



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
COMMENTS BY GEOFFREY S. MEARNES  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2018**

Last evening, we celebrated our University's 100th anniversary at our Centennial Celebration. As the first of our Centennial events, this special evening featured the debut of our student-produced Centennial documentary, *From Normal to Extraordinary: Ball State's First Century*. The celebration was also an opportunity for us to recognize our University's enduring values—excellence, integrity, social responsibility, respect, and gratitude.

I want to thank you, our Board, for your support of this yearlong celebration. In the months to come, there will be Centennial-themed art exhibitions, musical events, speaking engagements, and theater performances for the campus community to enjoy.

As we celebrate our proud past, it is imperative that we plan for our bright future.

Later this month, we will unveil the draft of our new strategic plan. This ambitious plan establishes the long-term goals for our University for 2040. The plan will be guided by our core values, as articulated in our Beneficence Pledge. To make measurable progress toward our 2040 goals, the plan also identifies a series of high-level, strategic imperatives to be executed by 2024.

This Fall, we will conduct a series of forums on campus to seek additional input from the community before we present a final draft of the strategic plan for the approval of the board in December. I am grateful to all faculty, staff, students, and community members who have participated in our “Spreading Our Wings” strategic planning process so far. Together, we will produce the mission statement, vision statement, core values, and strategic goals that will lead our University into our second century.

Among the strategic goals that will be highlighted in the draft plan is our University’s desire to build on our legacy of service. As you all know, our most ambitious community initiative is our latest partnership with Muncie Community Schools. We are encouraged to learn that the enrollment decline at MCS is less than projected for the 2018-19 academic year, and that the school district has a need to hire more elementary school teachers as a result. As you just heard Dr. Marilyn Buck report, we are moving forward with the development of a community engagement council, a national expert panel, and other strategic

initiatives that will help improve the educational experiences for all of the children in Muncie.

Our own enrollment continues to be strong. Our freshman class will be a little smaller than last year's, which was more than 4,000 new freshmen. And our total enrollment won't break last year's record of 22,513 students. But I am pleased to report that this year's freshmen class will be as qualified and as diverse as last year's class.

Finally, I am excited to share that our football team racked up more than 650 yards in a 42-6 victory in its season opener against Central Connecticut. After we adjourn, several of you will join me as we travel to South Bend to cheer our Cardinals on as they play Notre Dame tomorrow. It is a great time to be a fan of Ball State sports, and I am proud of our athletes who are proving both on and off the court that, at Ball State, We Fly. Go Cardinals!