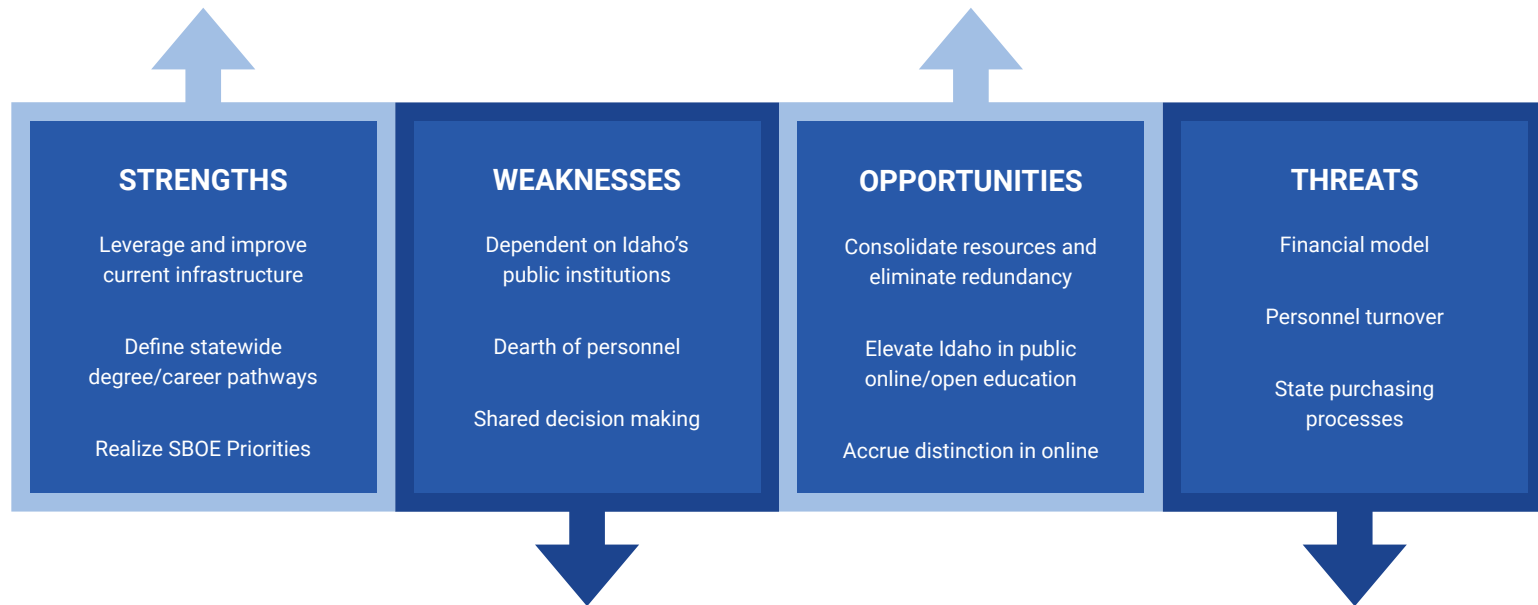
**NEXT-GENERATION DIGITAL
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Complement institutions' portfolios of enterprise technology and centralize common vendor licenses to ensure faculty and students have the technical tools they need to succeed.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Build a more reliable ecosystem for marketing high-need skills, stacking postsecondary credentials, and collaborating with industry on new curricular paths.

IDAHO ONLINE SWOT



Comparing Digital Campus Models

NEW U	IDAHO ONLINE
Digital Campus as separate online postsecondary institution	Digital campus as shared online practices, programs, and services
Has autonomy to utilize resources from out-of-state institutions & industry	Utilizes opportunities and resources from all Idaho institutions
Potential for co-curricular employment programs in 2020; Launch GenEd and AA level academic programming pursuant to acceptable plan for pursuing accreditation	Marketplace of existing online programs and robust technology portfolio would benefit Idaho students and institutions as early as fall 2020
Accreditation strategy and plan would need to be developed	All content and programming is regionally accredited via Idaho institutions
Targeting select BA degrees at \$15,000 and AA degrees at parity to community colleges	Radical affordability via market transparency and negotiation
Could attempt to align with SBOE goals and priorities	Directly and deliberately advances SBOE goals and priorities (OER, PLA, CCA, Dual Credit)
Does not qualify for CFAC funding	Qualifies for CFAC funding
Comparables: WGU	Comparables: Open SUNY , BYU Pathway Worldwide , UMass Online , Unizin

Some considerations

A new, fully online and accredited institution could be established immediately and for free by partnering with WGU to establish WGU-Idaho

Fully realizing Idaho Online's portfolio of services will be a significant lift without some dedicated state-level personnel

Both models support discussions of how to bridge Idaho's digital divide

The President's Leadership Council (PLC) has endorsed the idea of Board Staff managing a course sharing marketplace

The PLC has expressed strong reservations about a fully online 9th institution regardless of its accreditation status

Some strategic independence from other institutions benefits both models