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**BOARD APPROVES FIRST READING OF DRAFT POLICY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION; APPROVES LEASE FOR NEW U
of I LAW SCHOOL BUILDING IN BOISE**

The Idaho State Board of Education Board of Education today conducted a first reading of a draft higher education policy defining the terms diversity, educational equity, and inclusion and includes standards for freedom of expression on the campuses of Idaho’s public four-year institutions.

The draft policy is a result of ongoing Board discussions about updating these policies and this is the next step in that process.

If approved, the policy will require each institution to establish and maintain policies for addressing claims of oppression and unlawful discrimination and safeguarding the rights of individuals to participate in meaningful experiences that foster belonging and promote awareness of differing viewpoints.

“We want to make sure that all voices and viewpoints are heard and respected on our campuses,” State Board President Kurt Liebich said. “This draft policy adopts uniform definitions of key terms that will be utilized at all institutions, creating more accountability across our higher education system. This policy is aligned with HB 377 passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.”

Here's a link to the draft policy:

<https://boardofed.idaho.gov/meetings/board/archive/2021/062821/IRSA.pdf>

The public can send comments to: board@osbe.idaho.gov

Final consideration of the draft policy will occur at the regular Board meeting in August.

Other Board actions:

- Approved a University of Idaho request to lease the former Concordia Law School building on Front Street in Boise. The U of I College of Law in Boise will move to the building, vacating the old Ada County Courthouse, across the street from the Idaho Statehouse, which the law school says no longer meets their size and program needs. The lease on the new facility will cost \$600,000 per year for the first five years of the contract, with subsequent increases every five years. The U of I also will have an option to purchase the building every five years.
- Approved a \$2.4 million contract to purchase procurement software needed to support the consolidation of purchasing functions among the four 4-year institutions. Most of the cost will be covered by a \$2.5 million appropriation from the Legislature. The institutions will divide remaining costs. The purchase is part of a Board initiative to streamline and improve public higher education operations through a “systemness” approach.

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