



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMENTS BY GEOFFREY S. MEARNES
March 29, 2019**

Spring has just arrived, but the season is shaping up to be a busy one for our campus and our University community.

We continue to see promising increases in our enrollment figures for Fall 2019. Since I updated you in February, we have received a steady submission of applications, bringing us to more than 26,800 high school students who have applied to our University—an all-time record. Our total applicants have increased more than 14 percent over last year, with 31 percent of our applicants applying as test-optional. As you heard from Kay Bales, acceptances and confirmations remain ahead of last year's pace.

I also want to update you about a few of our facilities projects underway.

With your approval of the bond financing for our new Foundational Sciences Building, we will break ground on the building this summer. The building will be

built immediately to the south of our new Health Professions Building and is scheduled to open in Fall 2021.

Our Health Professions Building remains on schedule, as does the construction of our new North Residential Neighborhood. The installation of the structural steel for the first of the neighborhood's two new residence halls is nearly complete, and workers are finishing the concrete floors.

The new dining facility is also taking shape, and we anticipate its exterior will be finished in a few months. Both of these new facilities will open in 2020. In June, we will break ground on our second new residence hall in the neighborhood.

In related facilities news, earlier this week I announced a new use for the former Mitchell Elementary School, a property we purchased from Muncie Community Schools in 2017. In August, the school will become the Mitchell Early Childhood and Family Center, a facility that will provide innovative early childcare programming by virtue of a new partnership with our Child Study Center and the YMCA of Muncie's Apple Tree Child Development Center.

The Mitchell Center is the latest example of our University's expanded efforts to build strong relationships with the community. We are proud to support partnerships that seek to improve educational opportunities for young children to reach their developmental potential.

I also have good news regarding a few new University hires.

First, we have hired two new deans to join our academic leadership team.

Dr. Seth Beckman will begin July 1 as our new dean of the College of Fine Arts. Dr. Beckman is an alumnus who earned his master of music and doctor of arts degrees at the University. He currently serves as the dean of the Mary Pappert School of Music at Duquesne University, a position he has held since 2014.

I am also pleased to announce that Dr. Stephen Ferris will serve as the new dean of our Miller College of Business. Dr. Ferris will bring extensive administrative experience and an entrepreneurial spirit to our University when he begins his appointment on July 1. Currently, he is the dean at the College of Business at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs.

We have also selected Dr. Marsha McGriff as our new associate vice president for inclusive excellence. Currently, Dr. McGriff is a director in the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs at Indiana University. Her knowledge and experience will be invaluable as she leads our new President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence. She begins in her new role on May 1.

We are making progress in several other searches underway for key administrative and academic posts; I will have more news to share about these positions soon.

In the meantime, I ask that you mark your calendars for a few important events coming up.

The first event is our inaugural One Ball State Day on April 9. For 24 hours, Cardinals from across the country will join together to make gifts to the academic areas, to student organizations, and to funds that matter most to them.

We will have hourly challenges, including a challenge pool funded by the Foundation's Board of Directors, our Alumni Council, and our Board of Trustees. As of Tuesday, we have received \$53,000 in challenge pledges from our University's leaders. I want to thank everyone who donated. Your generosity will inspire others to give.

Additionally, more than 95 departments, units, and student organizations are participating in the event. We are asking the campus community to spread the message about this special event by taking photos in their Ball State gear and sharing them online with #OneBallState to help make our hashtag trend.

We also look forward to our first Day of Beneficence, a Ball State Alumni Day of Service, on April 13. We are inviting our alumni to participate in local service projects across the country—including several here in Muncie—as we celebrate Ball State's tradition of beneficence.

Lastly, I want to remind the board that we will hold a closing event for our Centennial on June 14. It has been an exciting year as we have honored our first

century in numerous ways—from special concerts and lectures to throwback athletics events and monthly spotlights of our colleges. We look forward to coming together for a final celebration of our proud past in recognition of our University’s 100th anniversary. We anticipate closing the University at 1 p.m. as we invite the campus community to bring their families for an afternoon of food, fun, and games.

Thank you.