



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMENTS BY GEOFFREY S. MEARNES
MARCH 30, 2018**

I am pleased to report that the planning process for our strategic plan, “Spreading Our Wings,” is well underway. I have appointed a strategic planning committee, which has been meeting regularly since January. The initial focus is to develop many ways to gather input from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and our community partners.

The committee’s first opportunity to share and gather information and ideas took place at a joint Foundation Board and Alumni Council session in February. Last week, we distributed a survey to faculty, staff, and students to gain their perspective on our current state, as well as our future goals.

This week, we kicked off a series of nine open forums, each with a different strategic theme. The forums are structured to be highly interactive and engaging and to spur creative and innovative ideas. On Monday evening, we held a forum specifically for students. In the coming weeks, we will host a second forum for

students and six on-campus open forums for faculty and staff. A forum for community partners will be held later this Spring.

We also have six working groups comprised of faculty and staff from different colleges, departments, and divisions. These working groups are gathering vital information and important data that the committee will consider during our visioning and priority-setting process.

While we are charting a course for our second century, we are also preparing for next Fall. It is still early to predict the size and characteristics of the Fall 2018 freshman class, but we anticipate another academically prepared, diverse class similar to the last two years. Transfer recruitment is also going well.

In order to prepare for our future, we are completing a strategic enrollment planning process. Our purposes for engaging in this process is to promote stability and sustainability, and to identify growth opportunities in our enrollment. We must also ensure our enrollment plan aligns with our University's strategic plan and that we are responding appropriately to an ever-changing market place. This process and resulting strategies are critical to foster long-term enrollment and the fiscal health of the institution.

Students are attracted to our University because of our outstanding academic programs and our dedicated, talented faculty. In March, Professor Brent Cole from the College of Fine Arts was awarded a 2018-2019 Fulbright U. S. Scholar grant to

study in Poland next Spring. Brent is one of two Fulbright Scholars from the College of Fine Arts within the last three years. Professor Ken Hall from the Department of History, was also awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study in India this Fall.

Speaking of outstanding achievements, Carmen Grande, the point guard on our women's basketball team, has been named to the 2017-18 College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-America First Team. Carmen becomes only the second player in program history to earn the honor and the first since Kate Endress in 2005.

Also, Ball State soccer goalkeeper Alyssa Heintschel and field hockey midfielder Carley Shannon have both been selected for prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships. They will each receive a \$7,500 scholarship toward the graduate degree program of their choice.

Shifting gears now to our commitment to our community.

As you know, earlier this year, our University was presented with an historic opportunity to assume the responsibility of appointing a board to manage the Muncie Community Schools. The General Assembly concluded its legislative session without conducting final votes on HB 1315, but Governor Holcomb has

called for a special session of the General Assembly in May. So, it is not yet clear whether this legislation will be revived.

Irrespective of the result of that session, I am grateful to all of the people who supported the proposed legislation—many members of the General Assembly, community leaders, school board members, and MCS teachers, staff, and parents, as well as Ball State faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends. Their encouragement gives me great optimism for the future of our University and our community.

Moreover, we will continue to partner with MCS in meaningful ways through various classrooms, teachers, and programs, even if the opportunity for a more comprehensive approach is not approved by the General Assembly.

It's an exciting time to be at Ball State University as we begin to celebrate our Centennial. A large and diverse group of faculty, staff, and alumni have developed a plan — “Proud Past and Bright Future” — to commemorate this historic anniversary. The plan is creative and comprehensive. Faculty and staff will have the opportunity to begin the celebration on campus in June. And in September, we will have a major event that will feature a special Centennial documentary produced by our talented students. Throughout the year, academic colleges, units, and departments will have the opportunity to highlight the great

things happening on our campus. And we will embark on a tour of Indiana to share our story of success and impact.

Propelled by an innovative, immersive approach to education and guided by clear and enduring values, our University will continue to build the bright, bold future that is worthy of the women and the men who had the vision and the generosity to found our University nearly 100 years ago.

Thank you.