Mearns Expresses Enthusiasm, Ambition for Ball State

Ball State University President Geoffrey S. Mearns opened the 2017-18 academic year with an address to faculty and professional staff in Ernser Auditorium. What follows are excerpts of his remarks.

Early Impressions
When my appointment was announced in January, I said that my first responsibility was to learn more about the people and the programs here at Ball State. I know from experience that, if I am going to be able to lead effectively, I must have a greater understanding of your perspectives, your past contributions, and your aspirations for our future.

So, what have I learned during these first three months? Simply put, in a short period of time, my appreciation, my respect, and my admiration for you and your work have grown significantly. I am proud to be a member of this University community. And, I am energized and optimistic about our future.

Financial Condition
Our University’s financial condition is very sound. For many years, we have managed our resources prudently and strategically. This practice enabled us to approve the smallest undergraduate tuition increase in more than 40 years.

We have also benefitted from the state’s sustained investment in public higher education. We are fortunate because Indiana is one of only a small handful of states that is now investing more money in public higher education today than prior to the Great Recession.

We will continue to ask the Governor and the General Assembly for additional increases in our operating appropriation. Our students deserve that support. But we should— and we will—begin that appeal with an expression of gratitude.

We are benefitting from the state’s significant investments in our facilities: $62 million for a new Health Professions Building (that construction project is now underway), and $87 million to build a new science building. Because of the state’s investment, we will be able to use our resources to build the first two phases of the East Mall Greenway. This pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly path will eventually run from Ashland Avenue to Neely Avenue.

Our careful, prudent fiscal planning has also enabled us to build and maintain our residence halls. I’ve moved my children into many rooms on several college campuses, and I can assure you that none of those residence halls was even remotely as nice as the ones that we have on our campus.

Our affordable tuition and our beautiful, modern facilities attract outstanding students. And our enrollment has grown.

Enrollment, Graduation Milestones
This fall we enrolled one of the largest freshman classes in our history. And these new students are as well qualified and are more diverse than last year’s class.

More good news: our total enrollment this year exceeds 22,500 students. We have enrolled more students this year than in any year in our history. That’s something to celebrate.

Since 1997, our critical freshman-to-sophomore retention rate has increased approximately 13 percentage points. During that same 20-year time period, the collective national retention rate for all colleges and universities has increased only two or three percentage points. So, our improvement has been truly dramatic.

We are graduating more students, and they are earning their degrees on time. Our four-year graduation rates have increased 65 percent in just seven years. And, we have made great progress in closing the “achievement gap” of underrepresented minority students. Between 2011 and 2016, the on-time graduation rate for our minority students has increased by nearly 16 percentage points. That’s almost twice the statewide average.

But the most significant reason that more and more excellent, ambitious students choose Ball State is because of our outstanding programs. We have an excellent reputation for academic quality, and that reputation continues to improve.

Strategic Planning
By the end of the Fall semester, I will appoint a strategic planning committee. The committee will present a proposed final Strategic Plan to the Board of Trustees no later than December 2018.

It would be premature and presumptuous for me to predict precisely what will be included in our strategic plan. But I do have some preliminary thoughts.

• We should accelerate our transition from delivering content in the classroom. Because of technology, our students can obtain information much more efficiently in other ways than a traditional lecture. So, we should continue to use our classrooms to foster discussions to help our students better appreciate the critical difference
update from president mearns (continued)

between information and knowledge and discerning judgment.

- We should expand our efforts to impart valuable skills—skills that apply to a student’s chosen discipline, as well as more universal skills that all graduates need in order to succeed.
- We should increase the number and variety of opportunities for students to apply the knowledge and judgment that they have gained and the skills that they have acquired to “real world” challenges through immersive learning, as well as internships and practicums.
- We should ensure that students have many opportunities to meet and interact with people from different cultures or who have different perspectives and opinions. These experiences may ensure that, after they graduate, students will embrace the intellectual curiosity and the passion for lifelong learning that will enable them to thrive in a dynamic and interconnected world.

as we begin another academic year, a year filled with great promise and opportunity. i hope that you share my enthusiasm, my optimism, and my ambition for our university. also, please pause to reflect upon our good fortune—on how truly fortunate we all are to be members of an institution whose mission is so fundamentally and intrinsically good.

our university changes lives for the better, and each one of us plays a role in that good work.

Achievements App Helps Freshmen Succeed

Ball State Achievements is a gamified mobile app available to all Ball State freshmen. The goal of the app is to increase engagement and retention of first-year students by rewarding them for their success and involvement at the university.

In the app, students are given hundreds of tasks and goals called achievements. Upon completing an achievement, students earn Bennies, an in-app currency named after our beloved Beneficence. Students can then spend their Bennies to receive real rewards from the Ball State Book Store, Technology Store, and Jo Ann Gora Recreation and Wellness Center.

Today, more than 2,000 students have completed over 100,000 achievements. Needless to say, students enjoy the program, and we’ve been keeping them busy! Furthermore, the program is having a significant impact on retention.

Achievements has also drawn its fair share of media attention and accolades from the education, technology, and gamification industries. In 2016, the app earned its highest award yet: Best Education Project 2016 from the Gamification World Congress Conference in Madrid, Spain.

To download the app, send your student to bsu.edu/achievements.

Ball State Achievements App Year-in-Review 2016–17 Academic Year

Achievements App freshman student users had higher GPAs and persisted 14 percentage points higher in fall-to-fall retention than nonparticipants.

New Student Users: 766
Achievements Earned: 64,310
Store Items Awarded: 1,586

Ball State Achievements was awarded Best Education Project 2016 from the Gamification World Congress Conference in Madrid, Spain.

Top 5 Achievements Earned
1. Workout in the fitness center
2. Study in the library
3. Register for class
4. Improve your GPA
5. Meet with your academic advisor

Top 5 Store Items Awarded
1. Apple EarPods
2. Skull Candy earbuds
3. Ball State sweatpants
4. Under Armour Ball State hat
5. Beneficence ugly holiday sweatshirt

Dates to Remember

November 22, Wednesday
Residence halls close at 8 a.m.

November 22-26, Wednesday-Sunday
Thanksgiving recess — no classes
University offices open Wednesday

November 26, Sunday
Residence halls open at 9 a.m.

November 27, Monday
Classes resume

December 12-15, Tuesday-Friday
Final examination period

December 15, Friday
Fall semester ends

December 16, Saturday
Commencement
Residence halls close at 4 p.m.

December 16-January 7
Semester break

January 7, Sunday
Residence halls open at 9 a.m.

January 8, Monday
Spring semester classes begin

January 15, Monday
MLK Day recess — no classes
University offices closed

March 3, Saturday
Residence halls close at 8 a.m.

March 3-11, Saturday-Sunday
Spring Break — no classes
University offices open

March 11, Sunday
Residence halls open at 9 a.m.

March 12, Monday
Classes resume

for more events and key dates, visit bsu.edu/calendar.
Career Center Receives National Award

The Ball State University Career Center has been named the 2017 recipient of the Career Services Excellence Award from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The distinction is awarded for excellence in career services and best practices providing guidance, service, and resources to students.

"The process of striving for national recognition empowers us to serve our students and partners better—something our team is very passionate about—as evidenced by being the only career center in the country to earn the Career Services Excellence Award at our national conference," said Jim McAtee, director of the Career Center. "I'm so proud of the entire team in the Career Center for earning this national award."

The Career Center also has an impressive career placement rate: 93 percent.

This success did not happen overnight. The Career Center team has spent several years developing and implementing a strategy to become a career center that is relevant today and positions itself for the future. The Career Center has adopted a servant leadership model that enables it to serve faculty, employers, and alumni to prepare students for success. This is represented in its mission statement:

"To connect all of our partners for the purpose of helping students integrate their curricular and cocurricular experiences, to package and tell those stories, empowering lifetimes of post-graduation success."

In addition to servant leadership, the career center has developed career infusion programs for students such as:

- KEY Careers
- Intern-Ready
- Career-Ready
- Practice Interview Program

These programs leverage the classroom experience to ensure students are receiving quality preparation to be competitive in their initial job search process and future endeavors. Alumni and employers are invited back to campus to lend their expertise to these programs as well.

"The Career Center's ability to try new things and be leaders in our industry is directly connected to the support of our campus groups, departments, administration, employers, and alumni," McAtee said. "We are grateful to share the honor of this award with the Ball State University community."

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Thank you, Ball State parents!

Your gifts to the Parents Annual Fund last academic year helped to provide critical funding to benefit students. Here are a couple examples of how we used your gifts:

- **Late Nite** provided students with a safe, alcohol-free environment where new friendships were formed. These events always draw a great crowd and continue to be a student favorite. The annual Late Nite Carnival attracted more than 7,700 guests.
- Your support of the Parents Annual Fund also made emergency aid available to students in need. Thank you for helping to ensure all Cardinals achieve their goal of receiving a Ball State diploma.

Every gift makes a difference and is put to work so that your student, and their classmates, benefit. We look forward to speaking with you during the 2017-2018 Parents Annual Fund campaign. We appreciate your support of Ball State students.

Make your 2017 gift to the Parents Fund at bsu.edu/give.

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Get flu shot

Flu season is right around the corner. Please remind your student to receive a flu vaccination to prevent the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone, 6 months of age and older, to get a flu vaccine every year.

**Students can receive a flu shot at the Ball State University Health Center by appointment at 765-285-8431, or at one of our mobile flu vaccination clinics.**

More information about the mobile flu clinics will be sent to students’ Ball State email address.

With Best Regards,

D. Dorman, MD
Medical Director
Student Health Center
The information presented here, correct at the
time of publication, is subject to change.
Ball State University practices equal opportunity
in education and employment and is strongly
and actively committed to diversity within its
community.
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Stay Connected
We welcome your questions and
comments as we partner with you
to ensure your student enjoys a fulfilling
and successful experience at Ball State
and beyond. Email Katie Slabaugh,
associate dean of students/Title IX
coordinator, at kslabaugh@bsu.edu,
call 765-285-1545, or write to her at the
Office of the Vice President for Student
Affairs, Bracken Administration Building,
room 238, Ball State University,
Muncie, IN 47306-0830.

Ball State University Telephone Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>765-285-1545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bursar</td>
<td>765-285-1643</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Information</td>
<td>765-285-5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Center</td>
<td>765-285-1522</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
<td>765-285-1736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
<td>765-285-1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Services</td>
<td>765-285-5293</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid and Scholarships</td>
<td>765-285-5800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Center</td>
<td>765-285-8431</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Residence Life</td>
<td>765-285-8000</td>
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<td>Learning Center</td>
<td>765-285-1006</td>
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<td>Multicultural Center</td>
<td>765-285-1344</td>
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<td>Parking Services</td>
<td>765-285-1208</td>
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<td>Police</td>
<td>765-285-1111</td>
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<td>Registrar</td>
<td>765-285-1722</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retention and Graduation Specialists</td>
<td>765-285-3312</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Legal Services</td>
<td>765-285-1888</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Life</td>
<td>765-285-2621</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Rights and Community Standards</td>
<td>765-285-5036</td>
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Many of these offices can be reached using the university’s
toll-free number, 800-382-8540. Campus information is
always available at bsu.edu.