
Pathway Missionary Orientation: Module 1

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Module 1 — Overview & Vision

Laying the Foundation

For more than 120 years, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been offering educational opportunities to students in Rexburg, Idaho. What started as Bannock Stake Academy in 1888, then changed to Ricks College in 1923, and eventually became Brigham Young University-Idaho in 2001, is an institution committed to providing students with a high-quality, Church-based education.

Today, thousands of individuals from all over the world come to BYU-Idaho to pursue a college degree. And while the university serves numerous students on campus every year, it has long been realized that there are yet thousands more who could benefit from a BYU-Idaho education, but because of distance, cost, or other obstacles, are kept from pursuing their goals.

Jacob Spori, the first principal of Bannock Stake Academy, shared his vision during a speech on the school's opening day on November 12, 1888:

"The seeds we're planting today will grow and become mighty oaks and their branches will run all over the earth."

In 1971, Henry B. Eyring expanded the school's vision when he said the following during his first address as president of Ricks College. Please pay attention to what he says about "moving the blessings of education" beyond Rexburg.

"We must also find ways for this college to serve young people whose needs are shaped by a great variety of cultures and situations, and who may not be able to come to this campus.... We will find direct ways to move the blessings of education ... from this campus out into the lives of men and women everywhere."

Nearly 30 years later, David A. Bednar made a similar statement in *his* initial speech as president of Ricks College.

"It will be necessary for us ... to serve ever better the thousands of students we have on campus while simultaneously reaching out to bless the lives of tens of thousands of young Latter-day Saints throughout the world.... We must learn to assist and bless institute students and other LDS youth in Rhode Island and Rome while effectively serving our students on campus in Rexburg."

Throughout the past more than 100 years, these brethren's messages have shared a common theme: BYU-Idaho will find ways to educate more students — wherever they live — without having them come to campus in Rexburg, Idaho. And in 2009, the university launched Pathway — its most successful initiative toward reaching that goal.

Pathway: Taking Church-based Education to the World

Pathway is a **low-cost** educational opportunity that mixes the flexibility of **online courses** with the benefits of **local student-to-student interaction**. Students earn college credit that is eligible for transfer to BYU-Idaho and other universities. The program takes one year (or three semesters) to complete, and can lead to employment opportunities, a local education option, or certificates and degrees from BYU-Idaho.

Each semester, Pathway students take a light course load consisting of online academic and religious education, and also gather once a week at their local institute or church meetinghouse. There, they meet with other classmates and Pathway missionaries, where they participate in additional educational and leadership activities.

The Purposes of Pathway

Pathway has three main purposes:

1. Get the gospel down into students' hearts
 - a. Students' testimonies grow as they enjoy the fellowship of other LDS students and participate in courses taught within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unlike other Church educational programs, participation in Pathway is not contingent upon personal worthiness, which means all Church members can participate — no matter their background. Thus, Pathway can be a great tool to rescue, reactivate, and retain members of the Church.
2. Help students become capable learners
 - a. Pathway helps students build confidence in a supportive environment. Students learn through a process of preparation, teaching others, and internalizing their learning through reflection and application. As students learn by the Spirit, they become capable learners.
3. Prepare students to lead and support families
 - a. Pathway helps students become self-reliant. Throughout their education, Pathway students gain skills, learn doctrines, and strengthen values that enable them to gain meaningful employment as well as be better parents, providers, citizens, and Church members.

After Pathway

At the end of the Pathway year, students have a variety of opportunities available to them. Whether it's **improved job prospects**, a **local educational option**, or a **degree from BYU-Idaho** — students will have the confidence and skills needed to navigate their personal path and reach their goals.

How Missionaries Fit In with the Vision

As a Pathway missionary, you play a vital part in fulfilling the purposes and objectives of Pathway, as well as BYU-Idaho. Your primary responsibilities include caring for enrolled students, informing Church members about Pathway's unique opportunities and blessings, and facilitating weekly gatherings with Pathway students. Throughout your training, you will learn more about your role and other specific details about Pathway.