

# **Ball State University**

*Education Redesigned 2.0: Advancing Indiana*

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*Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association Colleges and Schools*



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## Introduction to the Self-Study Report

### Presidential Welcome

(View a [personal message](#) from Ball State University President Jo Ann Gora to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.)

### Evolution of a University

Ball State University opened in 1918 as the **Indiana State Normal School Eastern Division**. The Ball brothers had purchased the land and buildings that had housed a series of local colleges dating back to 1899, all of which had failed financially and closed. The brothers donated the property to the State of Indiana. In 1922, the Indiana General Assembly changed the school's name to **Ball Teachers College** in honor of the generosity of the Ball family.

In 1925, the institution received its initial regional accreditation. In 1929, the name changed to **Ball State Teachers College**. Though previous attempts to build an institution of higher education had failed in Muncie, Ball State Teachers College established a solid foundation and began to grow.

In the 1960s, the Indiana General Assembly recognized the institution's phenomenal growth in enrollment and facilities and the variety and quality of its education programs and services by elevating the regional college to a university—**Ball State University**. The university continued to grow for several more decades until it reached its current stable enrollment of about 21,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in on-campus and off-campus programs.

Ball State was recently classified as a research university, high research activity (RU/H) by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This was one of the more recent examples of the growth and evolution of Ball State University. (Watch a video about the [history of Ball State](#) to learn more about the institution's development.)

The Ball family continues to support the institution with a relative serving on the Board of Trustees since the opening of the college. The symbol of Ball State is the winged statue **Beneficence**, which was created to pay tribute to the Ball family. The university continues to honor the contributions of the Ball family with annual Ball family reunions, which began in 2008 celebrating the university's 90th anniversary. These have brought many members of the family to Muncie to visit the institution that bears their family name.

### Progress from Previous Review

While Ball State met all five criteria in its last accreditation review by the **Higher Learning Commission** in 2003–04, we took seriously the constructive criticism and collegial counsel that the visiting peer review team provided. In particular, the team advised us to make our **strategic planning process** more transparent and obvious to the university community—

how strategic planning guides budgetary decisions, within the framework provided by the state, and the relationships among the evolving university facilities master plan, the state's capital funding priorities, and what is ultimately constructed.

We also appreciated the team's support for our **assessment efforts** and accepted the responsibility to continue the evolution of assessment in our culture so it would become an essential element of decision making in all university units. In particular, while respecting the value of assessment at different levels in the university and across all vice presidential divisions, we have tried to maximize the impact of assessment through university-level aggregation and reporting. Similarly, we have continued the redesign of our University Core Curriculum and its assessment.

A final suggestion pertained to **executive communication** between our president and our Board of Trustees. As documented in this self-study report, Ball State's president and governing board enjoy a cordial, collaborative working relationship. The president is the primary conduit of information to the board, and she invites the members of the President's Cabinet to contribute regularly to board meetings. She also invites others—deans, associate vice presidents, distinguished faculty, and students—to provide specific information the board may desire. Substantial evidence exists that the Board of Trustees feels well-informed and able to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.

## Transparent Planning

Since 2004, Ball State has engaged in several **formal strategic planning efforts**, as is more fully explained in this self-study report. It is important to highlight at this point, however, that each plan was guided by the university's provost and drafted by a task force representative of the entire university community. Each task force invited comments from all university constituencies in several open sessions and targeted specific groups (e.g., students, faculty and staff, trustees, administrators) in special sessions that included focus groups and retreats.

The task forces proceeded to construct **values statements**, from which followed statements of the university's **vision and mission**. In consistent fashion, **goals and objectives** were then written. Perhaps most important for clear definition and for benchmarking progress, specific **performance metrics** were written. In many cases, these were ambitious measurements that caused us to stretch ourselves, which proved to be important in making the case that Ball State understood that the changing economic environment required us to be creative and to learn to accomplish more with less. These metrics added an impetus for us to "work smarter" as well as harder.

Throughout these strategic planning processes, we reported annually in forums, retreats, in written communications, in special university publications, and in testimony before the **Indiana Commission for Higher Education**, other executive agencies and boards, and the committees of the **Indiana General Assembly** the progress we were making in achieving our objectives and goals through the specific metrics by which they were to be measured. Such transparency about the status of our performance, we felt, both shared information with university constituencies and, hopefully, conveyed to all the seriousness with which we took our responsibility as a public entity to be publicly accountable.

## Strategic Budgeting

Ball State's strategic plans have focused on four overarching goals:

- attracting and retaining a **higher quality and more diverse** student body
- providing those students with challenging and motivating intellectual experiences, including Ball State's signature **immersive learning** experiences
- attracting and retaining the **highest quality faculty** and supporting the learning, scholarship, and engagement they can provide
- synergistically connecting the curriculum, the cocurricular activities, and the physical setting of the campus so Ball State becomes a truly **vibrant and diverse community**

The university's budget has been formulated to support these goals. To be sure, the downturn in the nation's economy has affected Ball State, but we have responded creatively. Despite reductions in state funding, we managed to provide **employee raises** in all but one year and to support **strategic initiatives** by internal reallocation of nearly \$14 million from lower-priority items over the past six years and by becoming more efficient deliverers of essential services. We have continued to provide **scholarship assistance** to students through existing endowments, augmentations to those endowments, and the continuing generosity of our alumni, friends, and other benefactors. We have taken every opportunity to provide thoughtful input to those who develop and write state funding formulas and have become equally agile in responding effectively to the ultimate state policies.

New programs have been funded to provide not only **competitive salaries** for new faculty but also **competitive start-up packages**. Start-up funding is especially important in the sciences and other strategic disciplines. New programs have been funded to increase faculty grant and contract activity, to promote travel to deliver scholarship, and to give students the opportunity to experience making a public delivery of their research. We have just embarked on a set of new programs designed to **close the gap** between faculty salaries at Ball State and applicable peers.

## Cocurricular Opportunities

Ball State has always prided itself on the strength, diversity, and creativity of its cocurricular activities. We emphasize opportunities to build **lasting relationships** and develop **leadership talents** while deepening the process of **self-discovery**. We provide opportunities to develop **healthy lifestyles** and enjoy the company of peers from **diverse backgrounds**. We have set as a goal, for example, 1,000 international students on the Muncie campus and an equal number of domestic students traveling abroad, and we sponsor student-led discoveries of culture, religion, and food. This is part of enriching the community's experience of itself as part of the larger tapestry of the world.

We also sponsor **speaker series** as a university community (e.g., the David Letterman Distinguished Professional Lecture and Workshop Series, Excellence in Leadership Series), and as colleges and departments. We provide opportunities for our own faculty and students to **present their work**—readings of creative writing; displays of architectural designs; acting performances in University and Strother theatres and the Cave; artwork in the Atrium Gallery; voice and instrumental concerts in Sursa Hall and other venues; poster presentations of

research in psychology, chemistry, physics, and bioinformatics; and papers read at annual student conferences in philosophy, religious studies, and history, among many others.

Because these endeavors contribute to the achievement of strategic plan goals and objectives, we fund them. Funding comes from operational accounts, reallocations and savings, the generosity of donors, and sometimes ticket sales. In each case, however, the relationships among **planning, budgeting, and expenditures** are close and transparent.

## Facilities Planning

Ball State's vice president for business affairs and his associates are the stewards of the **University Facilities Master Plan**. This plan reflects the evolving understanding of the university's identity as an educational institution and as an asset of the state. Thus, our plans cannot be isolated from changing state priorities, the progress of science and technology, and the broader needs of society. Our plans must have integrity of purpose, but we must often be entrepreneurial in their execution and flexible in thinking through new opportunities to achieve objectives.

For example, the design for **McKinley Avenue** was well-known, but the order in which buildings were constructed and, indeed, the timing of the reconstruction of the street (and cross streets), its median, and associated drainage and sewer systems were unknown, often dependent upon the priorities of governing authorities at the state or national levels. The construction of the **Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass**, the pending construction of the **Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Greenhouse**, and the planned **Charles W. Brown Planetarium** are all examples of timely contributions by donors to projects that allow the university to develop in desired directions—in each case, expanding the ambitions of our original designs.

Another excellent example is the **campus geothermal project**. The coal-fired boilers in the university steam plant had been coaxed to exceed their life expectancy, and more efficient and ecologically friendly replacements were let to bid. When no bids were submitted, the university reevaluated the situation and set out on an ambitious course to fulfill a longstanding commitment to “greening” the campus by exploring the possibility of replacing all but back-up heating and cooling with geothermal energy. The result was the design of the largest geothermal project of its kind in the country, expected to substantially reduce the university's carbon footprint, while reducing campus energy costs by an estimated \$2 million per year.

**Phase I** of the geothermal project was officially dedicated on March 20, 2012. Phase I of the project was completely funded with assistance from the federal and state governments. The system has proven to be very efficient and has met or exceeded our estimates, saving approximately \$1 million annually in our utility budget. The 2013 Indiana General Assembly appropriated the additional funds to complete the geothermal project. Work on **Phase II** is already under way and should be completed by 2016.

At the same time, the Department of Geological Sciences has partnered with the university to study the **long-term impact** of the project using monitoring wells strategically located to provide continuous data on the geology and hydrology of the site. We are confident this research will result in publications by faculty and students and a wealth of practical information for institutions worldwide.

Similarly, although the campus itself is not technically an arboretum, our biology and landscape architecture academic departments are collaborating with the university's facilities planning and management staff to identify and locate plantings that will not only **beautify the campus** but also serve as an **outdoor laboratory** for students.

## **Institutional Assessment**

At Ball State, we understand assessment to include, but not be limited to, the development and measurement of **student learning outcomes** and the deliberations and curricular changes that result. Other assessments include the benchmarks for effectiveness and efficiency across all divisions of the university that permit us to be **publicly accountable** for our decisions, their costs, and their benefits. As the self-study report will show, we are mission directed, data driven, and willingly accountable for our policies and actions. We seek transparency in all we do in order to promote beneficial public comment, because **responsiveness** is an attribute of public institutions, and we believe in its appropriateness.

More specifically, the sections of this report will detail **academic assessments** owing to various accreditations, periodic program reviews, program assessments developed by departments where third-party accreditations are not available, and the actions that have resulted from these assessments. We view the assessment process as a dynamic one and are constantly reviewing the adequacy of our measures and the "research designs" in which the measures are embedded. We are alert to the challenges of **new technologies and pedagogies** such as online and blended instruction.

We have modified the distributed model of assessment that left much of the institution's academic assessment in departments and programs without apparent **connection to the university** as a whole. Information on undergraduate assessment flows from departments and programs through academic deans to the provost, or more specifically, the associate provost who also serves as dean of University College. Her office is also the repository of assessment information for the new **University Core Curriculum (UCC-21)**. The framework for UCC-21 assessment resides in the governance system. It is under the direct purview of the University Core Curriculum Subcommittee, which reports to the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC), which also has oversight over the entire undergraduate assessment process. The associate provost is an ex-officio member of these committees.

Graduate assessment flows through both the academic deans and the dean of the Graduate School (who is also the associate provost for research), and his office is the university repository of information. The Graduate Education Committee (GEC) is responsible for **graduate assessment**, paralleling the UCC and UEC oversight of undergraduate program and core curriculum assessment.

We show equal fidelity to assessment in nonacademic areas. Our **student affairs** division documents in great detail its goals and objectives and measurements of their achievements. The same is true of our **information technology** division. Similarly, our **facilities and maintenance** operations benchmark their performance against nationally recognized standards. Our financial records are externally audited each year. The **university advancement** division sets specific performance goals for alumni affairs and development and the efficiency of



their administrative services. These are reviewed annually by the university's president and the Board of Trustees. Of course, one of the most public assessments of the work of the advancement area was the successful conclusion of the \$200 million **Ball State Bold capital campaign**, which exceeded its goal despite an adverse economic climate.

## **Education Redefined**

When all is said and done, this **self-study for continuing accreditation** will demonstrate that Ball State University is a distinctive, nationally recognized institution of higher education that plans strategically, acts transparently, educates holistically, operates responsibly, assesses relentlessly, and adapts responsively.

## Criterion One—Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Ball State University's mission is clearly stated in *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, the institution's 2012–2017 strategic plan: "As a public research university, we focus on students and high-quality, relevant educational outcomes. Disciplinary knowledge is integrated with application. We do this in a manner that fundamentally changes students, researchers, and our external partners, who look to the university for guidance. We transform information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

This mission drives our strategic planning process, the development of goals and academic programs, and the operations of the university. It is publicly articulated to our constituents and stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrators, staff, parents, alumni, and members of the local community. In fall 2012, all employees were asked to complete a [Workplace Environment Survey](#). In response to the statement, "How well my work supports the mission of the university," 88 percent of staff respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied.

The mission statement is evaluated annually along with the strategic plan's goals and objectives in a process that is transparent to our constituents. The results of this evaluation for our recently completed plan, *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, are available on the [university's website](#) in the form of annual progress reports and [progress metrics](#) that were collected and reported annually.

Ball State has evolved better systems for assessing progress on strategic plan metrics since the initial attempts for the [2001–2006 strategic plan](#). Lessons learned from the absence of performance metrics and inconsistent requests for performance data in that plan led to the development of specific, measurable performance indicators in the subsequent plans. Systems used for the 2007–2012 strategic plan and implemented for the 2012–2017 strategic plan allow the university to more efficiently evaluate annual and overall progress in achieving the plan goals.

The development of Ball State's mission statement has been tied to the five-year cycle of the strategic planning process. Thus, the university has had [three vision, mission, and value statements](#) since 2001 that reflect the evolution of the institution. These statements demonstrate the institutional priorities of providing students with a challenging, learner-centered education that includes excellent academic programs with immersive learning, applied research, and community outreach experiences.

## **Core Component 1.A.**

### **The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.**

The consistent threads in Ball State University's evolving mission are broadly understood by students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The institution is clearly focused on providing a relevant, high-quality education for its students. With our goals, we value the integration of scholarship and outreach and embrace immersive learning and other creative/experiential academic programs for students that expand Ball State's reach into state, national, and international communities. The university achieves these goals on a campus that is vibrant and welcoming.

Every three years, Ball State participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In the [2012 results](#) our seniors reported significantly higher levels in the category of "[enriching educational experiences](#)" than all comparison groups. This category is specifically related to the statement, "Disciplinary knowledge is integrated with application," in the university mission (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

Ball State's mission is widely publicized within the institution. Academic, financial, and infrastructural decisions are guided by the mission, as will be demonstrated throughout this self-study report. The 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 strategic plans each include more than 100 defined [outcome measurements assessed clearly on an annual basis](#) so the institution is aware of its progress in meeting its goals. This assessment, published in print and [online](#) also provides a basis for continued decision making in all areas of the university.

#### **Subcomponent 1.A.1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and adopted by the governing board.**

Ball State's culture of strategic planning has been one of inclusive representation on the task forces that developed the plans, including the mission, vision, and values statements. Much like the original 2001–2006 strategic planning process described in our previous self-study, development of the subsequent strategic plans for 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 included campuswide task forces of 20 or more members meeting during the course of two or three academic years. Care was taken to represent the university community as comprehensively as possible within the limitations of groups this size.

#### **Strategic Plan 2007–2012**

The 2007–2012 Strategic Planning Task Force met 31 times over a period of 21 months. A review of [agendas and minutes](#) for these meetings between January 19, 2005, and December 14, 2006, indicates the task force took care to achieve procedural and substantive objectives. Task force members gathered data from a wide variety of sources, including institutions outside the university, such as peer institutions and governmental agencies within the state, and departments within the university, such as budgeting and enrollment. They carefully examined the previous strategic plan using a rigorous SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities,

threats) analysis. Smaller subcommittees looked intensively at specific issues, including the goals, mission, vision, and values, which became the cornerstone of the strategic plan.

The task force provided time for the university's many units to become engaged in the strategic planning process, encouraging and providing opportunities for feedback from all employees to ensure the process would merge top-down and bottom-up approaches. Feedback was gathered through two open forums (with task force members present) that were made available as webcasts, along with a presentation to the University Senate and a discussion board with comment forms. Commentary from the surrounding communities was also solicited.

In creating the 2007–2012 strategic plan, the task force systematically included quantifiable outcomes as well as assessment metrics and deadlines for achieving those outcomes. University units across the campus had considerable autonomy in determining objectives, outcomes, and assessment metrics that best applied to them relative to the institutional mission and strategic plan. The [mission, vision, and values](#) were developed to emphasize Ball State's distinctiveness in, for example, immersive learning and sustainability initiatives.

The university's Board of Trustees was kept informed about the development of the 2007–2012 strategic plan through presentations by the board's vice president and Ball State's president and provost at regular meetings in [2005](#) and [2006](#). The board also provided input into the development of the strategic plan as a whole during its annual retreat in 2006. Consensus was reached indicating the board members' satisfaction with the plan.

## **Strategic Plan 2012–2017**

The 2012–2017 Strategic Planning Task Force met 22 times over 16 months. The [meeting minutes](#) and [data summary](#) detail the procedural and substantive objectives. This group systematically analyzed the 2007–2012 strategic plan metrics to determine which objectives were met, which were nearly met, and which were not met in order to identify important targets for planning. The task force also performed a SWOT-A (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and aspirations) analysis.

Data gathering from 450 stakeholders organized into 21 groups—including faculty, students, alumni, parents, and community and business leaders—included reflection on the SWOT-A analysis and an evaluation of the following within a five-year window: what went well for Ball State, what could have gone better, and what new information we learned about ourselves. The SWOT-A analysis also attempted to identify an area where change would have a significant impact on the university.

Among Ball State's strengths, the task force cited:

- campus infrastructural improvements
- increases in student quality and retention
- unique identity and pride in the institution's reputation
- immersive learning experiences for students
- ability to work successfully toward change and achieve progressive goals
- strength and vitality due to strong teaching and research

Among areas for improvement, the group cited the university's need to enhance:

- student connectivity in areas of campus life
- faculty morale by continuing efforts to increase salaries, providing more support and recognition for research, and achieving a better balance between teaching loads and research expectations
- administrative communication on decision-making processes

With these data in mind, a subcommittee of the task force developed the [vision, mission, and values](#) statements that are the basis for the remainder of the strategic plan. The 2012–2017 strategic plan emphasizes four goals:

- provide distinctive, high-quality educational experiences
- become a recognized leader for educational and disciplinary innovation
- invest in an increasingly vibrant and integrated university and community
- advance Indiana through student engagement and faculty expertise

Performance indicators were developed in keeping with these four goals and will be assessed annually. The university community was asked to provide input into the plan via e-mail and forum discussions in spring 2012. Similarly, Ball State's Board of Trustees was apprised of progress on the development of the mission and the entire strategic plan and provided input into the planning process. The board approved *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana* at its [December 14, 2012](#) meeting.

**Subcomponent 1.A.2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.**

Ball State's 2007–2012 mission challenged the institution to offer students “action-oriented learning, including immersive out-of-class experiences, research, and study abroad” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 2). For 2012–2017, the university's charge is to “transform information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

## Academic Programs

As a comprehensive university, Ball State offers a wealth of academic opportunities, including about 190 undergraduate majors and preprofessional programs and more than 120 master's and doctoral degrees. The university's programs in entrepreneurship, architecture, landscape architecture, telecommunications, educational leadership, and nursing (online master's degree) are consistently ranked among the nation's best. A number of other academic programs have also earned [national rankings or recognition](#). Ball State is committed to increasing the list.

This excellence is due in part to the quality of Ball State's faculty and their commitment to teaching. Unlike at other large universities where graduate assistants take on more of the teaching responsibilities, 82 percent of Ball State's student credit hours are [taught by full-time faculty](#) and 15 percent by part-time faculty. Only 3 percent of student credit hours are taught by graduate assistants. Also driving academic excellence at Ball State are innovative, real-world learning experiences on and off campus.

**Immersive Learning**—At the heart of a Ball State education, immersive learning melds course content, practical skills, societal need, and student interests into an intense, transformative experience. Interdisciplinary student teams work alongside faculty mentors and community or business partners to solve real-world problems. The result is a tangible product that enhances the community with a lasting impact. Students have created business plans, websites, documentaries, emerging media content and applications, publications and performance productions, and much more. A detailed description of immersive learning is provided under [Subcomponent 1.D.1](#). Examples of immersive learning experiences are included under [Core Components 1.B.](#), [1.C.](#), and [1.D.](#)

**Experiential Learning**—Students are provided numerous opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research projects and participate in internship, practicum, or other related professional experiences. Graduate and undergraduate students participate in research with faculty in many academic departments via master's, doctoral, or certificate programs as well as honors theses and research for credit in undergraduate and graduate classes. More information about student research is provided under [Subcomponent 1.B.2](#).

Many departments require competitive internships for degree completion, including athletic training, criminal justice and criminology, exercise science, family and consumer sciences, finance, graphic arts management, and medical technology. Other programs such as accounting, biology, chemistry, management, natural resources and environmental management, and many more strongly encourage completion of internship hours as part of the degree. All teacher education students complete a student teaching experience. Details and curriculum requirements for these programs are outlined in the university's [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Overall, the number of students participating in an [experiential learning opportunity](#) rose from 2,005 (12 percent of all students) in 2007–08 to 5,607 (34 percent of students) in 2011–12, an increase of 22 percentage points. The 2012–2017 strategic plan sets a goal of 50 percent of students participating in experiential learning opportunities annually by 2017 (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 36, p. 10).

**International Programs**—Through the Rinker Center for International Programs, Ball State students can incorporate a wide variety of [study-abroad opportunities](#) into their curricula. They may study at one of Ball State's centers in England, Australia, and Costa Rica and take classes through an exchange program or one of our study-abroad consortia. They can participate in a field study during the summer or complete an international internship in Dublin, Ireland, or another city. Selected experiences are described via [student blogs](#) on the study abroad website. (*A photo gallery of [College of Architecture and Planning study-abroad programs](#) is available online.*)

Since 2006, the number of students participating in a stimulating [study-abroad experience](#) has ranged from 566 to 790 per year. The difficult economic times have caused this number to decline. Nevertheless, Ball State remains committed to improving the quality and quantity of international experiences available to students. In this regard, the university plans to eliminate its semester-long center programs in London, Australia, and Costa Rica as they have become too expensive and can slow a student's progress toward graduation. In their place will be

opportunities to enroll directly in international institutions for those who want a semester-long experience. These programs will cost less and provide a richer experience as participants will be in class and interacting with international students on a daily basis. In the previous center programs, Ball State students were in their own classes and not with international students.

At the same time, shorter summer experiences will be offered in each of the previous center programs, providing increased affordability and access. These five- or six-week opportunities will cost less than the semester-long programs that ran 12 or more weeks, and the summer schedule will not interfere with course sequences and timely degree completion. With these changes, Ball State's summer study-abroad options will be expanded beyond the current Worcester Center program and include a new center in China.

## **Student Support Services**

Support services for students are critical to ensure the success of Ball State's mission. Support for academics, career planning, health and wellness, and a variety of other services are available. A fuller description of these is provided under [Criterion 3, Core Component 3.D](#). Below is a summary of several academic support services.

**Academic Advising**—Academic advising starts at Orientation, when new students develop their first-semester schedule with an academic advisor. Students are then assigned a freshman advisor until they have accrued 30 credit hours and have declared a major; then they are assigned a faculty advisor in the department of their major. A detailed explanation of the advising process is available on the [Academic Advising website](#) and in the [Academic Advising Report](#).

Students can plan their degrees and evaluate their progress online through [Degree Works](#)—Ball State's new summary of each student's plan of study—as well as access their grades and transcripts, view suggested four-year plans of study for many majors on department websites, prepare a graduation plan, register for classes, and apply for graduation. [These and many other services](#) assist students and advisors in the process of mapping a schedule for completing academic goals.

**Learning Center**—Ball State's [Learning Center](#)—honored with the 2010 National College Learning Center Association/Frank L. Christ Outstanding Learning Center Award for a four-year college—provides students with a [variety of services](#) for learning enhancement and academic achievement. In keeping with the university's mission, the [Learning Center's mission](#) is “to enhance the academic success of Ball State students by providing free peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and workshops covering a variety of academic issues. In addition, the Learning Center models the university's goal of becoming a premier teaching institution by serving as a scholarly preprofessional experience for undergraduates and graduate student employees. Finally, the Learning Center strives to impact the extended university community through faculty development efforts, learning technologies, and outreach programs at other sites.”

In [2010–11](#), the Learning Center provided services to 34.1 percent of freshmen and 18.8 percent of the entire Ball State student population while employing 140 or more undergraduate and graduate students as peer tutors and supplemental instruction leaders.



Use of Learning Center services particularly for freshmen and sophomores resulted in higher overall GPAs 2.886 and 2.979, respectively—compared with GPAs for the overall Ball State population for those class standings—2.613 and 2.858, respectively. In [2011–12](#), the Learning Center recorded nearly 15,000 tutoring visits serving a total of 3,185 individual students. Supplemental instruction served an additional 2,181 students.

**Career and Counseling Centers**—Ball State’s [Career Center](#) provides a [variety of services](#) for students at every stage of their education, beginning even before their first day of classes. During the orientation program, all incoming freshmen complete a career survey to help them make more informed decisions about their path of study. For freshmen seeking advice on possible careers and associated majors, the Career Center and the [Counseling Center](#) offer personal assessment tools such as SIGI3 and TypeFocus to aid in career exploration. For juniors and seniors needing a job or internship, resources include professional career advising, links to job fairs, immersive learning information, internship opportunities, job fair information, and mock interview services. Online booklets [Internships and Career Planning](#) and [The Job Search](#) offer advice on resume preparation, networking, application, and interviewing.

[Cardinal Career Link](#) provides lists of job and internship opportunities for current students and alumni. Additionally, the Career Center maintains listings of part-time student jobs available on campus. Career Center and Counseling Center staff work one-on-one with students in pursuit of their career goals.

**University Libraries**—Ball State’s [University Libraries](#) support student pursuits for academic success and faculty endeavors for the creation of knowledge. The libraries currently house 1,088,825 total titles that are accessible to students, faculty, and staff in hard copy, microfilm, or digital format. The highly trained librarian staff provides reference services, library instruction in classrooms, online tutorials, workshops, online chat services, and support for distance education students. In addition to materials for class research, the libraries provide students access to more than 400 computers as well as printing services, the Cardinal Scholar digital repository for media storage, and the digital media repository. Free apps allow students to access the library’s services via mobile devices.

[Bracken Library](#) is also a meeting place for students in the middle of the campus, providing study spaces and meeting rooms for student reservation and use. Interlibrary loan, course reserves, and individual research consultations are available to the Ball State community. Students take advantage of this area to research, learn, and interact with friends and colleagues. The dean of University Libraries reports as many as 6,495 individuals use the library’s services during daily peak usage. The number of visitors increased from 807,606 in 2002 to more than 1.6 million in 2011. The story of the library’s transformation from a repository to a learning destination is provided under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.D.4](#). *(A photo gallery of [Bracken Library’s facilities](#) is available online.)*

## Enrollment Profile

Ball State’s [enrollment strategy](#) continues to support the goals of the institution’s mission and strategic plan. The Division of Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications recruits students from diverse backgrounds who are creatively curious, prepared for college academic rigor, and likely to persist to completion of a degree at Ball State. The four goals of this strategy include:



- developing an increasingly selective student body
- representing diverse ethnic, geographic, and international populations
- building a strong graduate student enrollment
- increasing undergraduate student retention and completion rates

This strategy will continue to provide Ball State with outstanding students who will be prepared to complete a rigorous and immersive college experience and be successful lifelong learners. *(A set of high-quality [online videos](#) feature some of our bright, curious students.)*

**Selective Student Body**—Immersive and experiential learning require bright and curious students. Almost 17,000 students applied for admission to Ball State for fall 2012, producing an increasingly selective student body. That fall, 63 percent of freshmen held the Indiana Academic Honors Diploma or its equivalent from other states, an increase of more than 16 percentage points from the 2006 freshman class. By comparison, about 33.5 percent of 2012 Indiana high school graduates earned the state's honors diploma. Ball State's 2012 freshman class also averaged a [high school GPA of 3.35](#), and [nearly 8 percent](#) were enrolled in the university's Honors College program.

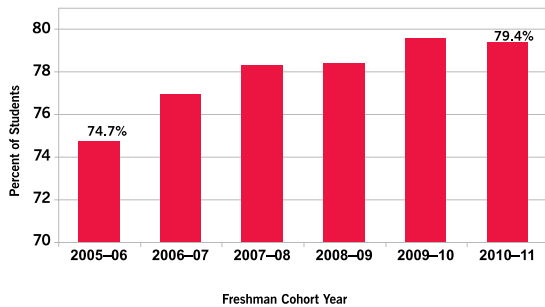
**Diverse Populations**—Demographically, 14.1 percent of the fall 2012 freshman class came from outside Indiana, and 14.3 percent were underrepresented minorities, up significantly from 8.6 percent in 2006. Ethnic diversity among Ball State's [graduate student applicants](#) increased from 10.6 percent in 2006 to 13 percent in 2011–12 but came short of the 15 percent strategic plan goal.

**Strong Graduate Enrollment**—The quality of Ball State's degree-seeking graduate students improved from 2006, when 22 programs enrolled students with a [mean undergraduate GPA of 3.3 or above](#), to the 2011–12 level of 37 programs. This progress advances the university toward the 2012–2017 strategic plan goal of 60 programs (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 5, p. 7). At the same time, [graduate enrollment grew](#) from 2,948 in 2006–07 to 4,520 in 2011–12 but [dipped in 2012–13](#) to 4,401, due largely to a change in Indiana's requirements for teacher licensure and evaluation.

**Undergraduate Retention/Completion**—[Freshman retention rates](#) rose during the 2007–2012 strategic plan, increasing from 74.7 percent for the 2005 entering cohort to 79.4 percent for the 2010 freshman class, just shy of the 80 percent target (see Figure 1.1 below). Over the past 12 years, the university's four-year graduation rate has improved by 84 percent, as shown in Figure 1.2 below. More information about retention, persistence, and graduation is provided under [Criterion 4, Core Component 4.C](#).

**Figure 1.1 Retention Rates**

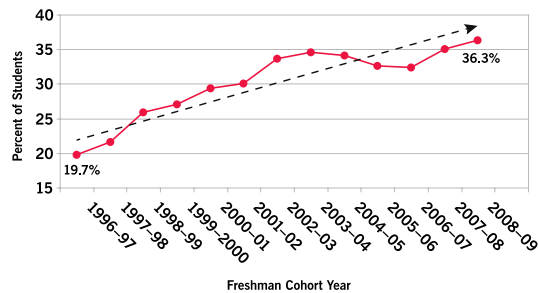
**FRESHMAN RETENTION RATE  
2001–2011**



**Figure 1.2 Graduation Rates**

**FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES**

Graduation rates have improved  
more than 84 percent over 12 years.



**Subcomponent 1.A.3.** The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Ball State's biennial and annual budget planning process occurs in the Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs and Treasurer in consultation with the university's president, the Board of Trustees, and faculty, staff, and student constituents through the Finance and Budgetary Affairs Committee. This budget is developed to allow Ball State to advance its priorities as defined in the university's mission and strategic plan. The institution's [request for state appropriations](#) is presented and negotiated by the president through the biennial legislative process. The Board of Trustees ultimately approves the university budget.

Details on the budgetary processes that support Ball State's mission are provided under [Criterion 5, Subcomponent 5.C.1.](#)

**Summary: Core Component 1.A.**

Ball State's mission was developed using a broad-based process during the university's five-year strategic planning efforts. The mission statement, crafted first, drove the development of the remainder of the strategic plan and its assessment metrics. As a result, our academic programs, student support services, and enrollment strategies reflect the mission, vision, and values in the strategic plan. The evolution of the institutional mission into the 2012–2017 strategic plan, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, will allow the university to continue to meet such challenges as providing quality immersive and experiential learning experiences for our students, increasing student participation in study-abroad experiences, and increasing the quality and diversity of our student body.

## Core Component 1.B.

### The mission is articulated publicly.

Ball State University's mission is developed with broad, campuswide input, as described under [Subcomponent 1.A.1.](#), so it is clearly articulated to constituents for feedback during the development process. It is then widely distributed via the web and written materials, including communications from the university president, such as the [President's Perspective](#) and presentations to campus units. The constant availability of the [strategic plan](#) on Ball State's website allows off-campus constituents such as donors, alumni, community partners, legislators, and parents of students to understand the mission, vision, and values of the university.

**Subcomponent 1.B.1.** The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

As part of the strategic planning process, Ball State evaluates and modifies its mission, vision, and values statements in keeping with its continuing evolution as a university and as the mechanism to develop specific future goals. These statements are articulated publicly both during and after development and approval by the publication and distribution of the strategic plan in electronic format for faculty, student, staff, alumni, and community constituents. These planning documents are always available on the university's [strategic plan website](#).

In addition, annual reports that assess our progress in meeting the strategic plan goals remind constituents of our mission, vision, and values. Announced by e-mail, these annual reports are available on [Ball State's website](#) and in a limited number of [printed copies](#) provided to constituencies such as the university's Board of Trustees, community and government leaders, and university donors and alumni.

The emphases of the mission, vision, and values statements from Ball State's strategic plans are described under [Core Components 1.A.](#), [1.C.](#), and [1.D.](#) These statements are also compiled in [one document](#) for review.

**Subcomponent 1.B.2.** The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Ball State's mission, reviewed in five-year cycles as explained above, is articulated publicly first and foremost in the university's 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 strategic plans, four of whose main components—mission, vision, values, and strategy—clearly identify the university's priorities with regard to the various aspects of its mission. The mission documents place emphasis on:

- high-quality instruction
- academic scholarship (research, application of research, and creative endeavors)
- public service/economic development

Both of these plans explained the extent of the mission through specific outcomes. The 2012–2017 plan includes more than 100 performance indicators.

## High-Quality Instruction

As the strategies and vision in the 2007–2012 strategic plan state, Ball State is committed to being “one of the most innovative and attention-worthy undergraduate-focused institutions nationwide” and “a national model of excellence” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, pp. 2–3). Continuing into the 2012–2017 strategic plan, our vision states: “We seek to become recognized for providing bright and curious students a holistic learning experience that occurs both in and out of the classroom” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

The number of nationally ranked or recognized programs on campus grew from 17 in 2006–07 to 54 in 2011–12, more than doubling the [strategic plan target](#). The 2012–2017 strategic plan sets a goal of [55 new or continuing](#) nationally ranked or recognized programs. Examples of recent rankings include:

- **School of Music**—Recognized by *In Tune* magazine in its “Best Music Schools” listings in 2009 and 2010 along with Juilliard, Oberlin, and the New England Conservatory.
- **Department of Educational Leadership**—Ranked among the nation’s top leadership development programs by *Leadership Excellence* magazine since 2005.
- **Department of Accounting**—Undergraduate and graduate programs ranked in the top 25 among the nation’s midsize colleges and universities by *Public Accounting Report* in 2009 and 2010.

As a “learner-centered academic community,” Ball State offers “action-oriented learning” in the form of research and study-abroad opportunities as well as immersive learning experiences available to all students. Students also benefit from accessible faculty, collaborative experiences, and a core curriculum that fosters lifelong inquiry.

**Scholarship**—Ball State promotes student research at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and through the 2012–2017 strategic plan, the university is committed to increasing student participation in research and other experiential learning from 34.1 percent to 50 percent (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 36, p. 10). Participation in research activities is clear through evaluating the following:

- [master’s and doctoral student enrollment](#): 4,520 in 2011–12, an increase of 53 percent since 2006
- [graduate degrees and certificates conferred](#): 2,148 in 2011–12, more than doubled from 1,004 in 2006–07
- [internal grant proposals submitted](#): 112 graduate and undergraduate combined for the 2011–12 academic year, up from previous years’ averages of approximately 100

- [honors theses completed](#): 145 to 198 graduating Honors College students per year from 2006–07 through 2011–12
- [student research symposium presentations](#): 175 given by 208 total graduate and undergraduate students in 2012, an increase from 111 given by 147 students in 2009

**Study Abroad**—Ball State provided 95 study-abroad programs in 43 countries in 2010–11, an increase from 87 programs in 30 countries in 2009–10. According to the Rinker Center for International Programs, of the 651 students who participated in study-abroad programs in 2010–11, 376 took part in faculty-led field studies and 156 studied at Ball State’s centers in England, Australia, and Costa Rica, while still others studied through consortia, exchange programs, and international internships. In 2011–12, 595 students participated in [study-abroad experiences](#), a slight decline from previous years. International programs are discussed more fully under [Subcomponent 1.A.2](#).

**Immersive Learning**—As a significant part of a Ball State education, immersive learning epitomizes action-oriented instruction. An objective of the 2012–2017 strategic plan is to “place immersive learning at the center of a Ball State education,” and several performance indicators include immersive learning, such as providing “every undergraduate student with an immersive learning opportunity” and “all undergraduate departments will offer at least one immersive learning opportunity each year” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017 PI 26–27, p. 9*).

Between 2007 and August 2012, 16,416 students participated in 1,019 [immersive learning projects](#). Projects have been conducted throughout Indiana and as far away as Hong Kong, Venice, and Malawi. In September 2011, *U.S. News and World Report* recognized our distinctive and transformative educational offerings, ranking Ball State eighth among universities and colleges “that are making the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty, and student life.” Examples of immersive learning include:

- [fisheries field research](#) on how the yellow perch population in Lake Michigan is being affected by alterations in the environment
- [development of a social media command center](#) to assist visitors to Indianapolis before and during the 2012 Super Bowl
- [design and construction of a solar-powered house](#) in the U.S. Department of Energy’s 2013 Solar Decathlon, one of only 20 international groups chosen to participate

Additional [immersive learning project descriptions](#) and/or links are available for review. (A set of high-quality [online videos](#) feature students involved in some of these projects, and [online feature stories](#) about selected projects are available on our immersive learning website.)

**Accessible Faculty**—In the mission, values, and culture statements of the 2007–2012 strategic plan, Ball State pledged to maintain “an open learning community,” to provide “extraordinary access to and collaboration with professors,” and to promote collaborative and interdisciplinary strategies in the classroom (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012, pp. 2–3*). Goal 1, Objective 5 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan commits to fostering “student-faculty collaboration at the graduate and undergraduate levels” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, p. 4*).

Ball State's faculty are available to students during classes and office hours, during review and study sessions in preparation for examinations, and during research and experiential learning experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. In the science disciplines, for example, most faculty in the 200-level and above classes are assigned to teach not only their lectures but also their own laboratory sections. This provides students with ready access to their professors in a small class environment with no more than 24 students. This is not always the case at large universities, where graduate assistants often teach all of the laboratory sections for classes in the sciences.

Smaller class sizes promote faculty-student interaction and extraordinary access to professors. Ball State's student-to-faculty ratio is 16 to 1, and the average class size on campus is [32 students](#). The distribution of class sizes by department and college is also reported in the *Ball State Fact Book*.

Faculty teaching online courses are accessible to students through a variety of digital tools, including e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, Blackboard communities, and social media. Online class sizes vary by discipline and pedagogy but are typically capped between 20 and 30 students.

**Collaboration**—The atmosphere at Ball State is one of collaboration both within and outside the university, as exemplified in Goals 1 and 4 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan: “provide distinctive, high-quality educational experiences” and “advance Indiana through student engagement and faculty expertise” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, pp. 4, 6). Collaborations on campus often create interdisciplinary learning experiences via our immersive learning projects and our [interdepartmental academic programs](#), including majors in mathematical economics and women's and gender studies as well as minors in environmentally sustainable practices, Asian studies, and peace studies and conflict resolution.

Many [collaborative experiences](#) occur through internships, such as those for interior design majors at a variety of top interior design and architectural firms throughout the country or the immersive internships offered by community agencies, health care facilities, businesses, and school corporations to students in the John and Janice Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology.

**Lifelong Learning**—Ball State fosters lifelong, wide-ranging intellectual curiosity in students across the arts, humanities, and sciences. This is accomplished by providing all undergraduate students a common core curriculum that is broad and inclusive of these topics in 100- through 400-level classes. The [University Core Curriculum](#) has been designed to develop graduates who will live healthy, productive lives by acquiring, discovering, creating, and applying knowledge responsibly and by providing civic and professional leadership in the future. As reflected in the mission statement for the 2012–2017 strategic plan, the University Core Curriculum strives to provide students with the skills “to transform information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2). A fuller description of the University Core Curriculum is provided under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.B.1.](#) and [3.B.2.](#)



In addition, the university provides students with a wide range of [enrichment activities](#) by way of guest speakers, film series, and cultural and social events at Emens Auditorium, Sursa Performance Hall, University and Strother Theatres, the David Owsley Museum of Art, and various other venues on campus. (Photo galleries of [notable speakers](#), [musical performances](#), [theatrical performances](#), and [art exhibitions](#) are available online.)

## Academic Scholarship

Ball State's 2007–2012 value statements affirm the institution's commitment to "sustaining a climate for open inquiry, investigation, exchange of ideas, and creative activity" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 3). Likewise in the 2012–2017 values, we are committed to advancing "critical thinking and creative problem solving, scholarship, and creative activity" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 3). The university ensures all members of the academic community are provided the intellectual freedom essential to preserving a climate that fosters strong scholarly productivity. Policies are in place to protect [intellectual property](#), and faculty members are afforded the [intellectual freedom](#) to perform research in areas that may be considered controversial. In this climate, academic scholarship has thrived with high faculty productivity and implementation of a modified teacher-scholar model.

**Faculty Productivity**—In 2011, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classified Ball State as a research university/high research activity (RU/H), placing us in the same category as Boston College, Clemson University, and the College of William and Mary, among others. Our faculty members are active in research, and most tenure-track professors receive at least 3 credit hours of release time for research or more if grants allow for additional buyout of teaching. Faculty are productive in publishing peer-reviewed books, articles in primary literature, and creative projects such as books of poems, short stories, and juried artwork. This productivity is reflected in the [annual reports of each academic college](#). Faculty are also successful in obtaining grants from a wide range of agencies, garnering record amounts of more than \$26 million annually in 2008–09 and 2009–10. Yearly awards are summarized in the [Sponsored Programs Office annual reports](#).

As stated in Goal 2, Objective 1 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan, Ball State is committed to increasing "the number and range of academic programs and faculty members that are nationally ranked and/or recognized" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 5). A variety of [nationally ranked programs](#) and [nationally recognized faculty](#) can be found in departments and colleges across the campus.

**Teacher-Scholar Model**—In the Higher Learning Commission report from Ball State's last accreditation review in 2004, two comments in the assurance section that needed institutional attention dealt directly with the teacher-scholar concept based on the Boyer Model. The first addressed a lack of clarity when individuals were asked to differentiate between the model as a mechanism to fulfill the university's mission and the actual mission itself. The language of the [mission statement](#) from the 2001–2006 strategic plan clearly reflected Boyer's Teacher-Scholar Model and focused on discovery, integration, and outreach, which are the major points of the model. It is perhaps easy in hindsight to see how this would lead to confusion in explaining the differences. Since that time, the [two subsequent mission statements](#) for 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 use very different language to describe the university's mission that is not centered on the principles of the Boyer Model.

The second issue involved faculty concern about their ability to fulfill the “teacher-scholar” role as enrollment continued to grow and the number of faculty remained constant. Implementing the Boyer Model as written is a major undertaking that would indeed make it difficult for faculty to continue their scholarship in an integrative way as Boyer describes.

To facilitate a better understanding of the expectations for faculty from a promotion and tenure perspective, during the 2007–08 academic year the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, in collaboration with the provost, implemented a modified version of the Boyer Model that applied to scholarship only. This initiative emphasized the need to provide recognition to faculty who were pursuing scholarship in the areas of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. This statement included a definition of each of the [four areas of scholarship](#), but it was careful to state that productivity could occur in any of the areas and did not require participation in all four. This modification does not fully integrate the Boyer Model into the teaching or service components of the promotion and tenure review; rather, it works to broaden the areas of acceptable scholarship in which faculty can participate and encourages interdisciplinary work.

To ensure faculty understood the implications of this change, workshops were held for department and college representatives across the campus in fall 2007. The chair of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee also met with individual departments or colleges upon request to help with adding appropriate materials into their respective promotion and tenure documents for approval for use in 2008–09 and to answer questions about the intent of the change. This system has been functional since the 2008–09 academic year.

### **Public Service/Economic Development**

As a state-assisted institution, Ball State is committed to forging educated citizens who will discharge their civic duties responsibly and promote democratic principles, including social justice and respect for diversity in its many forms and wherever they encounter it. In Goal 4 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan, the university pledges to “continue to emphasize learning and scholarship that synthesize disciplinary knowledge with application to today’s most complex challenges” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 6).

Ball State is passionate about engaging the larger communities to which it belongs, both within Indiana and on a national or global scale, in order to enhance educational, economic, and cultural development. In doing so, the university seeks to extend its commitment to collaborative and interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies beyond the classroom through partnerships and other collaborations across the institution and with the wider world beyond its walls. A central feature of Ball State’s broader civic engagement is reflected in its focus on environmental sustainability and economic vitality. More detail about the university’s public service activities is provided under [Core Component 1.D](#).



**Subcomponent 1.B.3.** The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services Ball State provides.

Ball State's [mission, vision, and values statements](#) for 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 clearly identify the constituents that the university as a public institution of higher learning is meant to serve. These statements address:

- our commitment to our internal constituents—students, faculty, and staff of the university—in providing a stimulating environment for discipline-specific, interactive, and immersive learning
- our commitment to state, national, and international communities whom we serve to assist in advancing economic development, business success, and government organizations and in providing educational opportunities and cultural development for all constituencies

**Summary: Core Component 1.B.**

Ball State makes its mission available to the public through the strategic planning area of the university's website. The mission, vision, and values statements that are part of the institution's strategic plan clearly delineate the emphasis we place on instruction, scholarship, diversity and inclusion, cultural awareness, and outreach focused on public service and economic development.

The university's 2007–2012 mission statement focused on high-quality instruction, scholarship, study abroad, immersive learning, accessible faculty, collaboration, and lifelong learning. Our 2012–2017 mission, vision, and values focus the institution even more on providing high-quality, application-based experiences that fundamentally change students, researchers, and the constituents Ball State serves. This mission statement led to the development of strategic planning goals and metrics that will allow the university to continue to strengthen its academics, scholarship, and community involvement.

Ball State will continue to work to increase funding for research to previous levels as, it is hoped, the overall economy improves and resources become more widely available. Immersive learning is no longer just two performance indicators in the strategic plan but now its own objective, and it will continue to receive major attention in the university's planning and delivery of programs. Efforts are also under way to become a premier institution in the delivery of the scholarship of teaching and learning as several initiatives begun this past year will build on those priorities. Throughout these endeavors, information about the strategic plan's progress will be provided to the public through print and web-based sources each year.

## Core Component 1.C.

### The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

Ball State University's mission strongly emphasizes an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of society regionally, nationally, and internationally. This is accomplished by offering programs and classes with diversity and inclusion themes that foster student understanding of cultural differences. In addition, the university has developed strategies to diversify the student and faculty populations on campus and to retain and enhance the experience of diverse populations through the development of support services for students, faculty, and staff. This emphasis on diversity has continued to evolve over the past 10 years and has been reflected in [changes in the language](#) of the mission, vision, and value statements of Ball State's strategic plans.

#### Subcomponent 1.C.1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

#### Subcomponent 1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

In the 2001–2006 mission statement, Ball State's role in a multicultural society was not overtly addressed but only alluded to in the last points of the value statement: "In our civic and professional leadership, we value integrity, social justice, and social responsibility" (*Strategic Plan 2001–2006*, p. 3). Although social justice and social responsibility are important goals, they were addressed only in a more civic and professional leadership context. Diversity and commitment to diversity were not specifically addressed.

With the development of the 2007–2012 mission, vision, and values statements, the importance of diversity and inclusion on campus became a more significant component. Specifically, the mission highlights the opportunity to inspire students by offering study-abroad experiences as well as "engaging state, national, and international communities to enhance educational, economic, and cultural development" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 3). The values and culture statements add: "We expect all members of the university community...to recognize, respect, and welcome the diverse cultures, heritages, and perspectives within our institution and the larger community. We recognize that we live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society, and we seek to serve, engage with, and learn from members of our community, the state, nation, and world" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 4).

In the mission, vision, and values section of the 2012–2017 strategic plan, Ball State continues to emphasize its role in a multicultural society. The values statement includes the following language: "As a creatively pragmatic institution, we seek to articulate our distinctive place in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world while holding these [traditional values of the academy] dear. External forces will continue to shape the role of higher education. We seek to lead rather than follow..." (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 3).

The university challenges "students to question assumptions and extend boundaries" and embraces "diversity and inclusion" and "engagement with communities across Indiana"

(*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 3). By using the term “inclusion,” the new strategic plan broadens the definition of diversity from primarily a multicultural perspective to also include disabilities, gender, and sexual orientation. This inclusion is achieved by speaking about the broadened definition through student, faculty, and staff engagement and by challenging student assumptions and comfort zones.

## **Multicultural Center**

Ball State’s [Multicultural Center](#) offers programs and services that assist students of color and of all cultures in achieving academic, cultural, economic, and social success. For example, the Excel Program is a five-day summer orientation experience that pairs incoming minority freshmen with returning student mentors. In summer 2011, 30 students participated in this program, which acclimates new students more quickly to campus life and helps them prepare for academic and social challenges they may face on campus.

Other programs include the One World speaker series, which offers a more informal question-and-answer session with community leaders on topics of multiculturalism and diversity, and the Heritage Film Festival, which documents experiences and perspectives of diverse groups around the globe. The center also provides space and services for student use through the Malcolm X Library, a computer lab, the Harry Watkins Conference Room, and a kitchen that is available for small gatherings.

The Multicultural Center reported [visits from 2,940 students](#) in 2011–12, with attendance of 1,850 students at 74 events and programs. Overall, 6,740 students, faculty, and staff attended the center’s programs in 2011–12. Many of these programs were cosponsored with the Rinker Center for International Programs, Office of Institutional Diversity, Counseling Center, and multicultural student organizations. Nine annual awards are given to outstanding students, faculty, staff, and organizations composed of or supporting people of color or international students—for example, minorities who are outstanding freshmen or people of color who exhibit outstanding leadership throughout the year.

## **Disability Services**

According to its [mission, goals, and plan](#), Ball State’s [Office of Disability Services](#) (formerly Disabled Student Development) strives to create a campus environment that provides access and opportunities for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities to fulfill their potential. This effort includes enhancing students’ ability to understand how their disability affects them in the educational setting and to be better self-advocates. Disability Services also encourages participation of disabled individuals on boards or campus groups to provide a voice for this constituency, sponsors guest speakers and campus events and presentations to increase disability awareness, and ensures court and civil rights rulings are implemented appropriately on campus to provide the most effective accommodations for community members.

Under the leadership of Disability Services, the Ball State campus for more than 20 years has enhanced access for individuals with disabilities in all campus areas and has been known as a disability friendly campus. This office is committed to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities who have been admitted to the university.

This office's [annual reports](#) show freshmen who disclose their disabilities had retention rates of 87 percent from 2009–10 to 2010–11, and 80 percent from 2010–11 were retained to 2011–12. Assessment of life skills competencies of students with disabilities in 2011–12 found:

- 97 percent could describe their disability and its limitations in an educational setting
- 93 percent agreed they knew what to do to acquire a disability accommodation
- 84 percent understood their rights and responsibilities relative to the Americans with Disabilities Act
- 67 student respondents were involved on campus in a total of 85 activities and 55 student organizations and had used 97 campus services

## **Counseling Center**

Services of Ball State's [Counseling Center](#) are fully accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services, and the center's predoctoral internship is accredited by the American Psychological Association. The center provides [numerous services](#) for all campus constituents. Master's and predoctoral interns engage in social justice and diversity immersion projects throughout their year of training. The Diversity Outreach Team presents programming for and about international students; issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) students; and issues of race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and prejudice, for example. Workshops and presentations are adapted to specific needs of the faculty, staff, or students requesting the presentation.

For international students and issues, the Counseling Center offers a weekly International Conversation Hour and International Women's Conversation Hour and workshops on dating cultures and friendships, understanding and coping with cross-cultural experiences, and academic success, offering important information on study skills, classroom culture, academic writing, and test-taking skills.

In support of LGBTQ community members, the Counseling Center coordinates the [Safe Zone network program](#) of faculty, staff, and students, offering workshops in cooperation with the Office of Institutional Diversity several times each year. General LGBTQ workshops are also provided upon request. The center also offers counseling services for sexual abuse and threats, sexual responsibility, and other health and wellness issues such as eating disorders.

Statistics on the overall use of the Counseling Center can be found in the center's [annual reports](#). In 2012, an [assessment](#) of the impact of the International Conversation Hour on international and domestic students found that both groups gained more confidence in social settings. American students reported having a more positive intercultural attitude and an increased understanding of different cultures and cross-cultural communication skills. International students reported higher academic efficiency, but the number of international students participating was small.

## **Office of Institutional Diversity**

Although Ball State's 2001–2006 mission statement did not directly address multicultural and diversity aspects, the university was already moving in that direction as early as 1998

with the creation of the [Diversity Policy Institute](#). Through this institute, faculty members were selected as Diversity Associates to develop curricular modules emphasizing diversity and multicultural themes for class use. Since 1998, projects by more than 100 associates have been incorporated into classes across the campus, focusing on one or more of the following areas: race, ethnicity, economic status, national origin, disability, gender, sexual identity, age, and/or religious viewpoints.

In 2007, the Diversity Policy Institute became the [Office of Institutional Diversity \(OID\)](#), and the institute's director became the university's assistant provost for diversity. Also that year, by Indiana state legislation, Ball State's Board of Trustees established the University Diversity Committee as an advisory group to OID and the assistant provost for diversity. Annual university diversity reports have been provided to the Board of Trustees since before the legislation was enacted. The most recent report was presented to the board on [October 17, 2012](#), with a response from the university's provost. [In 2013, a new OID director was appointed with the rank of associate provost.](#)

OID's [mission](#) states that "Ball State University is committed to: creating innovative courses, programs, and practices that attract, retain, and nurture a diverse university community; and fostering a university environment that enables all who contribute to excel in a culture that is growing ever more diverse." The office has established committees and events that promote and encourage diversity in student and faculty endeavors. For example, OID sponsors Martin Luther King Jr. commemorative lectures and concerts annually, organizes a diversity seminar series across the curriculum, facilitates the ongoing Diversity Associates Program for faculty, implements a minority mentoring program, and participates in regional and national organizations focused on diversity. OID annual reports are available for review.

### **University Diversity Committee**

Ball State's [University Diversity Committee](#) works with OID to develop suggestions for increasing diversity awareness across the campus. In 2009–10, the assistant provost for diversity presented the committee with a diversity plan for consideration. This resulted in the development of the [Strategic Diversity Plan](#), which provided an action plan for meeting Ball State's 2007–2012 strategic goals dealing with diversity and inclusion issues for underrepresented ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) minorities among students, faculty, and staff.

The committee's [2010–11 annual report](#), presented to the university's president and provost, carefully evaluated Ball State's progress in diversity, multicultural, and inclusion initiatives and made concrete suggestions for continued improvement. The [provost's response](#) highlighted six specific recommendations and actions that should be taken in future years, including a climate survey pretest in the 2011–12 academic year and an investigation into the low percentage of female faculty at the professor rank. The provost recommended the development and administration of the survey instruments in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The climate survey was included in the [Workplace Environment Survey](#) and administered in fall 2012. A [female faculty rank survey](#) has also been completed and is undergoing analysis.

## Diversity Awareness

Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)—administered in 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2012—indicate moderate student awareness of the relationship between Ball State’s mission and the diversity of society. For example, the 2012 survey found the following results:

- **Discussion**—54 percent of freshmen and 60 percent of seniors indicated they included diverse perspectives in class discussions or written assignments
- **Contact**—57 percent of freshmen but only 48 percent of seniors felt Ball State encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- **Collaboration**—71 percent of freshmen and 80 percent of seniors indicated their Ball State experience had contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of working effectively with others
- **Understanding**—49 percent of freshmen and 53 percent of seniors believed their educational experiences contributed to understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds very much or quite a bit

Although some student responses to these and other survey questions hovered at or below the 50 percent mark, it appears gains have been made in student diversity awareness in comparison to data from 2004 and in certain cases 2007. The university’s continued emphasis on campus will generate additional improvements in student development.

## Diversity Programs and Classes

A number of [undergraduate academic programs](#) at Ball State are interdisciplinary and focus on issues of diversity and inclusion in society. These include, for example, a major and minor in women’s and gender studies, a major and minor in international business, and minors in multicultural education, peace studies and conflict resolution, Asian studies, and European studies. [Many courses](#) have a diversity theme related to a specific area such as age, gender, global cultures, race/ethnicity, religion, and sexuality.

For graduate students, the Department of Educational Studies offers a [certificate program in diversity](#), which can be completed by a non-degree-seeking student or applied to a graduate degree. A description of the program reads: “The graduate certificate in diversity studies addresses issues pertaining to race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation in an increasingly pluralistic society. The 15-credit program is designed for teachers, administrators, policy makers, and health and human services personnel.” In addition, all courses in the Department of Psychological Sciences graduate programs include diversity as a course objective.

Other courses with some emphasis on diversity, multicultural, or international topics can be found in a variety of fields, including international business, multicultural education, counseling psychology, wellness and gerontology, and journalism. Cognates for doctoral degrees in multicultural issues and diversity can be constructed on an individual basis.



**Immersive Learning**—Ball State’s immersive learning experiences frequently include a diversity theme. Such projects have been sponsored by both the Office of the Provost and the [Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry](#). At the latter, for example, 15 students and their professor in the “Servir y Aprender” seminar spent a semester exploring cross-cultural misunderstandings and language barriers that can have life-changing consequences for newly arrived immigrants. Together they conducted community action research that took them into businesses, churches, schools, police stations, courtrooms, jails, and victim support and advocacy agencies around Hamilton County in central Indiana. They identified common issues where recently arrived Hispanic immigrants could unintentionally stumble into conflict, and they wrote and produced a [series of four educational telenovelas](#) that were made available to the public. The videos were viewed by many nonprofit organizations, and snippets of them aired in Univision in Chicago.

Also at the Virginia Ball Center, the “[State of Assault](#)” seminar in fall 2008 immersed students in a victim-centered study on how sexual assault cases are handled by experts in forensics, nursing, law enforcement, DNA analysis, patient advocacy, and legal prosecution. The end product was a short documentary film addressing the current issues and evolving needs of rape case management. *State of Assault* won a regional Emmy Award. Details of these [Virginia Ball Center projects](#) and many other examples of diversity-oriented [immersive learning projects](#) among Ball State’s colleges are available for review.

**Other Programs**—Study-abroad opportunities offered by [the Rinker Center for International Programs](#) also increase diversity awareness among Ball State’s undergraduate and graduate students. Additional discussion of these programs is provided under [Subcomponent 1.A.2](#). Diversity is also emphasized in a variety of [multicultural events](#) on campus and in the following programs:

- Cultural Exchanges, sponsored by the Rinker Center for International Programs, in which students talk about their study-abroad experiences or international students and faculty teach about other countries and cultures
- [Diversity Fellows](#), a faculty learning community that discusses and implements the infusion of diversity materials into classroom instruction with support from the Office of Institutional Diversity and the Office of Educational Effectiveness
- [International Conversation Hour Program](#), sponsored by the Counseling Center, in which students from various countries hold conversations about specific cultures and customs
- [Office of Institutional Diversity’s Annual Lecture Series](#), in which faculty and other invited speakers with expertise in various diversity-related areas present their work to faculty and students on campus
- [Perspectives Discussion Series](#), sponsored by the Multicultural Center, which covers topics such as racial issues, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and current events

## **Diverse Students, Faculty, and Staff**

Ball State’s 2007–2012 strategic plan called for attracting, enrolling, retaining, and graduating a more selective and diverse student body (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012, Goal 1, Objective A, p. 4*) and also increasing the diversity of student, faculty, and staff populations on campus and

enhancing the climate supporting diversity (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012, Goal 4, Objective D, p. 10*). This focus continues in the 2012–2017 strategic plan, which states that Ball State is to be a university that “attracts a diverse student body, faculty, and staff” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Goal 1, Objective 7, p. 4*) and encourages the university community to “reflect the diverse and interconnected world in which we live” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Goal 3, p. 5*).

In this spirit, the university’s [Equal](#) Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy—approved by the Board of Trustees on July 24, 1998, and revised in August 2002 and again in April 2009—provides for equal opportunity for student admission or employment considerations “without regard to race, religion, color, sex (except where sex is a bona fide qualification), sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, national origin, ancestry, or age.” In fall 2011, this statement was [amended](#) to include “gender identity/gender expression,” which will appear in the 2012–13 policy. In addition, the policy states: “The university also takes affirmative action to employ and advance minorities, women, qualified disabled persons, and qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era.”

Ball State’s president reviews these policies and programs annually, measures progress against the objectives stated in the affirmative action programs, and reports findings and conclusions to the Board of Trustees. The university also maintains data on the distribution of ethnic minorities in the [student body](#) and [faculty population](#) in the *Ball State Fact Book*.

**Minority Enrollment**—Under Goal 1, Objective A of the 2007–2012 strategic plan, Ball State set a goal to achieve 15 percent of total enrollment from underrepresented minorities in the undergraduate population and to increase graduate applications from minority groups to 15 percent annually. Table 1.1 below shows the increases in undergraduate minority enrollment—especially among freshmen—during the five-year period. At the same time, minority graduate applications increased from 10.6 percent in 2006–07 to [13 percent in 2011–12](#).

**Table 1.1: Fall Percent of Total Enrollment from Underrepresented Minority Populations**

|                    | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Target |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Freshmen           | 8.6  | 10.8 | 10.0 | 11.7 | 11.9 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 15.0   |
| All Undergraduates | 8.1  | 8.9  | 9.4  | 10.3 | 10.9 | 11.9 | 12.0 | 15.0   |

While significant strides have been made in diversifying the student population, further work is needed to meet our goals. The [2012–2017 strategic plan](#), continues to focus on this effort with a target of 17 percent of the entering freshman class coming from underrepresented populations.

The University Diversity Committee and the Office of Institutional Diversity have evaluated this new goal and suggested measures for increased success. The [provost’s response](#) to their report recommends that Ball State “continue existing minority recruitment efforts and add new programs: a) visit of Multicultural Ambassador Corps to targeted schools, b) translation of key marketing materials to Spanish, c) creation of DVDs for secondary schools which promote access for students with disabilities, d) hold virtual info sessions on the graduate school for



[underrepresented minority] students.” The provost referred these improvements to appropriate university units for implementation.

**Minority Employment**—Goal 4, Objective D of Ball State’s 2007–2012 strategic plan called for increasing the diversity of tenure-track faculty to 15 percent and all other employees to 9.5 percent. Table 1.2 below tracks the progress made.

**Table 1.2: Fall Percent of Employees from Underrepresented Minority Groups**

|                      | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | Target |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Tenure track faculty | 12.44 | 12.67 | 14.22 | 14.33 | 14.77 | 14.80 | 14.96 | 15.00  |
| Contract faculty     | 7.47  | 7.44  | 9.17  | 9.62  | 8.58  | 8.26  | 8.97  |        |
| All other employees  | 8.26  | 8.56  | 8.81  | 8.72  | 8.71  | 8.45  | 8.74  | 9.50   |
| Total                | 8.88  | 9.09  | 9.83  | 9.87  | 9.76  | 9.54  | 9.89  |        |

The fluctuation in the contract faculty population and all other employees might be expected due to larger turnover than for tenure track faculty. For context, the city of Muncie has a minority population of 17.2 percent, and Delaware County has a minority population of 11.1 percent.

The [2012–2017 strategic plan](#) continues to support and emphasize these goals for increasing underrepresented minorities in the faculty and staff populations. To advance these goals, the deans of Ball State’s seven academic colleges have been asked to develop guidelines for [attracting and retaining a diverse faculty](#).

## **Services Supporting Multiculturalism/Diversity**

Success in diversifying Ball State’s campus and promoting an environment of understanding and acceptance of multicultural diversity and inclusion for students, faculty, and staff is dependent on providing readily available, well-developed, and welcoming support services for all constituents.

**Rinker Center for International Programs**—In addition to providing study-abroad experiences, the [Rinker Center](#) facilitates the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of international students at Ball State. The center also provides [support services](#) for these international students, including the awarding of scholarships, advising for immigration, employment and taxes, early-intervention academic advising for at-risk international students, personal and social advising, and facilitating freshman and departmental advising when needed. Various events sponsored by the Rinker Center throughout the year focus on international and multicultural themes, including cultural exchanges and friendship families for international students. In collaboration with the Multicultural Center and the Office of Housing and Residence Life, the center also sponsors Culture Week, The Amazing Taste International Festival, and the International Living-Learning Community.

**Housing and Residence Life**—Ball State’s [Office of Housing and Residence Life \(HRL\)](#) also plays a major role in supporting multicultural students on campus. The [International Living-Learning Community](#) and the [Languages Living-Learning Community](#), both housed in the newly renovated Studebaker East Complex, accommodate international as well as American

students wanting to learn more about each other's culture. For these programs, the International Partner Program pairs international and U.S. students as roommates based on common interests and the desire to learn more about other cultures. These programs also partner with the university's Department of Modern Languages and Classics. Undergraduate and graduate resident assistants and professional staff receive diversity education training to be prepared for specific issues or problems that might arise in these communities.

As with all other multicultural programs, HRL collaborates with the Rinker Center for International Programs, Counseling Center, and Multicultural Center as well as Academic Advising and the Learning Center to provide the strongest support for Ball State's diverse student population.

**Student Organizations**—[Diversity-oriented student organizations](#) supported by the Office of Student Life include the Asian American Student Association, Black Student Association, Latino Student Union, and Spectrum (for LGBTQ students).

**University Development**—Ball State's [Office of University Development](#) has been active in soliciting financial support for multicultural and diversity programs. For example, [39 funds](#) are targeted to areas and people of diverse backgrounds, with 11 funds specifically for nontraditional students. These funds usually target general minority or African-American students and groups. Among these are funds supporting Safe Zone projects, the Merrill Marshall Scholarship facilitated by the Office of Institutional Diversity, and the Velvet Day Scholarship facilitated by the Pre-Health Professions Advising Office and the Department of Biology.

### **Summary: Core Component 1.C.**

Ball State's mission, vision, and values statements have emphasized the importance of diversity and an understanding of issues in diversity. Strong programs are in place that provide academic opportunities for studying diversity issues and that provide support for our population of minority and international students. One goal of the university has been to increase the diversity of the campus population in all areas.

Although major gains were achieved under the 2007–2012 strategic plan and goals were essentially met for freshman and faculty diversity, work is continuing through the 2012–2017 strategic plan to achieve 17 percent diversity among freshman undergraduates, the overall undergraduate student population, and the contract faculty and staff populations.

### **Core Component 1.D.**

#### **The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.**

Ball State University's mission, vision, and values consistently address a [commitment to the public good](#). In *Strategic Plan 2001–2006*, these statements emphasized application of the discovery of knowledge and integration of learning experiences through civic and professional

leadership demonstrating the university's social responsibility. In *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, the mission recognized Ball State's responsibility to improve economic vitality and quality of life while engaging and learning with members of state, national, and international communities.

The mission in the 2012–2017 strategic plan, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, includes an even stronger emphasis on the public good. Ball State seeks to be recognized for “fresh and pragmatic thinking that will address problems facing communities, businesses, and governments in Indiana and beyond” who look to the university for guidance. In particular, the following objectives under Goal 4 (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 6) make the university's commitment obvious:

- Connect academic programs with employers in the state to create more synergy between educational offerings and the needs of a knowledge-based economy
- Leverage university expertise to increase the competitiveness of Indiana's communities and businesses
- Enhance commercialization with new opportunities and strategies

**Subcomponent 1.D.1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.**

In the transition from the 2001–2006 mission to the 2007–2012 mission, Ball State substantially increased the emphasis on a commitment to the public good. The 2007–2012 values and cultures statements clearly said: “As civic and professional leaders, we value civic engagement with the larger communities of which we are a part and are dedicated to preparing civic and professional leaders for the future. We accept our individual and institutional responsibilities to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in the greater society we serve. We seek healthy and productive living, social justice, and environmental sustainability for Indiana, the nation, and the global community” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 4).

The university's strategy for accomplishing this mission included “supporting partnerships and collaborations across the institution and with the greater external community to accomplish the mission in an integrated manner” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 3).

The decisions that went into developing the 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 strategic plans demonstrate the university understands its educational role serves the public and not solely the institution. Ball State has implemented numerous programs, demonstrating through its actions and decisions a clear understanding of a commitment to the public good. The university has enhanced its efforts toward outreach in multiple areas, including an emphasis on immersive learning, which by definition involves a community partner who will benefit from the student team's work.

In addition, the Building Better Communities initiative (discussed later in this section) consolidates many of Ball State's outreach efforts, and support for public programming is demonstrated through resources such as the public television and radio stations on campus

and expanded academic programs in off-campus locations such as Ball State's [Indianapolis Center](#) and [Fishers Center](#).

## Immersive Learning

Ball State's strategic planning process in 2007 included the decision to define [immersive learning](#) as a major initiative and differentiator for the university. This is reflected in the mission and values statements indicating Ball State is "dedicated to providing opportunities for interdisciplinary work and for collaboration, looking to teamwork for problem solving in the classroom, within the institution, and with the larger communities to which the university belongs" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 3).

Immersive learning continues to be a major initiative in the 2012–2017 strategic plan, which expands upon the two performance indicators of the previous plan to include an entire objective. [Goal 1, Objective 3](#) is devoted to placing "immersive learning at the center of a Ball State education." Seven measurable performance indicators include goals to provide every undergraduate student with an immersive learning opportunity and to have all departments offer at least one immersive learning experience per year. Other goals involve publications and presentations reporting immersive learning projects, recognition of immersive learning scholarship and teaching in faculty promotion and tenure and merit salary considerations, and establishment of annual awards and college-based Immersive Learning Presidential Fellow opportunities for faculty.

The [definition](#) for immersive learning projects is unique to Ball State and includes the following seven criteria:

- carry academic credit
- an active learning process that is student driven, guided by a faculty mentor, and solves a real-world problem
- produces a tangible outcome or product
- involves a team of students which is often interdisciplinary
- includes a community partner
- focuses on student learning outcomes
- helps students define a career path or make connections to a profession or industry

Not all experiential activities are immersive by the Ball State definition, but all immersive projects are experiential. Between 2007 and 2012, more than 20,000 students participated in [more than 1,000 projects](#) throughout Indiana and as far away as Hong Kong, Venice, and Malawi. The majority of immersive learning projects are part of individual courses.

Students can also focus on one project for an entire semester by participating in [Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry](#) seminars. These projects include 15 students from a variety of disciplines who receive 15 credits for their efforts. One very successful seminar involved adapting Indiana author Cathy Day's novel [The Circus in Winter](#) for the musical theatre stage. The musical has received numerous awards and participated with professional productions in

a prestigious festival in New York City attended by theatre insiders. (An [online feature story and video](#) about this project are available.) Other projects have also [received notable awards](#).

Immersive learning projects suggested by faculty members can be supported by grants from the Office of the Provost. Final products range from business plans, documentaries, and programs to websites and emerging media content. As a result of these real-world projects, students develop important critical-thinking skills, problem-solving experience, and knowledge and become more confident self-starters. Three examples of immersive learning experiences that demonstrate commitment to the public good are described below:

**Schools within the Context of Community**—This program is an immersive 18-credit semester emphasizing that knowledge about the communities in which children are growing and learning is a critical component to effective teaching. As part of the semester, Ball State students complete a practicum at a high-need elementary school. After school, the local community center is their classroom, where they develop relationships with children, families, community members, and community mentors. This program allows students to experience children’s lives both in and outside formal schooling and to examine the challenges and strengths inherent in the community. Teaching students earn credit for core courses in the elementary education curriculum, and the course content is integrated seamlessly within their students’ lives at school and in their community. (An [online feature story](#) about this project is available.)

**Vernacular Memorials: Commemoration in Delaware County**—This immersive project allowed students to investigate specific manifestations of “vernacular memorials”—and more importantly, the people and events behind these memorials—throughout Delaware County. Vernacular memorials include roadside crosses, car decals, quilts, tattoos, and other individual efforts to commemorate losses and joys in the public sphere. The students created a public exhibition and a catalog for their community partners, the Muncie Public Library and the Delaware County Historical Society. (An [online feature story](#) about this project is available.)

**Project 18**—Created by Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent, Project 18 is an anti-childhood obesity campaign encouraging children and their families to make healthier food choices in a state where nearly one-third of children ages 10–17 are overweight or obese. Ball State students collaborated with St. Vincent on an 18-week curriculum that brought the campaign into schools, a plan and materials to support a grocery program, and public relations strategies. Since 2009, Project 18 has touched more than 100,000 students in 550-plus schools. Students are addressing major risk behaviors through nutrition, physical activity, and holistic health in 76 counties and 121 communities across the state. (An [online feature story](#) about this project is available.)

Information about selected immersive learning projects—including the [Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library Interpretation and Technology Enhancement project](#)—is available on Ball State’s [immersive learning website](#), where selected students also share their experiences. (A set of high-quality [online videos](#) feature students involved in some of these projects.)

## Building Better Communities

Ball State's [Building Better Communities \(BBC\)](#) initiative is [historically rooted](#) in the College of Architecture and Planning's Community-Based Projects Program in the 1960s and later the Center for Economic and Community Development and the Center for Organizational Resources in the 1980s and 1990s. BBC was launched as a university-wide initiative with state funding from the 2003–2005 biennium budget under the leadership of the newly appointed associate vice president of economic development and community engagement. Ball State President Jo Ann Gora [presented the BBC initiative](#) to constituents throughout Indiana in 2006, and it was incorporated into Goal 3 of the university's 2007–2012 strategic plan (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, pp. 8–9).

In 2008, the BBC initiative brought three key teams under its umbrella: the Center for Organizational Resources (COR), the Center for Economic and Community Development (CECD), and Business Fellows (now BBC Fellows), an immersive learning program established with a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The outreach programs offered by the [E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center](#) also became part of BBC in 2010.

**Mission/Vision**—Building Better Communities connects businesses, organizations, and communities across Indiana with the university's expertise and resources, providing real-world solutions to real-world problems. Through customized efforts, the initiative's work results in stronger businesses, improved communities, and more efficient state and local agencies. The BBC office now serves as a single coordinated gateway for communicating about and providing outreach services to external audiences. "Building Better Communities reflects a vision well beyond a simple expansion of already-existing outreach services: it embodies instead a major strategic alignment of Ball State's education distinction—immersive learning—with its recognized leadership among peer organizations in active community engagement" ([Brief History of Building Better Communities](#)).

**BBC Fellows**—Community partners are encouraged to become involved in the immersive [BBC Fellows program](#), whose website reads: "We invite you to collaborate with a Ball State faculty mentor and student team to develop solutions to meet the needs of your organization. Benefits include: new ideas and perspectives applied to your organization's distinct challenges or problems; an energetic team of Ball State students from diverse majors selected specifically to meet your needs; expertise and knowledge that comes from a faculty-led team; advantages of a consulting team approach without a long-term investment; and relationships with Ball State students for future internship and full-time job openings."

**Activities/Projects**—BBC [outreach and final reports](#) from the 2008–09 through the 2011–12 show continued growth in project numbers, student participants, and external funding generated. The number of completed projects increased from 183 in 2008–09 to 619 in 2011–12, impacting 64 and 55 Indiana counties, respectively. Student participation increased from 544 in 82 projects in 2008–09 to 5,083 in 282 projects in 2011–12, and external funding generated increased by approximately \$2.72 million.



Building Better Communities activities fall into several categories:

- [outreach partnerships](#), which provide faculty expertise to help businesses reach and assess goals
- [BBC Fellows](#), an immersive learning program in which students develop solutions to real-world problems for businesses and communities (funded in part by Lilly Endowment Inc.)
- [applied research](#), in which participants conduct detailed research and analysis customized to the achievement of goals by the client
- [training and education](#), including courses for Indiana communities on topics such as economic development, emerging media, and organizational service
- [strategic planning](#), which provides clients with suggestions and strategies to meet the missions of their organizations

Examples of BBC projects completed in 2011 include:

- education and training classes on retention through customer service at Henry County Hospital (100 participants)
- Magna cum Murder Crime Writing Festival (116 participants, two students involved)
- immersive and experiential learning projects between Ball State's Department of Marketing and Management and school districts in Delaware and Madison counties to develop a marketing strategy and communication plans for the Camp Adventure Environmental Learning Center (nine students involved)
- a project between Ball State's Office of Charter Schools and Department of Architecture with five Indiana charter schools to develop an interactive website and a guidebook on planning and designing charter school facilities (10 students involved)
- a consulting project between faculty in Ball State's Department of Anthropology and the Fort Recovery Historical Society and State Museum in the Mercer, Ohio, area to develop plans for Fort Recovery preservation funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program (25 students involved)

A complete list of [2010–11 BBC projects](#) is available for review.

## **WIPB Public Television**

Ball State's public television station, [WIPB-TV](#), was founded in 1971 and is housed in the Ball Communication Building on campus. WIPB develops programming for local, regional, and national presentation. Community outreach programs have included the following:

- [Facing the Mortgage Crisis](#) aired on February 25 and April 1, 2010. This two-part live call-in program featured a panel of guest experts discussing

what viewers can do to save their homes. Both parts featured panelists who addressed questions by viewers on the topic of foreclosure.

- [\*Surviving Unemployment: Solution Oriented Approach\*](#) aired in 2009. WIPB's in-depth look at the economy offered information on resources available in the community, news on the economy in Indiana and across the nation, and special local programming. This program provided help with finding a job and coping with losing one.
- [\*The National Parks: America's Best Idea\*](#) premiered September 27, 2009. WIPB partnered with Ball State's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management to visit the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and State Park with children from the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie.

## **College of Architecture and Planning**

Outreach centers housed in Ball State's College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) serve multiple purposes for students and the public. First, they give students a series of viable learning experiences in urban planning and design, citizen participation methods, and neighborhood revitalization. Students need a realistic and pragmatic understanding of these activities, and that can be gained through their participation in a community-based, problem-focused, hands-on format.

In addition, these programs provide public education in environmental planning and design to both the public and private sectors. They also provide service in the form of technical assistance in urban planning and design matters to both the public and private sectors and promote applied research activities that focus on Indiana urban contexts, from inner-city neighborhoods to small rural towns.

**CAP Indianapolis Center—[CAP:IC](#)** is a major part of the College of Architecture and Planning. Its mission is "to provide community outreach and service activities to neighborhoods and other organizations while offering students invaluable immersive learning experiences." CAP established the center in the mid-2000s to expand the college's reach of service in the state of Indiana. Neighborhoods, organizations, and communities can request CAP:IC assistance, which is then designed to meet the needs, resources, and project end products required. Common ways CAP:IC helps communities include:

- participation on boards, design juries, and task forces
- academic design studios and classes undertaking community design or planning issues as class projects
- community design *charrettes* that quickly analyze a design issue and develop a series of alternative visions
- community education, visioning exercises, workshops, and training
- research activities, including demographic and best-practice research
- field work, including building condition and land use inventories
- grant-supported research and studies
- support for community initiatives



CAP:IC's noteworthy projects include facilitating the [Indianapolis Regional Center Plan 2020](#), which involved public assistance and interaction, conducting urban design and youth workshops, managing committee membership for the program and communication, and graphic design of logos as well as merchandise and publication development. The [Speedway Speedzone](#) workshop engaged the community of Speedway in planning to redevelop the village by supporting the heritage associated with the Indianapolis Motor Speedway but developing mixed-use facilities that could be used for both the racing events and daily by residents.

The [Historic Meridian Park Neighborhood Workshop](#) paired Ball State with residents to plan for the future preservation of the neighborhood in celebration of its 100th anniversary. A summary of the [design plans and charrettes](#) for this project are available for review.

## Teachers College

Public outreach activities in Ball State's Teachers College include an award-winning series of virtual field trips produced for schools across the U.S. and sponsorship of innovative charter schools through Indiana.

**Electronic Field Trips**—For 15 years, the Teachers College and its Burris Laboratory School on campus produced 60 [Electronic Field Trips \(EFT\)](#) that were viewed by more than 80 million students and teachers in schools throughout the country. For each program, a teacher and a few Burris students traveled to a site in the United States with a film crew to learn about subjects such as volcanoes, baseball, national parks, history, space, and dinosaurs, to name only a few. Some parts of the programs were prerecorded, but much was live, and students watching at their schools could submit questions during the broadcast. These programs have been archived and are still available for teachers to use in their classes.

This initiative received 23 Telly Awards and 16 World Media Festival Gold and Silver Awards. EFT sponsors included Apple Learning Interchange, which developed the online educational environment used, and other organizations and foundations such as the National Park Service, Space Center Houston, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Selected EFT [program evaluations](#) are available for review.

**Charter Schools**—When the Indiana legislature passed a statute in 2001 authorizing the mayor of Indianapolis and institutions of higher education to sponsor charter schools, Ball State became the only university to participate. Ball State has authorized as many as 42 [charter schools](#) affecting more than 15,000 Indiana children. In response to the charter school movement, the university created a graduate [certificate in charter school leadership](#) and provides charter school [research data and reports](#) on its website.

Ball State's [Office of Charter Schools \(OCS\)](#) recently [revised the process](#) by which it grants and renews charters. After an extensive review of academic, financial, and organizational performance and compliance, OCS in January 2013 took action on 20 charters up for renewal. Four were granted five-year renewals, seven received three-year extensions with performance conditions, seven charters were not renewed, and two schools withdrew their requests.

**Subcomponent 1.D.2.** The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Ball State’s 2007–2012 mission statement clearly emphasizes “offering action-oriented learning, including immersive out-of-class experiences, research, and study abroad” as the institution’s primary educational responsibilities, but it also includes engagement with state, national, and international communities as long as the goal is to enhance educational, economic, and cultural development (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 2).

The university’s continuing focus on education, including educational outreach in support of external interests, is reflected in the vision statement from the 2012–2017 strategic plan: “We seek to become recognized for providing bright and curious students a holistic learning experience that occurs both in and out of the classroom; for being relentlessly focused on learning outcomes; for embracing and solving today’s greatest educational challenges; and for bringing fresh and pragmatic thinking to the problems facing communities, businesses, and governments in Indiana and beyond” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

Members of the Ball State community have interacted with the city of Muncie and the larger communities of Indiana, the nation, and the world in a variety of ways. All of these can and should benefit an external interest to improve economic vitality and quality of life in these communities, as this is part of the university’s mission of outreach and commitment to the public good. However, Ball State’s primary interest in these interactions involves enhancing education, scholarship, and community life for our students, faculty, and staff. Examples of such external engagement follow.

### **CAP Indianapolis Center**

Through Ball State’s [College of Architecture and Planning: Indianapolis Center \(CAP:IC\)](#), the city of Indianapolis gains valuable ideas and funding possibilities to improve the community’s economic stability (discussed under [Subcomponent 1.D.1](#)), but the main reason for the university’s involvement is the student experience. CAP:IC draws from the rich interdisciplinary nature of the college’s programs in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, historic preservation, and urban design. Combining this richness with the urban context offered by Indianapolis, the center affords the college a unique opportunity to help shape not only future professionals but also the future of Indiana’s capital and largest city.

[Outreach projects](#) that have provided both real-world learning experiences for students and benefits for economic vitality in Indianapolis include partnerships with:

- BioCrossroads, a public-private life sciences collaboration whose initiatives include plans for a downtown research community
- Indianapolis Cultural Trail, which developed information on a new urban greenway
- IndyConnect, a proposed rapid transit initiative for central Indiana
- Smart Growth District, a concept for sustainable neighborhood renewal that is one of five federal Sustainable Communities Partnership pilots

## Building Better Communities Fellows

Ball State's [Building Better Communities \(BBC\) Fellows](#) program engages interdisciplinary teams of students led by faculty mentors in on-site, problem-based projects that directly help Indiana business and community partners to improve their services, quality, or competitiveness or develop new job opportunities. These projects benefit the state and local economies while providing real-world immersive learning experiences and career connections for participating students, thus meeting our educational priorities as well as our goals of community outreach. More information about BBC Fellows and other BBC projects is provided under [Subcomponent 1.D.1.](#)

## Faculty Consulting

Faculty in a variety of Ball State departments participate in consulting projects for external community partners. While outside firms and organizations stand to benefit economically from this work, these projects enhance the scholarly activity of the faculty members involved. Their external contacts may also build internship opportunities for Ball State students. Since these projects are often compensated work, they must follow the university's policies on [conflict of interest and conflict of commitment](#) in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*, which also provides guidelines on preventing conflicts of interest in [government-sponsored research](#). These policies are implemented appropriately, and the process is overseen by Ball State's [Office of Research Integrity](#).

## WIPB-TV

Public television station [WIPB-TV](#) is sponsored by Ball State, which provides the infrastructure required for operation, but today it is sustained largely by external grants, corporate contracts for various products, and private gifts handled through the Ball State University Foundation. Funds generated for the [station's operations](#) are also dedicated, along with university funding, to upgrading equipment as a partnership to provide immersive learning projects, such as the telecommunications sports network initiative [Ball State Sports Link](#).

## Private Support

Gifts from benefactors enhance education, scholarship, and campus life at Ball State and support the overall betterment of the university. The Office of University Development is primarily responsible for identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding private support for Ball State. The [Ball State University Foundation](#) is responsible for planned giving and endowment stewardship. The foundation is governed by a clear set of [bylaws](#) and has a well-defined [policies and procedures manual](#). It follows the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Code of Ethical Principles and Standards as well as the AFP Donor Bill of Rights and the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning Model Standards of Practice for the Charitable Gift Planner.

The Division of University Advancement is charged with promoting gifts that fulfill its mission to serve Ball State and thus reserves the right to refuse gifts that do not fulfill its mission or that violate any laws or ethical standards. In practice, the university does not accept every gift offered if the investor is the only one who will benefit. Examples of recent gifts accepted to advance Ball State's strategic priorities include:

- David Letterman's contributions toward telecommunications student scholarships and the [David Letterman Distinguished Professional Lecture and Workshop Series](#), which has brought media icon Oprah Winfrey, Twitter cofounder Biz Stone, MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, legendary newscaster Ted Koppel, and Burberry CEO Angela Ahrendts to campus to interact with students.
- A. Umit Taftali's support of the finance program in the Miller College of Business. His lead gift enabled the university to establish the [A. Umit Taftali Center for Capital Markets and Investing](#), which closely simulates the real world of financial services firms by creating an environment of hands-on training in the workings of financial markets, financial modeling, and valuation.
- A gift from The Glick Fund, a fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation established by Marilyn and Eugene Glick, in support of Ball State's glass program. The lead gift enabled the construction of the 10,000-square-foot [Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass](#) and establishment of a glass arts program in the College of Fine Arts. *(A video about the [Glick Center](#) is available online.)*
- Joe Rinard's support of the Department of Biology Greenhouse Project. The Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Greenhouse will be a new 3,380-square-foot facility for approximately 1,800 orchids, the largest collegiate-based collection of its kind in the country. Groundbreaking is scheduled for August 16, 2013.
- David Owsley's support of the [David Owsley Museum of Art](#) expansion and renovation. He was one of numerous donors who contributed to the addition of four new galleries that will increase the museum's exhibition space by about 50 percent to almost 27,000 square feet.
- A gift from Indianapolis entrepreneur Charles Brown to support the construction of a new planetarium that will rank among the largest and most sophisticated in the United States. Groundbreaking is scheduled for fall 2013.
- The Scheumann family's significant contribution to the renovation of the [John B. and June M. Scheumann Stadium](#), Ball State's NCAA Division I football venue.
- Sport Graphics' contribution to the installation of signs and banners at Scheumann Stadium and in Worthen Arena, the university's two largest athletic facilities.

An example of a gift the university did not accept because it would not benefit the institution involved a donor's offer to help purchase a piece of property for use by Ball State's Field Station and Environmental Education Center and its programs. After a careful review of the property by representatives from University Advancement, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, and the Department of Geological Sciences, the gift was declined because it did not meet the needs of the educational programs in these departments.

**Subcomponent 1.D.3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.**

Values statements in Ball State's 2007–2012 strategic plan addressed the university's commitment to service for the public good. As a vital academic institution, Ball State values

problem solving with the larger communities to which the university belongs, and “as civic and professional leaders, we value civic engagement with the larger communities of which we are a part....We accept our individual and institutional responsibilities to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in the greater society we serve” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 3). The values statement in the 2012–2017 strategic plan reaffirms the university’s commitment to the values of the academy “for the purpose of bettering society and individuals” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 3).

In the 2007–2012 mission statement, Ball State emphasized engaging state, national, and international communities to enhance educational, economic, and cultural development. That commitment continues in the 2012–2017 strategic plan, whose vision calls for “bringing fresh and pragmatic thinking to the problems facing communities, businesses, and governments in Indiana and beyond,” integrating discipline-specific knowledge with application that “fundamentally changes students, researchers, and our external partners,” and embracing “engagement with communities across Indiana” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

As a need is identified for an external constituent—often through the Building Better Communities initiative—the university responds with collaboration when possible. In addition to the projects and programs cited earlier for this criterion, the following examples reflect such identified needs and responses:

### **Student Volunteers**

To successfully provide services to meet the needs of community members, local not-for-profit agencies often need volunteers to offer their time and talent. Ball State’s [Student Voluntary Services \(SVS\)](#) program had 109 active nonprofits and schools in its database as of November 2011. During the 2010–11 academic year, 1,685 student volunteers were registered through SVS for 2,990 placements (several volunteers registered for more than one program). These volunteers completed a total of 25,685 hours of service. In 2011–12, 1,935 students volunteered for 27,365 hours of service. In addition to SVS, Ball State’s fraternities and sororities organize service opportunities. Through these projects, students provided 28,453 hours of service in [2011–12](#), an increase of 8,000 hours from [2010–11](#). (A photo gallery of [student community service work](#) is available online.)

The [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) in 2004 found that 70 percent of freshmen and 76 percent of seniors planned or had participated in community service at Ball State. In the 2008 and 2012 surveys, 75 and 79 percent of freshmen and 80 and 78 percent of seniors, respectively, indicated the same. When asked in 2004 to what extent their experience at Ball State contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in contributing to the welfare of the community, only 18 percent of freshmen and 21 percent of seniors indicated very much or quite a bit. In 2008 and 2012, these numbers rose to 40 and 41 percent of freshmen and 45 and 44 percent of seniors, respectively, indicating a significant increase in awareness for contributing to the public good.

### **Bowen Center for Public Affairs**

In response to a need for Indiana legislators and government officials to collect information about residents’ attitudes regarding public policy, the [Bowen Center for Public Affairs](#)—housed

in Ball State's Department of Political Science—conducts the annual Hoosier Survey of attitudes related to current issues and policy such as right-to-work laws and health care reform.

The annual [Bowen Institute on Political Participation](#), established in 1981 as the original component of the Bowen Center for Public Affairs, is a two-day workshop designed to enhance the skills of students and citizens interested in increased civic engagement in government and politics. Participants interact with public officials, political analysts, and private sector leaders. Citizens acquire skills and information on becoming involved in government issues, engaged in service, and knowledgeable about issues.

In addition, the Bowen Center's [Institute for Public Service](#) is the only educational institution authorized to offer certified public manager (CPM) training to local official government officials in Indiana. The Institute for Public Service also sponsors the [Community Conversation Series](#), which promotes dialogue between community leaders and citizens from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to address challenges, evaluate solutions, and acquire access to resources, technology, and expertise through Ball State to implement solutions as well as ongoing consultative support. Examples of projects include a community cleanup in Orange County and the Horizon 2.0 Project in Elkhart, Indiana.

### **Other Outreach Initiatives**

A significant number of other Ball State programs and centers also address outreach for the public good. Specific projects include:

- [Hancock County Chamber of Commerce](#) in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, needed post-hurricane reconstruction assistance. Students from the Entrepreneurship Center and the College of Architecture and Planning assisted in constructing a valuable business database, creating awareness of hardships in Hancock County, and promoting hurricane relief efforts. The combined efforts resulted in monetary grants for reconstruction and a kick-start of many businesses after Hurricane Katrina.
- Midwest POS Solutions Inc. in Anderson, Indiana, needed market research data before a product launch. [Entrepreneurship students](#) conducted the research, and the results suggested the product would not be profitable. The company ultimately decided against launching the product.
- [Emerging Technologies' Digital Corps](#)—a group of certified student software experts who work on digital media projects for campus and community clients—helped pilot a project for the 2013 Indiana General Assembly in which 62 Indiana legislators used iPad tablets to access documents and track bills online. [This initiative](#) reduced paper, saved money, and increased efficiency.

Other established university outreach groups include the following:

- [Center for Business and Economic Research \(CBER\)](#) is a resource for economic data, policy analysis, and regional demographics and provides a weekly update on current issues.



- [Social Science Research Center \(SSRC\)](#) provides support to Ball State faculty and staff and to public and private organizations for externally funded social science research and service projects, including program evaluation services.
- [Security and Software Engineering Research Center \(SERC\)](#) is a cooperative research center with business and university partners.
- [Center for Middletown Studies](#) continues the sociologic research work of studying Muncie as Middletown USA, established as a barometer of social trends in the United States.
- [Human Performance Laboratory \(HPL\)](#) has conducted research on aging and effects of space travel on muscles.
- [Center for Energy Research/Education/Service \(CERES\)](#) has sponsored international Greening of the Campus conferences since 1996 that provide opportunities for diverse groups to present information on environmental issues.
- [Aquatic Biology and Fisheries Center \(ABC\)](#) was established in 1998 to promote applied research in the aquatic science discipline and was the first such center in Indiana.

#### **Summary: Core Component 1.D.**

Ball State demonstrates its commitment to the public good through academic programs that feature immersive learning experiences as well as service learning classes. The Building Better Communities (BBC) initiative allows faculty and students to identify and participate in projects that involve partnerships in the community. Certainly the outreach and public service projects in the College of Architecture and Planning serve as excellent models for our commitment to the public good. Students are also encouraged to give back to the community through opportunities afforded them by Student Voluntary Services.

The challenge in the 2012–2017 strategic plan is to promote continued commitment to the public good and expansion of our immersive experiences, BBC opportunities, and volunteer services to extend the university's reach to all areas of the state and beyond.



## Criterion Two—Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Ball State University fosters a culture of ethical ideals and responsible behavior. All constituents are encouraged to promote an environment of accessible guidelines that are flexible, reliable, practical, and enforced. The university community is engaged in high professional standards and committed to an evolution of best practice. Academic integrity is a fundamental and core value in all expectations and practices, and it reinforces quality teaching and learning. Integrity is also emphasized throughout the university's administrative, service, and support operations.

Four major campus groups have each developed a code of ethics or a bill of rights to further solidify the expectations of the campus culture for all. Each of these documents was reviewed and approved through the appropriate governance processes.

- [Board of Trustees Statement on Rights and Responsibilities](#)—This asserts the Ball State Board of Trustees' belief in academic freedom and empowers the university administration to maintain a campus where these essential freedoms are preserved. It is included in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*.
- [Faculty/Staff Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#)—Also found in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*, this outlines such topics as the faculty member's relation to civil law and to the university as well as defining academic freedom and discussing the judicial process.
- [Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#)—Similar to the faculty/staff bill of rights, this outlines the student's relation to civil law, to the university, and to the community. It concludes with the topic of academic freedom and then a general list of additional rights and responsibilities. The document is included within the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*.
- [Employee Code of Ethics](#)—This focuses on expectations of confidentiality related to student and employee records. It appears in all staff handbooks.

Two other related statements encompass the entire campus:

- [Strategic Plan Values](#)—Part of Ball State's 2012–2017 strategic plan, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, these statements affirm campus beliefs that the university embraces the traditional values of the academy and chooses to lead rather than follow as it outlines the areas that we challenge ourselves, the areas that we advance, and the ideals we embrace.
- [Beneficence Pledge](#)—This campuswide initiative is a broad statement of expectations that guides fair and ethical practice for all members of the Ball State community, who promise to “maintain high standards of scholarship and excellence,” “practice academic honesty,” “act in a socially responsible way,” and “value the intrinsic worth of every member of the community.” The Student Government Association first acted on the pledge in fall 2006, and the University Senate passed it in February 2008. The following month, the pledge was [unanimously endorsed](#) by Ball State's Board of Trustees. It appears on the Student Rights and Community Standards website and in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*.

## **Core Component 2.A.**

**The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.**

Ball State University has numerous well-established ethical policies and processes that guide the actions of its community members in all areas of the institution. They are implemented and enforced across the campus to ensure fairness and integrity in everything from employment, promotion, and tenure decisions to academic integrity, purchasing, auditing, alumni data handling, and public safety.

### **Governing Board**

As stated above, the Ball State Board of Trustees' [Statement on Rights and Responsibilities](#) affirms the board's commitment to the citizens of Indiana to provide an optimum educational experience for all students of the university. The document also states that the board delegates responsibility for maintaining an atmosphere of academic freedom and freedom of expression for all individuals to the appropriate university officials.

Article V of the [Board of Trustees Bylaws](#) recognizes that the powers of the board come from the Indiana Code. All board members are appointed by the state's governor for four-year terms that can be renewed. Upon appointment, each board member participates in a detailed orientation that includes meetings with each of Ball State's vice presidents to learn about all areas of the campus in preparation for making decisions regarding university operations and policies. One meeting is with the university attorney, who outlines [the roles and responsibilities](#) of the board.

### **Administration**

Ball State's [Office of University Compliance](#) provides information, resources, and counsel on the institution's policies concerning fairness, integrity, and ethics, including fair labor standards, equal opportunity and affirmative action, sexual harassment, identity theft, privacy rights, and access to public records.

The Office of Research Integrity advises on [ethical and legal issues](#) related to research and manages the [significant financial conflict of interest and conflict of commitment](#) programs for the entire university. The Office of Business Affairs also administers a portion of Ball State's [conflict of interest program](#), which covers situations where an employee has a monetary interest in a university contract or purchase. Until recently, administrative responsibility for the conflict of interest and conflict of commitment policies resided with the Office of University Compliance.

Guidance on other types of conflicts of interest is provided by specific offices and departments, including the following:

- [Scholarships and Financial Aid: Conflict of Interest Policy and Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Legal Services: Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Miller College of Business: Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment](#)
- [Charter Schools: Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest](#)

## **Faculty and Staff**

Ball State's fair and ethical policies, procedures, and regulations approved by the Board of Trustees, the university president, and/or the University Senate are communicated to faculty and staff through the applicable employee handbooks. The following policies are provided in all handbooks:

- [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy](#)
- [Anti-Harassment Policy](#)
- [Anti-Nepotism Policy](#)

The *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*, maintained by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, also contains policies specific to the academic responsibilities of faculty, professional personnel, and students. Examples include:

- [Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee](#)
- [Grade Appeals](#)
- [Institutional Review Board](#)
- [Policy for Animal Care and Use](#)
- [Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#)
- [Policy for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules and Research Involving Infectious Materials](#)
- [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [University Promotion and Tenure](#)
- [Collegiate Promotion and Tenure](#)

All of Ball State's employee handbooks are readily available on the [University Human Resource Services website](#) and the [accreditation online resource room](#), including:

- *Handbook for Exempt Staff Personnel*
- *Handbook for Temporary Full-Time Exempt Staff Personnel*

- *Handbook for Nonexempt Staff Personnel*
- *Handbook for Service Personnel (Bargaining Unit)*
- *Handbook for Service Personnel (Non-Bargaining Unit) Affiliated with Staff Personnel*
- *Handbook for Regular Part-Time Service Personnel*
- *Handbook for Temporary Staff, Temporary Service, Casual, and Substitute Personnel*

Examples of fair and ethical policies and processes also can be found in the following divisions of the university:

**Student Affairs**—This division works to foster a fair and ethical campus environment. The [Student Rights and Community Standards](#) website is a primary resource that includes the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), [emergency policies and procedures](#), and information concerning conduct on and off campus. The Student Code outlines disciplinary procedures and the [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#), which ensures all students adhere to the principles of academic integrity and honesty.

Individual offices in this division also provide up-to-date policies and procedures for students and community members. Examples include:

- [Counseling Center Confidentiality Policies](#)
- [Disability Services Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Disability Services Verification Process](#)
- [Health Center Mission and Values](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life Policies](#)
- [Student Organization Handbook](#)

**Information Technology**—Several documents outline this division's policies to support a fair and ethical campus environment. All of these [policies and procedures](#) can be found on the university website. Documents include the following:

- [User's Privileges and Responsibilities](#)
- [Disposal of Confidential Information Policy](#)
- [Third Party Disclosure Agreement](#)
- [Model Confidentiality and Information Access Agreement](#)

**Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications**—This division pursues the highest standard of fair and ethical practice in its decision making and operations, taking seriously the responsibility that comes with admitting, enrolling, and recording the academic progress of students; facilitating access through student financial assistance; and communicating the value of the institution. Decisions regarding student admittance to the university, academic probation, and academic disqualification are based upon objective academic criteria designed to facilitate fair, ethical, and equitable decision making.

All units in the division safeguard confidential data and require that those with access to sensitive and personal information sign the university's [confidentiality agreement](#). Each unit also has established practices to ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Individual offices follow codes of conduct established by professional organizations, when applicable. Examples include:

- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) [Statement of Professional Ethics and Practice](#)
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) [Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct for Institutional Financial Aid Professionals](#)
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Principles of Practice for Communications and Marketing Professionals at Educational Institutions and Statement of Ethics

**University Advancement**—Each of the four interrelated areas in this division has established [ethical policies and processes](#) to guide daily activities in advancement services, university development, and alumni programs. For example, a series of policies has been developed to protect [alumni data](#), including the [E-mail List Policy](#) and the [Third Party Partnership Policy](#). In addition, each professional employee in the division must sign a [confidentiality agreement](#) to maintain the privacy of the data with which they work and to keep data secure and accessible only to those who have rights to this information.

**Business Affairs**—In this division, Purchasing Services has developed [ethical guidelines](#) that adhere to the National Association for Education Procurement Code of Ethics. Also, the internal auditing staff follows the [Internal Auditor's Code of Ethics](#) in the performance of its responsibilities.

**Intercollegiate Athletics**—Ball State's athletic programs adhere to the fair and ethical code of conduct policy established by the university as well as the [policy developed for intercollegiate athletics](#). The department believes that a hostile environment should not be part of an athletic event, and specific policies prohibit taunting and baiting of opponents. Staff members work with student-athletes and students to create and promote a "hospitable" environment that includes sportsmanship and respect for opponents. This behavior is expected from everyone involved, including the local community. Student-athletes understand that they represent the university and that they are expected to behave with dignity and class on and off the field.

In addition, each athletics staff member—including full-time employees, graduate assistants, and volunteer coaches—must sign a [confidentiality agreement](#) to maintain the privacy of the data they work with and to keep data secure and accessible only to those who have rights to the information.

### **Summary: Core Component 2.A.**

Ball State has many sound policies and processes in place to ensure integrity, fairness, and ethical practices in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions, and these are communicated to members of the campus community through the university's website and in

printed materials. These ethics policies and processes are reviewed periodically to confirm their relevance and accuracy. Additional policies and processes will be created as situations warrant as the university continues to maintain a high level of integrity in all of its operations.

## **Core Component 2.B.**

**The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.**

Ball State University's [website](#) is the most clear and comprehensive resource for presenting institutional information to current and prospective students and the public. A complete redesign of the site in 2007 provided intuitive navigation to key information for specific priority audiences, first and foremost of which was prospective students. The intentional, strategic structure of the website supports four primary institutional goals:

- attracting high-quality, bright, passionate students
- building advocates among alumni, donors, legislators, and business leaders
- raising money for the university
- facilitating productivity among faculty, staff, and students

These goals are accomplished by the infusion of brand messages and stories on the website that help build the argument "Why Ball State" for external audiences. These messages and stories appear throughout the site in the form of [special interest features](#), [news stories](#), and [video chronicles](#) that align with the university's comprehensive marketing efforts.

The website's consistent navigation scheme allows visitors to easily access details about Ball State's programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, institutional control, and accreditation relationships from numerous starting points. Prominent topical buttons along the top of every page include the following:

- [About](#)
- [Academics](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Athletics](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Campus Life](#)
- [News](#)
- [Giving](#)

Specific information can also be found using the Google search engine, [site map](#), and [searchable directory](#) of faculty, staff, and students. The [Contact Us](#) page links people to

relevant areas of the website based on a set of described scenarios. Target audiences can find collections of links to information tailored to them through the following gateway pages:

- [Alumni](#)
- [Business Partners](#)
- [Current Students](#)
- [Faculty and Staff](#)
- [Parents](#)

A number of other areas within the Ball State website illustrate how the university presents information clearly and completely to students and the public.

## **Programs and Personnel**

Information about Ball State's academic programs, requirements, and faculty and staff can be found in various locations on the university's website, starting with the [admissions](#) and [academics](#) gateways on the home page. From there, visitors are directed to areas for undergraduate, graduate, and online/distance education students that describe academic offerings and policies, admission and degree requirements, and unique student opportunities for all programs at Ball State.

These areas provide online applications and convenient access to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), which includes official information about all bachelor's and associate degrees (searchable by program, department, or college), and the [Graduate Catalog](#), which outlines all master's, doctoral, specialist, and certificate programs. Alphabetical lists of links to majors and minors are also available, along with information about the [University Core Curriculum](#), [immersive learning](#), [study abroad](#), and [research opportunities](#). Individual departmental sites include additional details about academic programs, faculty, and staff and provide a glimpse into the unique culture of each discipline.

Through their own gateway, current students can access the university's [Banner \(MyBSU\)](#) and [Degree Works](#) systems to gain real-time, on-demand course and scheduling information, transcripts of their completed courses, and tools for tracking their degree progress.

## **Costs to Students**

Ball State presents detailed cost information for undergraduate, graduate, and online/distance education students through its [Tuition and Fees webpage](#) in the admissions gateway. The [Bursar and Loan Administration site](#) also lists official tuition rates and various fees along with links to payment statements and due dates, direct deposit of financial aid refunds, account services, and [frequently asked questions](#). Information about [room and board rates](#) and [meal plans](#) on Ball State's Housing and Dining websites includes flexible options and cost-saving opportunities.

To help students cover these costs, the Scholarships and Financial Aid website offers guidance on types of aid available, applying for aid, managing a financial aid award, and loan counseling.



Undergraduate students and their families can estimate their costs and aid with the [Net Price Calculator](#), a helpful tool for financial planning.

In addition to providing student cost information, Ball State posts its [audited financial reports](#) and its documents and presentations from the [state legislative budget process](#) on its website for public access and transparency. Another area of the site documents the university's [return on investment](#) to the state by demonstrating how Ball State prepares students, advances Indiana, and ensures affordability through distinctive, high-quality educational experiences.

## **Institutional Control**

Ball State's central leadership is a collaborative effort between President Jo Ann Gora and the Board of Trustees, who determine the institution's overall strategies and policymaking with support from the university's officers and area, college, department, and unit administrators. Information and [organizational charts](#) linked from the [University Leadership webpage](#) describe these administrative and governance structures.

The duties and members of the governor-appointed [Board of Trustees](#) are listed on the website, along with links to their biographies and meeting minutes. The members of the [President's Cabinet](#) are also listed online, with links to their biographies and responsibilities.

The [Office of the President website](#) provides a brief overview of the university, the importance of the strategic plan, and the institution's emphasis on immersive learning. It also includes the president's biography, transcripts of a selection of her speeches and remarks, and links to the strategic plan and related progress reports, news, photos, and university television commercials.

Information is also provided about Ball State's three elected legislative bodies that provide recommendations and counsel to the university's leadership: [University Senate](#), which is focused on policies affecting faculty, professional personnel, and students; [Staff Council](#), which is concerned with policies affecting staff and service personnel affiliated with staff personnel; and [Student Government Association](#), which focuses on policies reflecting student interests on a wide range of campus issues.

Ball State's leadership and governance procedures incorporate input from various constituents through a "checks and balances" process. This interconnectedness, communication, and leadership through many levels can be seen, for example, in the university's process for curriculum change, outlined below.

## **Curriculum Change Process**

Curriculum changes are usually initiated at the department/program level and then move through an extensive approval process:

1. New, revised, or dropped courses/programs proposed
2. Departmental committee approval
3. Department head approval
4. College curriculum committee approval
5. College dean approval

6. Undergraduate/Graduate Education Committee approval (programs) or provost designate approval (courses)
7. Office of Academic Systems university posting (If no demurrer is received within 10 business days, the changes are certified for implementation.)
8. Provost approval

## **Accreditation Relationships**

Details about Ball State's accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools are provided on the university's [Institutional Accreditation website](#), along with extensive information on the current process to secure continuing accreditation in 2014. Committee rosters, meeting agendas, descriptions of the accreditation criteria, and the self-study report are available on the site, as well as archived webcasts of the community forums held during the public review period in 2012. Online comment forms and a survey were also posted on the site during the review period.

Similar information about Ball State's NCAA certification process for intercollegiate athletics was provided on the university's website from 2010 to 2012. In the spirit of transparency and public access, Ball State also posts documentation from its biennial budget request for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) on the [Ball State Fact Book website](#). ICHE defines the educational mission of the state's public colleges and universities, reviews budget requests, and approves the establishment of new programs and campus expansions.

Professional accreditations of individual academic programs at Ball State are usually listed on the departments' websites and in the university's graduate and undergraduate catalogs. Program accreditation is discussed more fully under Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.A.1.

## **Web Accessibility**

To facilitate access to information on Ball State's website, the university has created and promotes many marketing URLs that are simpler and more user friendly than the actual addresses of the site's pages. For example, the Net Price Calculator for estimating student costs and financial aid can be accessed by [entering only](#) rather than Ball State's website is also accessible to individuals with disabilities and provides a list of the university's [text telephone \(TTY\) numbers](#), including a link from the home page, and information about [adaptive technology resources](#).

## **Print Materials**

While Ball State's website is the most comprehensive resource of information presented to students and the public, printed materials are also provided for certain uses, including admission and orientation information for new and prospective students and communications with parents, donors, and friends of the university. Many of these materials support electronic or digital communications.

## **Summary: Core Component 2.B.**

Ball State's website is the most comprehensive source of institutional information for students and the public. As information can change rapidly, the challenge for the institution at all levels

is to maintain the accuracy and currency of this resource. The university will also focus on making its digital presence more effective and transparent to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and the public have access to current, clear, and complete information necessary for their various roles.

## **Core Component 2.C.**

### **The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.**

Ball State University is governed by its own nine-person [Board of Trustees](#), which has executive and supervisory authority over all aspects of the institution, including the appointment of the university's president. Board members are appointed by the governor of Indiana and represent a wide range of constituencies. The board maintains autonomy from special interests within and around the university and delegates day-to-day operations to the institution's administration and duly selected university councils, committees, and officers. The primary mission of the board is to ensure the fiscal, physical, academic, and social well-being of the university and its constituencies.

#### **Subcomponent 2.C.1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.**

Ball State's Board of Trustees has the authority to govern all facets of the university's finances, personnel, and curricula and to approve initiatives in facilities planning, subject to limitations established by special law or through appropriation acts passed by the Indiana legislature. The board's deliberations routinely address issues that affect the reputation, well-being, and quality of the institution, as can be seen in the Board of Trustees minutes from 2004 to the present (available in the online resource room) and in a [template for the normal schedule of issues](#) that come before the board each year.

Selected actions taken by the Ball State Board of Trustees since the university's last institutional accreditation are listed below. Other examples of important board actions are provided under [Subcomponent 2.C.2.](#)

- Approval of Jo Ann Gora as the university's 14th president
- Construction of East (Park) Residence Hall/Renovation of Woodworth Dining, \$36 million ([December 17, 2004](#))
- Geothermal project and boiler replacement, \$48 million ([December 5, 2005](#))
- Scheumann Stadium renovation and expansion, \$15.5 million ([March 18, 2006](#))
- Establishment of the Ball State Indianapolis Center ([June 29, 2006](#))
- Construction of the Student Recreation and Wellness Center, \$39 million ([July 21, 2006](#))
- Renovation of L.A. Pittenger Student Center, \$22.9 million ([July 20, 2007](#))

- Construction of North (Kingham) Residence Hall, \$46.5 million ([July 20, 2007](#))
- Renovation of DeHority Complex, \$30 million ([July 20, 2007](#))
- Renovation of Ball Honors House, \$1.2 million ([October 26, 2007](#))
- Approval of the new University Core Curriculum ([November 29, 2007](#))
- Central Campus Academic Renovation and Utility Improvements, including \$33 million for Phase 1 ([July 24, 2009](#))
- Construction of the Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass, \$2 million ([July 24, 2009](#))
- Approval of doctorate in nursing practice and master of fine arts degrees
- Renovation of Studebaker East Residence Hall, \$24.1 million ([January 29, 2010](#))
- Approval of *Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana* ([December 14, 2012](#))
- Approval of Tobacco-Free Policy, Phase 2 ([May 3, 2013](#))

*(Photo galleries of these new or renovated [academic buildings](#), [nonacademic buildings](#), [athletic facilities](#) are available online, along with videos about the [Geothermal Project](#), [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#), and [Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass](#).)*

While the day-to-day management of the institution is delegated to Ball State's administrative team (discussed under [Subcomponent 2.C.4.](#), the president and her cabinet keep the Board of Trustees informed of activities and issues of importance at the university, both during and between board meetings. A report of such issues is provided by the president and the chair of the University Senate at each meeting.

For the past couple of years, the president has also requested a special presentation by one of the university's colleges or another campus group at each board meeting. Originally these were made at the end of the regular meeting. On a few occasions, the agenda ran long and left no time for the presentation. Because of this, the presentations are now made during lunch. Some of these have also resulted in tours of facilities, such as one given by the athletics department at the [December 14, 2012](#), meeting. These presentations provide board members with more information about the university's programs.

A variety of other issues are also discussed as needed at Board of Trustees meetings, and board members are given thorough information about any action items on the agenda.

**Subcomponent 2.C.2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.**

Ball State's Board of Trustees does not act alone when making decisions that will impact the university's internal and external constituencies. The board observes and values Indiana state statutes, the institution's strategic plan, cultural diversity, research, and recommendations before approving resolutions. The following examples illustrate this approach:

- **University Diversity Committee**—In response to actions by the Indiana legislature, the board created the University Diversity Committee on [January 25, 2008](#), to review and recommend faculty employment policies related to diversity issues, review faculty and administrative personnel complaints concerning diversity issues, make recommendations to promote and maintain cultural diversity among faculty, and make recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students.
- **Intellectual Property Policy**—In 2008, the board was notified of Ball State's need for a new Intellectual Property Policy. The University Senate gathered information and drafted a proposed policy for the president and the board based on research, focus groups, and open forums of faculty, staff, and students. The revisions of the existing policy were proposed in 2009 and were approved on [February 6, 2009](#), based on advice from a task force assembled by the provost.
- **Tuition Policy Revisions**—A few years ago, the board's student trustee expressed concern that she was paying an extra \$1,000 to take one of her classes online even though her total course load remained in the 12–18 credit hour bracket. In response, a task force was created to [review all tuition policies](#). Several changes were made, including establishing identical tuition structures regardless of the delivery mode (on campus, blended, or online). Students with a mixed delivery schedule would not pay additional charges if they stayed within the full-time course load of 12–18 hours. Summer school tuition was also reduced to encourage enrollment in summer classes and help students stay on track to complete their degrees in four years. Differential tuition structures were established for programs that cost more to deliver, such as nursing, music, architecture, business, and graduate programs.
- **Fraternity Loan Guarantee**—Attentive to the quality of campus life, the board considered a fraternity's problems in obtaining a first mortgage for a house in 2010. Ball State's 2007–2012 strategic plan mentioned Greek life as part of an overall objective to increase the vitality of the campus and its social and cultural life. Specifically, Goal 4, Objective F included: "By 2007, complete a plan for redeveloping Riverside Avenue and strengthening Greek life" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 11). The fraternity's request for a loan guarantee was reviewed by business affairs and student affairs personnel, who suggested assisting the group in order to enhance the goals of Greek housing. On [May 6, 2011](#), the board agreed to guarantee the loan on behalf of the fraternity.

**Subcomponent 2.C.3.** The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

The university's Board of Trustees includes members of the public and is sufficiently autonomous from the university's administration to ensure the integrity of the institution. The governor of Indiana [appoints all nine members](#) of the board: six are at-large members, two are recommended by the [Ball State Alumni Council](#), and one is a [Ball State student](#). Traditionally the board has always included a relative or descendent of the original five Ball

brothers who provided the land for the university to the state of Indiana. [Short biographies of current members](#) of the Board of Trustees are available for review.

A strong conflict of interest clause that includes abstention, disclosure of interest, and determination of quorum is incorporated into the [Board of Trustees bylaws](#), and each board member signs a [conflict of interest disclosure statement](#), which is discussed by the university's attorney in the [orientation of new board members](#). This is a relatively new practice. Ball State's accreditation self-study process revealed that board members generally had not signed conflict of interest disclosure statements. The board agreed that it was appropriate and immediately initiated the practice.

**Subcomponent 2.C.4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.**

Ball State's Board of Trustees delegates the daily management and administration of the institution to the [university's president](#), who is appointed by the board. President Jo Ann Gora was appointed on [May 11, 2004](#), following a national search.

### **President's Cabinet**

At Ball State, the [President's Cabinet](#) includes seven vice presidents, the director of intercollegiate athletics, and the associate vice president for governmental relations. The vice presidents are:

- provost and vice president for academic affairs
- vice president for business affairs and treasurer
- vice president for enrollment, marketing, and communications
- vice president for information technology
- vice president for student affairs
- vice president for university advancement
- vice president and general counsel

Organizational charts and descriptions of the vice presidents' areas of responsibility are provided in the [Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook](#).

In providing day-to-day management, the university's president and administration refer to Ball State's strategic plan to inform decisions that need to be made about the direction of the institution. The strategic plan outlines the university's vision, mission, and values and details the strategies and objectives for attaining the plan's goals. The 2012–2017 strategic plan was developed by a campuswide task force representing faculty, staff, administrators, and students, and a draft was presented to the Board of Trustees on [October 17, 2012](#). Titled *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, the strategic plan was approved at the [December 14, 2012](#), board meeting. A progress report on the plan's performance indicators is presented at the board's annual retreat.



## University Senate

The Board of Trustees cedes oversight of academic matters to Ball State's faculty. The university's *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* (p. 14) states: "The principal agent for the formulation of educational policy at Ball State University is the University Senate." The University Senate's constitution outlines the responsibilities of the senate and the various councils and committees under its purview. Specific responsibilities include determining the following:

- admission and retention standards
- requirements for the curriculum and instruction
- requirements for granting degrees
- standards regarding academic freedom and professional responsibilities

Three councils report to the University Senate: Faculty Council, University Council, and Campus Council. Two standing committees also report directly to the University Senate, and more than 30 committees report to one of the three councils. The duties, composition, and meeting schedule of these councils and committees are easily accessible on the [University Senate's website](#).

Actions of the University Senate are recommendations to the president and, at her discretion, the Board of Trustees. The board approves any changes to the University Senate constitution. The current constitution was approved by the Board of Trustees on [December 17, 2004](#), and is available in its entirety in the [Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook](#).

### Summary: Core Component 2.C.

Ball State's Board of Trustees [carefully considered](#) all of the recommendations of the Higher Learning Commission in its 2004 accreditation report. These included:

- more effective communication between the board and the university's president
- regular evaluation of the president's performance
- creation of a committee structure to make the board's work more efficient
- improved communication with campus constituencies, including community leaders, faculty, staff, and students

With the university's current leadership, the first two items are no longer deemed problematic, and the board makes considerable effort to be accessible to a wide range of campus constituencies. The recommendation for a formal committee structure was not adopted because the board is small, with only nine members, and regards its current procedures as efficient and effective in carrying out its work and the business of the institution. The board members prefer to participate in all aspects of their work.

The nine appointed members of the Board of Trustees gain an understanding of their roles and information about the university through an extensive orientation process. This orientation



process will continue, and feedback from board members about the process will be used to suggest any changes to improve its effectiveness.

The board's areas of responsibility are clearly outlined in its bylaws, the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*, and information provided during the orientation. The day of each regularly scheduled board meeting will continue to include presentations from various groups around the campus, and a member of the University Senate's Executive Committee will continue to have an opportunity to address the board and answer questions at each meeting. Three members of the Ball State Board of Trustees also serve on the Ball State University Foundation Board of Directors: R. Wayne Estopinal, Richard J. Hall, and Hollis Hughes.

## **Core Component 2.D.**

### **The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.**

Ball State University's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is evidenced by a variety of publicly accessible statements, policies, and practices, starting with the institutional strategic plans. The university's 2007–2012 vision of being "a national model of excellence for challenging, learner-centered academic communities that advance knowledge" and its mission to provide "extraordinary access to and collaboration with professors who create scholarship to advance knowledge, improve teaching, and transform learning" place the pursuit of truth at the very heart of Ball State's teaching and learning responsibilities (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 2).

The 2012–2017 strategic plan continues to foster these ideals as evidenced in its values statement: "We are committed to the traditional values of the academy: freedom of inquiry, imparting knowledge, and advancing the frontiers of knowledge, all for the purpose of bettering society and individuals" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 3).

Additional evidence of the university's commitment to freedom of expression is the Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Council within the university governance system. Among the purposes of this committee are to "develop and review guidelines and policies for academic freedom and academic ethics issues" and to "receive any allegations regarding alleged interference with academic freedom and alleged breaches of academic ethics." The committee provides recommendations to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. Recommendations can include dismissal of a tenured faculty member if the circumstances warrant that level of action.

Numerous programs, offices, and committees across Ball State's academic affairs and student affairs divisions enable and enhance inquiry by faculty, staff, and students.

## **Academic Affairs**

Ball State's Division of Academic Affairs maintains statements, policies, and practices related to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. These reflect the

spirit of the university's [Statement on Rights and Responsibilities](#), which reads: “A vital part of such education is the assurance of academic freedom on the campus. The trustees recognize and accept their responsibility to preserve the right of all members of the university community to examine critically the university and the society of which it is a part. The trustees further call upon the faculty, students, and administrative officials of the university to share the responsibility for maintaining an academic atmosphere on the campus which is conducive to the exploration of all issues in a rational manner as befits an institution of higher learning.” Examples of these values are found in the following areas:

**Bracken Library**—The hub of the [University Libraries](#) system provides the entire campus with valuable resources and tools for inquiry, investigation, and research. These are discussed more fully under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.D.4](#). The library also houses the [Copyright and Intellectual Property Office](#), where faculty, staff and students can seek consultation and instruction on the most current interpretations of copyright law and intellectual property law that pertain to their studies, research, teaching and other related professional projects.

**Intellectual Property and Commercialization**—Ball State's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) outlines processes and procedures to guide all members of the university community engaged in developing products that can be defined as intellectual property. Both the policy and the [Intellectual Property Disclosure Form](#) are accessible from the [Commercialization website](#).

Faculty who wish to pursue commercialization activities are directed to the [Ball State Innovation Corporation \(BSIC\)](#), an independent, not-for-profit organization separate from the university. Its mission is described on the BSIC website: “By providing Ball State University innovators with resources, business expertise, and guidance, we help them navigate through the commercialization process and ultimately impact society. We help innovators take ideas developed in classrooms and laboratories across the Ball State University campus and introduce them to families, workplaces, and institutions across the world.”

**Sponsored Programs Office**—[SPO](#) provides research incentives to Ball State faculty that support their scholarly work and encourage them to pursue external funds for this work. This office also assists faculty and graduate students in locating funding agencies to support their inquiry endeavors and provides guidance in the development of external funding. For 22 years, the annual Benefacta Day has recognized faculty and professional personnel who submitted proposals and carried out sponsored projects during the prior year. This event highlights a number of significant projects that have obtained grant support and gained recognition for the quality of their outcomes.

**Student Scholarship**—Ball State's [Graduate School](#) develops and monitors research requirements for graduate students, and these requirements aid in developing an environment where freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning can be realized. The university also systematically engages in undergraduate research endeavors such as the [Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry](#) immersive learning seminars, the Honors College [senior thesis/creative project](#) and [undergraduate fellowships](#), and special initiatives at the university or department level such as the [What Middletown Read](#) and the [Chemistry Summer Research Program](#). Undergraduate research opportunities abound in some of Ball State's science departments that don't have graduate programs.

Recognition programs and awards related to the scholarly work of students include the annual [Student Symposium](#), which provides a forum for students to share their research and creative efforts. The distinguished achievements of graduate students are celebrated at the annual Graduate Student Recognition Reception, which honors those who have published papers, received grants, or presented at conferences. This event showcases research and teaching projects. Graduate Student Awards for Excellence in Research and Teaching are given annually, specifically for excellence in teaching and distinguished thesis and dissertation projects.

**Professional Development**—Programming for university faculty is continually available to further enhance Ball State’s commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. [New faculty](#) participate in an [orientation session](#) that includes information and presentations about all aspects of the university. Some of the topics address sexual harassment, professional development opportunities, sponsored program resources, technology support, and [training on student/faculty interactions](#).

The [Office of Educational Excellence](#) provides professional development for on-campus instruction. This unit primarily works with individual faculty members through midterm evaluations and assists faculty who have specific teaching issues. Other activities are provided to groups, such as the Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) that focus on specific aspects of teaching and student learning. Some recent topics have been related to the new student learning initiative involving new learning spaces. Another centralized unit, [iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute](#), provides technology training and works with faculty to design blended and online courses. iLearn gives faculty the resources to create assets for specifically online courses as well as for blended and traditional face-to-face courses. In addition, all online courses are evaluated for quality using the [Quality Matters](#) rubric.

**Student Evaluations**—The revised process for evaluating faculty teaching, including the use of student evaluations, was approved at the March 21, 2013, meeting of the [University Senate](#). Student evaluations are one of several measures outlined for the evaluation of teaching. The new policy establishes procedures for administering student course and faculty evaluations, and the new system uses Digital Measures as the online tool from which faculty can extract data. All student evaluations include university core questions. Departments can add a departmental core, and faculty can add their own additional questions. All courses must be evaluated by students each semester.

## **Student Affairs**

Ball State’s Division of Student Affairs maintains a variety of statements, policies, and practices related to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching, learning, and student activities. Many of these are found in the following documents:

**Student Code**—Ball State’s [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) communicates the [Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#), which addresses various topics relating specifically to the university’s commitment to freedom and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The following sections of the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities provide specific value statements as well as processes and procedures to maintain a strong integrity between stated values and everyday practices:

- Basic rights: speech, press, assembly, political, etc. (1.2)
- Right to use campus facilities for political purposes (1.4.7)
- Academic freedom (1.5)
- Affirmation of academic freedom for students (1.5.1)
- Specific rights for students (1.5.2)
- Process for students raising concerns regarding academic freedom (1.5.4)
- Free inquiry regarding research, publications, etc. (1.6.1)
- Freedom to pursue normal activities and freedom of movement (1.6.3)
- Obligation to not interfere with others on intellectual or public issues (1.6.4)
- Right to hold public meetings and engage in peaceful demonstrations (1.6.6)

In addition, Ball State's [Use of University Property for Expressive Activities Policy](#) is outlined in Appendix N of the Student Code.

**Student Organization Handbook**—Specific policies guiding students—plus faculty and staff working with students—regarding demonstrations, marches, etc., both in university buildings and outdoors are provided in Ball State's [Student Organization Handbook](#). This resource addresses the processes that guide university actions to safeguard the institution's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth as it applies to out-of-classroom activities. Specific sections demonstrating this commitment include:

- [Expressive Activities Policy](#), taken from the Student Code, Appendix N
- [Residence Hall Policy for Hall Solicitation/Posting/Lounge Usage](#), which explains housing policies for events in the campus residence halls
- [Structures Policy](#)

The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the *Student Organization Handbook* are available to everyone in the Ball State community via the university's website. The information is also distributed to every student as a point of emphasis via e-mail, new student orientation, and student organization training sessions.

### **Summary: Core Component 2.D.**

Many Ball State units and programs illustrate the university's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. These include the Sponsored Programs Office, professional development opportunities such as those provided by the Office of Educational Excellence and iLearn, student evaluations, the Division of Student Affairs and the Student Code, student scholarship to support student work, and Bracken Library's extensive collection and services, to name a few. It is important to emphasize that Ball State continues to give high priority to involving students in the creation and evaluation of statements, policies, and practices related to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

As part of the university's 2012–2017 strategic plan, greater emphasis has been placed on increased online and blended course delivery and becoming a leader in the delivery of the scholarship of teaching. Faculty will continue to be encouraged to pursue truth through their scholarly activities at increasing levels, and more knowledge units and faculty learning communities will be nurtured.

## **Core Component 2.E.**

### **The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

Ball State University has gone to great lengths to ensure that knowledge and information are respected and are acquired, applied, and shared with responsibility. This commitment applies to all faculty, staff, and students. [The Beneficence Pledge](#), which is provided to all members of the university community, includes the promise to “practice academic honesty” and to “model and uphold academic integrity, to honor their peers and earn the trust and respect from all members of the community.”

#### **Subcomponent 2.E.1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.**

Ball State's recently expanded [Office of Research Integrity](#) reflects the university's proactive stance to ensure alignment with the highest academic and ethical standards. This office's [Responsible Conduct of Research webpage](#)—which includes links to the university's [Responsible Conduct of Research Plan](#) and the [Research Misconduct Policy](#)—states: “Adherence to ethical standards of practice and behavior in institutional activities is expected of all members of the Ball State University community, whether they be faculty, students, or staff members.” This office also provides training for students and faculty, including [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\) assistance](#) for those planning research projects involving people and animals. Various IRB forms are available online.

Faculty and staff are also made aware of proper protocols by university administrators. For example, the orientation program for new employees includes an introduction to the safeguards required to maintain confidentiality. Understanding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and how to properly interact with parents is covered in the training using a video segment created specifically for faculty development. This and other [faculty/student interaction training videos](#) are provided on the Office of the Provost website.

Ball State's *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* highlights the responsible uses of intellectual property, issues related to copyrights, and the privileges of technology users. For example, the 2012–13 handbook includes seven sections (called “parts”) exclusively about [intellectual property and related issues](#).

### **Subcomponent 2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.**

Like all members of the Ball State community, students gain digital access to university resources and services through Ball State e-mail and password authentication. As students and employees are issued authentic credentials, they review information on [privacy and responsibilities](#) related to information technology use at Ball State. These policies and procedures are also provided on the [Online Technical Support Center](#).

Notices are routinely sent to all campus e-mail users urging them to protect passwords and to be aware of spyware, malware, and similar invasions of Ball State communications. Awareness events are regularly held and training provided to educate the Ball State community about cyber security issues. E-mail messages from “Security@bsu.edu” also remind users to connect to the university system via the “bsusecure” wireless network when accessing academic information, rather than using the less-secure guest status. All university resources dealing with personal data are behind one or more password-protected walls. Ball State’s intellectual archives and databases are also protected from outsiders. Two examples include:

- Digital access to Bracken Library resources involves a password-protected system called [CardCat Login](#).
- As faculty and academic advisors log onto the new Banner student information system, the initial screen displays a privacy warning and the policy for viewing grades.

### **Subcomponent 2.E.3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.**

Ball State’s policies addressing academic honesty and integrity are provided to members of the university community in the [Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook](#) and the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), which includes the [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#). The student policy states: “Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated, for it threatens the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity.”

Students are informed of the university’s academic ethics policies in a variety of ways, including:

- Faculty members are encouraged to provide a statement in their course syllabi outlining proper procedures and the impacts of dishonesty.
- Telecommunications majors sign a [Student Academic Ethics Policy form](#) at the beginning of each course in their major, as their class projects may be broadcast on campus or to audiences around the world.



- Most academic departments and programs rely on the [Office of Research Integrity](#) to help students learn about appropriate academic procedures for dealing with human subjects, animals, and areas involving conflicts of interest.

Stated policies in university communications address the enforcement aspects of dealing with knowledge as well. For example, students are made aware of the ethical implications of their actions, including plagiarism and cheating, through the [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#). Individual instructors monitor classes and programs. Serious matters regarding faculty ethical violations may be reviewed by the University Senate's [Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee](#), which can recommend disciplinary action or termination and refer the case to the Judicial Committee. The Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee also reviews disputes over conflict of interest or commitment. Additional information about this committee is provided under [Core Component 2.D](#).

### **Summary: Core Component 2.E.**

The Beneficence Pledge developed by students, additional FERPA training for faculty, the Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee, and the student Academic Ethics Committee include policies and procedures to ensure that faculty, students, and staff work and learn responsibly. The 2011 expansion of the Office of Research Integrity is another important aspect of this process and has resulted in dedicated attention for faculty in individual departments and programs. In addition to the sharing of information, this office also monitors the use of materials and other resources. This important area will continue to be a focus of attention through enforcing policies and procedures already in place as well as revising and developing policies as technology and the means of seeking truth change in the years to come.



### **Criterion Three—Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

**The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.**

As a nationally recognized institution of higher education, Ball State University provides high-quality academic programs and equally high-quality support services that together promote student academic success, personal growth, and the foundation for lifelong learning and a lifelong contribution to the pluralist society that is 21st century America.

The university's faculty and staff are appropriately credentialed to perform these professional responsibilities at which they excel and about which they are enthused. They have crafted rigorous curricula that challenge students to stretch their capabilities. The transformations of the core curriculum, for example, have refocused attention on critical thinking for all students, raising the visibility of epistemology and requiring students to address questions from different perspectives. We feel that this approach best prepares students for work-group collaboration that research and our alumni tell us is the future of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Our teachers embrace new pedagogies and new technologies that often support them in creating new environments that facilitate learning at all levels. At the same time, they have created services that help differently prepared students and those with various disabilities to make the most of Ball State's educational and personal growth opportunities.

Ball State approaches teaching, scholarship, and service synergistically. The result, as this section will show, is an institution that can be proudly known as a learning community.

### **Core Component 3.A.**

**The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.**

The following information pertains to course and program currency and academic performance expectations for courses and degrees and certificates awarded by Ball State University.

**Subcomponent 3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.**

Ball State's academic programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. All programs at Ball State undergo periodic external reviews either through an accrediting organization in their discipline or through the university's own academic unit review system. Details of these two processes and the results of our examination follow.

## Review Process

The 48 academic departments at Ball State offer a total of seven associate, 183 bachelor's, 107 master's, two specialist, and 17 doctoral degree programs. Of these, three associate, 38 bachelor's, 33 master's, both specialist, and 10 doctoral programs have [disciplinary accreditation](#) that demonstrates external expectations for course and program rigor. The rest of the programs are subject to a [cyclical academic unit review process](#) coordinated by the university.

**Administration**—Program accreditations are orchestrated by the respective academic units with assistance from their college dean's offices, while Ball State's academic unit review process is overseen by the Office of the Provost and the academic colleges of the reviewed programs. The frequency of accreditation review cycles is determined by the accrediting bodies, whereas the [cycle of academic unit reviews](#) is determined by the Office of the Provost.

**Self-Study**—Both processes begin with the unit or program preparing a self-study document. For accredited programs, the contents of this document are determined by the accrediting body. The self-study document for [academic unit reviews](#) contains uniform elements. Both processes involve an examination of the program's curriculum as well as a self-examination of assessment methods used for courses and the desired program outcomes. In addition, these processes also examine the program rigor as defined by disciplinary standards to ensure appropriate levels of student performance. All reviews involve a campus visit by outside evaluators and the submission of a subsequent report.

**Outcomes**—Ultimately, the outcomes of either kind of review are reported to the university administration. Normally, the results of accreditation reviews are reported to the unit and the Office of the President, while the [outcomes of academic unit reviews](#) are reported to the unit and the appropriate academic dean. In either case, reviews of academic programs are discussed in the annual reports from department chairs to their deans and often in the deans' annual reports to the Office of the Provost. While the accreditation reviews and the academic unit reviews examine many facets of a program, one important element of both reviews pertains to the quality of the degree and/or certificate programs offered. Among other types of critique, both types of review offer a critical examination of the curriculum and suggestions for improvement where appropriate.

**Recommendations**—For programs in the academic unit review process, curriculum recommendations are addressed by the appropriate academic dean in consultation with the unit, and suitable changes are made when the recommendations are deemed reasonable and appropriate by the unit. In the case of accreditation reviews, programs or units do not receive full accreditation until evidence providing remedies for cited issues is supplied to the accrediting body.

## Review Results

Since Ball State's last Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review in 2004, numerous programs have undergone the academic unit review process. Based on an assessment of documents from across the campus resulting from the academic unit review and accreditation review processes, the academic and certificate programs examined for this self-study report appear

to be current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Three examples illustrate curriculum currency and appropriateness as determined by the academic unit review and accreditation processes:

**Nursing Accreditation**—Ball State’s School of Nursing within the College of Applied Sciences and Technology recently earned accreditation for its baccalaureate and master’s degree programs. The school completed a self-study report for the November 2010 on-site evaluation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The commission submitted a [final report](#) to the program in February 2011. The school’s currency and levels of student performances are reported under [Standard III, Program Quality: Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Practices](#) of the final report. This section evaluates the school’s mission, goals, and student outcomes as they “reflect professional nursing standards and guidelines.”

The school successfully met all seven CCNE standards with no compliance concerns. For instance, [Standard III-B](#) concluded that the baccalaureate program “prepares nurse generalists, and the self-study document indicates that the baccalaureate program curriculum and expected student outcomes, both aggregate and individual, are consistent with and reflective of the *Baccalaureate Essentials*, *ANA Code of Ethics*, *ANA Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice* and the Indiana State Board of Nursing’s *A Compilation of the Code and Indiana Administrative Code (2009–2010)*.”

As further evidence of the school’s currency and level of appropriateness, [passing rates for first-time test takers of the NCLEX-RN](#) were near or exceeded the national average. Both degree programs officially received [continuing accreditation](#) in May 2011.

**Criminal Justice and Criminology Unit Review**—For its academic unit review, the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology in the College of Sciences and Humanities assembled a [self-study](#) in 2009. Incorporating the university’s template for self-study reports, the department described its degree programs and how they relate to the department’s mission, goals, and program objectives. The report included an alumni survey measuring employment in the fields of criminal justice and criminology and the graduates’ satisfaction with the department. Two peers from other universities reviewed the self-study report and the department, and reports were submitted by each reviewer in December 2009.

Regarding program currency and appropriate levels of student performance, [external reviewer Jonathan White’s report](#) explained that the department “should be complimented for its efforts to provide comprehensive preparation of its students” and that the curriculum is “comprehensive and clear” and is “consistent with the university strategic plan, addressing state, local, and other needs.” [External reviewer Kevin Minor](#) further explained that the curriculum reflected the “voluntary certification standards promulgated by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences” and that it is “in line with the requirements of criminal justice and criminology programs nationally.”

**Business Reaccreditation**—This example illustrates the university’s willingness to change rapidly to adopt best-practice solutions. Following a reaccreditation review of the academic

programs in the Miller College of Business by AACSB-International (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) in spring 2010, the college immediately began a faculty-led and faculty-centered discussion on how to build into the college's culture a commitment to continuous, meaningful, and systematic assessment of student learning. The primary goal was to assure that student learning is taking place, that such learning is measured regularly, and that the data from the measurements are shared with faculty to drive changes in the curriculum and instruction, with the cycle operating in a continuous loop.

In a collegewide meeting led by the dean and the associate dean, the principles of student learning assessment were reviewed, faculty input was sought, and a course of action was identified. The following steps were taken to institutionalize the process of assurance of learning at the undergraduate level:

- The faculty selected five undergraduate learning goals, referred to as C-KITE: communication skills (both oral and written); knowledge of subject matter (of the essential business subjects such as accounting, economics, finance, business law, marketing, management, and operations); integration of the knowledge of the various subjects; teamwork (ability to effectively work in groups); and ethics (ability to recognize ethical issues and apply an ethical framework to decision making).
- To ensure maximum faculty engagement, committees comprising members from each of the college's five departments were created for each of the five learning goals. The task of these committees is to establish standards of student performance for their respective learning goals, agree on procedures to measure student performance, identify courses where student performance would be measured, develop the method for collecting and reporting data, and establish the schedule for the continuous cycle to occur.
- A faculty super-committee representing the five learning goals receives the data from each of the specific learning goals committees (e.g., ethics, teamwork, etc.) and coordinates across the curriculum to ensure the process is functioning satisfactorily.
- A data collection, analysis, and reporting method has been established. It is online and made available to the faculty. Monthly faculty meetings focusing on each of the goals are organized to report progress, share and understand the data, and incorporate changes in the curriculum and how it is delivered. Regular updates are provided to faculty. At the faculty and professional staff retreat in May, assurance of learning is a principal topic of review.
- A faculty member was appointed by the dean to serve as the director of assurance of learning, with the clear charge to ensure that assessment of student learning takes place in the college. The director works with the faculty and advises the dean on assessment matters.
- The dean's office makes resources available to support this process on the recommendation of the director of assurance of learning. Support includes sending teams of faculty members to assessment seminars organized by AACSB so they become familiar with the concepts and processes of measuring learning, requiring graduating seniors in the spring semester to take the Major Field Test in Business (designed by the Educational Testing Service, or ETS, to assess student

knowledge of key business concepts), and purchasing various motivational gifts to boost faculty participation.

- A similar process has been established to measure student learning in the MBA program. Five learning goals—global perspectives, leadership, integration of knowledge, decision making, and ethics—are represented by the acronym GLIDE.
- The college's reaccreditation was affirmed the following year. The process described above is in place and in use.

Additional examples of [program accreditation](#) and [unit review documents](#) indexed by college are available for review.

### **Subcomponent 3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, postbaccalaureate, postgraduate, and certificate programs.**

Learning goals for Ball State's undergraduate, graduate, postbaccalaureate, postgraduate, and certificate programs are clearly articulated and distinguished.

**Associate Degrees**—Ball State offers two kinds of associate degrees. These two-year, 60-credit-hour programs prepare students for further study at the baccalaureate level or provide a first level of professional training in certain technical fields.

**Bachelor's Degrees**—Ball State offers nine types of bachelor's degrees. Prior to May 2012, baccalaureates required a minimum of 126 credit hours. After this date, the university reduced the minimum to 120 hours. These hours include a core curriculum common to all students; a major area of study, often with embedded prerequisites, or an integrated focus designed by the student in conjunction with faculty; and a selection of electives, which might include minors, certificates, or other experiences to support the aspirations of individual students. The emphasis at the undergraduate level is to provide a liberal arts core on which various majors can build toward a firm foundation for engaged citizenship, professional success, and lifelong learning.

**Master's Degrees**—Ball State offers 11 types of master's degrees. These programs require a minimum of 30 credit hours and a thesis, research paper, creative project, or graduate research methodology course. The course work required of master's students is substantively more advanced and methodologically more sophisticated in the disciplinary or interdisciplinary program of study than that typically required of undergraduates. In addition, master's students' research activities are expected to prepare them for contributions to their discipline or profession.

**Specialist Degree**—The specialist in education degree is a professional practice program that requires students to complete a thesis and at least 30 credit hours of graduate work beyond the master's degree. This program prepares students to serve in administrative roles in PK–12 schools and school districts.

**Doctoral Degrees**—Ball State offers programs leading to five doctoral degrees. Doctoral students must complete at least 90 credit hours of graduate work, including a dissertation, beyond their bachelor's degree. At least 40 of these graduate hours, excluding dissertation

hours, must be in the major. For all doctoral programs except the doctor of audiology (AuD) and doctor of nursing practice (DNP), which are clinical practice degrees, students must complete a rigorous research component. Students are expected to demonstrate competency with research tools applicable to their major areas, including additional languages, statistical methods, computer science, and research techniques. The required research tools are determined by the student's doctoral committee and included on the student's program of study. The combination of intensive, substantive, and methodological degree work prepares students for the original contribution to the discipline that they will make through their dissertation. AuD and DNP graduates are expected to be able to read and evaluate research pertaining to diagnoses and therapies involved in clinical practice and to complete clinical experiences that demonstrate this ability.

Graduate courses are distinguished between those designed for doctoral students only (700 level), those restricted to graduate students (600 level), and 500-level courses that can be "taught with" undergraduate courses at the 300 or 400 level. As shown within course master syllabi maintained at the departmental level, graduate students in ["taught with" courses](#) must complete additional assignments, along with differentiated learning outcomes, beyond those required for undergraduate students, thus assuring a rigorous graduate-level experience.

Ball State complies with the Higher Learning Commission's standard for articulating and differentiating the learning goals of academic programs at all levels. All of our graduate and undergraduate programs have [student learning outcomes](#). Departments are assessing outcomes in systematic ways and using analyzed data constructively to affirm the current pedagogy or to initiate changes to improve students' learning. A fuller discussion of the university's assessment programs is provided under [Criterion 4, Core Component 4.B.](#)

**Subcomponent 3.A.3.** The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Ball State ensures consistent quality and learning goals wherever and however its academic programs are delivered, from classroom instruction on the Muncie campus to distance education programs in the Greater Indianapolis area and online courses across the country. In addition to our associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, the university also offers the dual-credit College Transition Program, which conforms to the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partners (NACEP) standards to ensure academic integrity.

**Indianapolis Programs**—Ball State's [Greater Indianapolis credit course offerings and degree programs](#) are all at the graduate level and are taught by Ball State faculty based in their respective units on the Muncie campus. Full programs of study that allow students to start and complete a degree include the master of urban design, master of arts in mathematics education, and doctor of education in educational administration and leadership. Other graduate classes can be applied toward master of arts degrees in political science, adult and community education, executive development for public service, and special education.

**Distance Education**—The [Division of Online and Distance Education](#) extends Ball State's services and resources to students whose needs cannot be met through traditional classes on campus. The university offers courses, degree programs, and certificate programs through a variety of delivery options, including online, independent learning, web conferencing, and on-site (live) instruction at selected locations around Indiana. Some courses blend online instruction with face-to-face instruction at one of Ball State's campus locations. All credit earned is residence credit, and continuing education units (CEUs) are available to record individual participation in certain noncredit programs.

The university's online programs and courses are prepared and taught by Ball State faculty with assistance from instructional designers through the [Integrated Learning Institute \(iLearn\)](#), which was established in spring 2011 to ensure the quality of the university's online programs. iLearn assists with faculty development (pedagogical and technological) and online course creation, using the [Quality Matters](#) rubric for guidance. While the iLearn staff are technical experts in online delivery, responsibility for the integrity of the academic programs and the substance and assessment of courses remains with the appropriate academic departments and their faculty.

**Dual-Credit Program**—Ball State also builds partnerships with high schools through the [College Transition Program \(CTP\)](#). This dual-credit initiative focuses on college preparation for high school juniors and seniors by assuring quality instruction and offering students an educational experience that is otherwise unattainable. All high school instructors participating in the program must have the same credentials as Ball State adjunct faculty. A fuller discussion of the dual-credit program is provided under [Criterion 4, Subcomponent 4.A.4.](#)

### **Summary: Core Component 3.A.**

Ball State has taken great care to establish assessment outcomes that clearly express its expectations for student learning. Curricula are the intentional designs of faculty, and student learning outcomes flow from these intentions. The university expects its students to show not only progressive mastery of content as they move through majors, minors, graduate degrees, and other programs but also increasing intellectual sophistication as captured by critical thinking and appropriate communication.

These expectations, embedded in the institution's accreditations and local assessments, allow the university to differentiate learning goals and, thus, degree programs. Ball State's rigorous review and accreditation processes ensure fidelity to these principles across locations and educational platforms.



## **Core Component 3.B.**

**The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.**

This section addresses Ball State University's efforts to ensure that intellectual inquiry is exercised within its educational offerings, whether they are general education requirements for the entire student body or specific curricular offerings within academic programs.

**Subcomponent 3.B.1.** The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

**Subcomponent 3.B.2.** The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Ball State's current core curriculum moves the university from a traditional distributed study model to an innovative model built on the progressive study of differentiated domains of knowledge that extends throughout the student's academic career. The new core is innovative and integrated and stresses assessment of student learning outcomes. The transition to a new core was phased to allow major innovative changes from the previous core requirements.

### **Core Curriculum 1985–2010**

Ball State's original University Core Curriculum (UCC) was the result of general studies reform in 1985 that tied the goals of the program directly to the institution's mission statement. A key strength of the program was requiring the same curriculum of all baccalaureate degree students in all seven academic colleges. This coherent program was designed to develop broad competencies and promote intellectual inquiry. The core included [foundation requirements](#) and [distribution requirements](#). Certain [exceptions to the requirements](#) were based on particular disciplines as well as special provisions for [elementary/special education majors](#) and [Honors College students](#).

This core curriculum comprised 41 credit hours, including 15 hours of foundation courses. Associate degree programs also included a general education component that varied by program. All students were required to pass a writing competency exam—a holistically evaluated written essay before graduation. Students who failed to pass after two attempts were required to take ENG 393, a portfolio-based course available for credit or no credit. Credit hours for this course did not count toward graduation.

After the foundation courses, the remaining 26 UCC hours were divided into five areas:

- physical, earth, and life sciences (two courses)
- social and behavioral sciences (two courses)
- fine arts and humanities (one course each)
- international/global studies (one course)
- physical education, fitness, and wellness (one 2-credit course)

Students also took one additional course from the first three areas. [Complete UCC requirements](#) were provided in the *Ball State University Advising Handbook* until 2010.

Evaluation, review, and changes to the program were the responsibility of the University Core Curriculum Subcommittee, a standing subcommittee of the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC). The subcommittee's nine members included a member of UEC appointed by the UEC chair, six faculty members appointed by the University Senate's Governance Committee, an undergraduate student chosen by the Student Government Association, and the associate provost (ex officio) responsible for the UCC or a designee.

### **Current Core Curriculum**

A required component of all undergraduate degrees, Ball State's current University Core Curriculum (often referred to as UCC-21, or the "new core") was designed to prepare students to realize their intellectual potential, add breadth and depth to their perspectives, and maintain their physical and mental well-being. Through their course work, students further developed their scientific, critical, and creative thinking skills.

Importantly, the university aligned its 2012–2017 mission statement with the fundamental premise of the University Core Curriculum: "We transform information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2). This alignment provides the strongest affirmation of the core curriculum possible by incorporating it into the identity of the institution itself.

**Guiding Principles**—UCC Task Force I developed the guiding principles for the new core curriculum in spring 2003. After reading literature on core curricula and general and liberal studies and considering documents from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) such as *Greater Expectations*, the faculty members of the task force developed principles focused on increasing skill development in metacognitive awareness and the ability to develop creative solutions as students apply content knowledge.

After studying the literature and core curricula in place throughout the country, [UCC Task Force II](#) completed the framework for implementing the new guiding principles in spring 2006. The framework was revised and approved by the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) in fall 2007. Central to this effort was providing a way for students to move from experience and content knowledge to reasoned judgments and actions. The three-tier framework was designed to take students through this skill-developing process in multiple domains. The UCC Task Force II firmly believed that a core curriculum that gave students the ability to be metacognitively aware and practiced in applying their knowledge to make reasoned judgments

and actions prepared students for careers and civic engagement in contexts where change was a given.

**Core Structure**—After extensive consideration and revision by several university governance bodies, Ball State began a phased implementation of the new University Core Curriculum in 2010. The basic structure of the new core curriculum included foundation courses in math, written communication, oral communication, history, physical education, and financial literacy plus four domains of knowledge: fine arts, humanities, natural science, and social science. In each domain, students would experience a sequence of courses with progressively different foci. Core curriculum courses were assigned to one of three levels: Tier 1 involved the formation of knowledge from experience; Tier 2 focused on transforming knowledge into judgment; and Tier 3 involved the transformation of judgment to action.

**WISER+ Component**—In addition to the tiered core classes, the university's governance system revised the UCC Task Force II proposal from five WISER elements to seven WISER+ elements. These elements were intended to provide more specific content integrating 21st century issues and skills into the curriculum. The seven WISER+ elements were:

- writing
- international awareness
- service and civic engagement
- environmental awareness and sustainability
- respect for human liberty and diversity among peoples and cultures
- American institutions and/or history
- technological literacy

Tier 2 courses required a WISER+ designation, and students completed this requirement through courses that satisfied at least one but not more than three WISER+ designations.

UCC-21 was introduced to freshmen entering Ball State in fall 2010. Students who enrolled before then were completing their studies according to the previous core curriculum. Descriptions of UCC-21 courses are provided in the [2013–2014 Advising Handbook](#).

### **Phased Implementation**

In consultation with the university's provost, UCC-21 was implemented in phases to ensure courses with the appropriate transformations and assessments were available in sufficient numbers to meet student demand. Phased implementation also permitted the university to evaluate enrollment trends and assess its capacity to respond to unexpected changes in the economy and political climate.

**Challenges**—Implementation of UCC-21 faced unforeseen obstacles. First, the national economic recession prevented the university from fully resourcing the ambitious reconstruction of the core curriculum, as anticipated by the members of UCC Task Forces I and II. Second, the Indiana legislature mandated that baccalaureate programs consist of not more than 120

credit hours, without specific exceptions that owed chiefly to accreditation requirements, thus straining highly structured professional and science programs.

The state also required each public college and university in Indiana to establish and maintain a 30-hour core, transferable to any other state institution, and to assess the common goals of that core. The legislature further required state schools to design core curricula so that a student completing the core at one college or university could transfer to another state institution with a 30-hour block of credit that satisfied the requirements of a similar “common core” component of the new institution.

**Response**—Full implementation of UCC-21 necessitated the development of new courses and the revision of current courses, as well as associated assessment plans, to meet new requirements that emphasized domain epistemology in the construction of the transformations in each tier. The challenges above compelled this work to be executed in phases so faculty and administrators could experiment with the program, at each point trying to preserve as much of the original intent as possible. Through the phasing process, the University Core Curriculum Committee provided the UEC and the University Senate’s Agenda Committee with progress reports and made recommendations regarding extensions to the phased implementation.

**Current Status**—Freshmen entering in the 2012–13 academic year are required to complete the UCC-21 foundations and transformations associated with Tier 1 in all four domains. Students must proceed with sequenced work in two of the four domains of knowledge and complete two WISER+ categories, one of which must carry a writing (W) designation. A detailed description of the [2012–13 core content](#) is provided in the *Ball State University Undergraduate Catalog*.

With the [latest version of the core curriculum](#) approved by the University Senate on April 25, 2013, and sent to the Board of Trustees on June 6, 2013, students entering in fall 2013 and later still complete the foundations and transformations associated with Tier 1 in all four domains. At Tier 2, the domains are now grouped into two clusters: humanities/fine arts/design and natural sciences/social sciences. Students complete one course from each of the two domain clusters. Courses in Tier 2 move students through the third transformation, knowledge into judgment. In addition, the original WISER+ requirement was modified so that students complete only two elements: writing and either respect for other cultures (i.e., diversity) or international awareness.

At Tier 3—which has remained unchanged since the fall 2010 implementation—students complete capstone courses, immersive learning experiences, or similar learning experiences (e.g., internship, clinical work, student teaching, fieldwork, study abroad, etc.) that require them to demonstrate the ability to move from experience or information through to action. In addition, students must demonstrate their capability to write at a level of competence appropriate for college graduates and to reflect on their intellectual and personal development in these experiences.

**Assessment Plan**—As the new core curriculum was implemented, the University Core Curriculum Committee developed an assessment plan requiring each proposed course to detail and outline an assessment plan for core objectives. A timetable was set for completing assessment, and all currently approved courses gathered assessment data consistent with the

schedule for reporting this data to the committee. Assessment required preparation of reports to be reviewed by the committee. These data and reports from the departments were to be reviewed on a schedule beginning in 2013–14. These efforts were intended to be recursive and close the assessment loop. This procedure followed the historic processes the university had instituted with the previous core curriculum.

In spring 2013, changes were made to this process. Until now, the university model for core assessment has focused on assessing individual courses but not the core as a whole. The new plan will place primary responsibility for course assessment upon the departments that deliver the courses. During fall 2013, departments that deliver the foundation courses will be asked to submit a report outlining the effectiveness of the course as reflected in their analysis and what changes, if necessary, have or will be made in the courses in the future.

The plan being developed by the university is a program-level assessment in which student outcomes in course work are reviewed to assess whether the program goals are being achieved. Pilot projects for this program-level assessment have been under development in summer 2013, with the writing and reflective thinking goals as an important initial project. A faculty group is writing rubrics to assess writing competency and reflective thinking. Beginning in fall 2013, faculty teaching Tier 3 courses will identify student artifacts that best demonstrate writing and reflective thinking ability. These assignments will be tagged and submitted through Blackboard Learn. In summer 2014, a faculty group will randomly select student artifacts using Blackboard Outcomes and will assess the work against the rubrics—one group for writing competency and another for reflective thinking.

Assessment results, including strengths and weaknesses, will be provided to departments with a request to review and strengthen their courses where needed. Adjustments will be made to this process after analyzing the outcomes, and discussions will explore other core competencies that might be assessed. More information about UCC-21 assessment is provided under [Criterion 4, Subcomponent 4.B.2.](#)

**Subcomponent 3.B.3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.**

Through more than 300 undergraduate major and minor areas of study in 48 academic units, Ball State engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

A hallmark mechanism for accomplishing these goals is Ball State's immersive learning initiative, a key feature of the university's strategic plans for 2007–2012 and 2012–2017. Both plans call for providing each undergraduate student with the opportunity to participate in an immersive learning experience, which allows students to transform traditional classroom information into knowledge, judgment, and—ultimately—action. Students learn to develop practical solutions to real problems for a community partner by working in interdisciplinary teams led by faculty mentors. These intense, hands-on projects yield a tangible product with lasting value. Through immersive learning, students graduate with the skills, experience, and

connections to succeed in the global workplace. A fuller discussion of immersive learning is provided under [Criterion 1, Subcomponent 1.D.1.](#)

Student academic engagement across the university is also demonstrated through the annual Student Symposium, which showcases the scholarly achievements of undergraduate and graduate students under the mentorship of university faculty. A listing of the [1,042 projects](#) that have been completed since 2004 is available for review. Representative projects include:

Stories posted on the [strategic plan website](#) illustrate how the institution is offering more distinctive educational experiences that prepare students for a changing world, such as partnering with the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana, to [commercialize military patents](#) and bring their benefits to civilians.

### **Subcomponent 3.B.4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.**

Diversity is an important value at Ball State, both in terms of the composition of the student, faculty, and staff populations and the inclusion of various viewpoints and cultures within the curriculum. The university strives to provide courses and experiences that prepare students for an increasingly diverse world. Examples of these efforts follow.

#### **Freshman Common Reader**

Ball State freshmen quickly engage in an academic experience that introduces them to new ideas in preparation for their lives in a diverse world. The [Freshman Common Reader program](#) has been a powerful asset since its inception in 1998. Each year, a committee of faculty, staff, and students selects a book that is purchased and provided to first-year students at the orientation program with the expectation that they will read it during the summer. After the Freshman Convocation at the start of the academic year, new students are divided into small groups to discuss the book.

During the semester, the book's author is invited to the campus for a lecture and to interact with students in a variety of formats. Writing experiences and various programs are also presented on topics related to the book's subject. Topics have included race, socioeconomic status, child soldiers, war refugees, food production, disability, and gender.

#### **Office of Institutional Diversity**

Ball State's [Office of Institutional Diversity](#) is "not only committed to diversity programming for students; it also supports several faculty development programs." Faculty are encouraged to explore the relevance of diversity in their classes through the Diversity Associates Program, the Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence Seminar, and Diversity Seminars. An indication of the importance of diversity at Ball State is that this office is led by an individual with the rank of associate provost.

#### **Curriculum and Cocurriculum**

Regardless of major, students have opportunities to engage in exploration of a global society through course work and cocurricular programming. Ball State's academic colleges offer



[more than 100 courses](#) that address aspects of diversity. A number of [interdisciplinary academic programs](#) also focus on diversity-related topics, including women's and gender studies, gerontology, Asian studies, European studies, peace studies and conflict resolution, international business, and international resource management. In addition, diverse cultural viewpoints are emphasized within the new University Core Curriculum (UCC-21), which includes courses related to international awareness and respect for other cultures.

The Counseling Center, Office of Educational Excellence, and Office of Institutional Diversity offer workshops, resources, and consultation to assist faculty in creating [inclusive and welcoming classrooms](#) as well as methods for weaving issues related to diversity into [course content](#).

Ball State supports individuals from underrepresented groups by providing meaningful educational experiences both within and outside the classroom. During the [2012–13 academic year](#), the Multicultural Center sponsored programs that were attended by 6,759 people. Other examples of cocurricular programs related to diversity include:

- [Safe Zone](#)—This is a “voluntary network of faculty, staff, students, and community members who believe that every member of the university and broader community should have an equal opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and open environment. It is a group of people especially committed to being allies to and advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals.” This program provides education and training opportunities, workshops on relevant topics, and assistance and support for faculty, staff, students, and the community as well as resources for LGBTQ people and their allies/advocates.
- [Disability Services](#)—This office (formerly Disabled Student Development) provides numerous resources for students, faculty, and staff to make the university community aware of both apparent and nonapparent disabilities and to create an open and accessible learning environment. The successful Faculty Mentorship Program enhances the learning experience for students with disabilities by assigning faculty mentors to each student in the program. These mentors meet with students regularly and help them deal with the complexities of the academic experience. The program was developed upon the realization that “engagement with faculty is a key to student success and that the transition to college can be especially difficult for students with disabilities.”

**Subcomponent 3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.**

Ball State's faculty and students contribute to the development of scholarship, creative work, and knowledge discovery in various ways. How each discipline accomplishes this may differ, but each approach is consistent with the institutional mission. In particular, Goal 2 of the 2007–2012 strategic plan states: “Ball State University will support and reward faculty and student scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching” (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, p. 6). This is reinforced in the 2012–2017 strategic plan with its emphasis in Goal 2 on synthesizing learning and scholarship. That goal says Ball State will “become a recognized



leader for educational and disciplinary innovation” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 5). This approach is commonly referred to as the Boyer Model as it is applied to scholarship, and its products are evident across the campus.

## **Learning Experiences**

Immersive learning is Ball State’s most distinctive and robust mechanism for demonstrating scholarship and creative work by faculty and students. These unique experiences focus on the development of creative approaches to solving problems, building relationships, and engaging students in learning within the context of changing environments. Immersive learning is discussed more fully under [Criterion 1, Subcomponent 1.D.1.](#)

Other activities that foster faculty and student scholarship, creative work, and knowledge discovery include doctoral dissertations, master’s and honors theses, independent study projects, and funded or unfunded research and creative projects. Such activities—whether student driven, faculty driven, or collaborative—are central to the university’s mission and the work of faculty and students throughout the institution. These projects have numbered in the thousands since Ball State’s last accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission. Student research and examples from the Student Symposium Series are discussed later in this section.

## **Institutional Units and Programs**

Ball State has institutionalized opportunities for research and creative expression by establishing various knowledge units, knowledge groups, and creative outlets. A sampling of these and their foci for faculty and students follows.

**College of Applied Sciences and Technology**—A number of special projects and community partnerships provide opportunities for scholarship and knowledge discovery.

- [Biomechanics Laboratory](#) has joined Midwest Health Strategies in a partnership that combines the skills and expertise of rehabilitation professionals and university researchers to provide state-of-the-art rehabilitation and performance enhancement services for athletes and other community members.
- [Exercise science](#) second-year graduate students work with cardiac rehabilitation and cancer rehabilitation patients at IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital, helping students to improve their knowledge and comfort in clinical rehabilitation settings.
- [Human Performance Laboratory](#) has worked with IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital to establish a medical advisory board to assist with clinical research programs. Composed of physicians and Ball State faculty members, the advisory board provides medical consulting and professional services related to human clinical research in the Human Performance Lab.

**College of Architecture and Planning**—Outreach, applied research, and research initiatives provide low-cost or no-cost expertise to communities while offering students excellent opportunities for practical experience.

- [CAP Indianapolis Center](#) offers research and academic opportunities, forums, and lab experiences for students and professionals in the state's largest urban area.
- [Center for Energy Research/Education/Service](#) is an interdisciplinary resource focusing on issues related to energy and resource use, alternatives, and conservation.
- [Center for Historic Preservation](#) provides experiences for students and services to communities seeking economic development through preservation.
- [Community-Based Projects](#) has made helpful connections with hundreds of local governmental, civic, and service organizations since the late 1960s.
- [Drawings and Documents Archive](#) collects and preserves records about Indiana's historic sites and structures.
- [Institute for Digital Fabrication](#) brings together architectural design with cutting-edge industrial computer technology to revolutionize the digital manufacturing processes.
- [Institute for Digital Intermedia Arts](#) explores the intersection of art and technology.
- [Land Design Institute](#) promotes ecologically and culturally responsible land design.

**Miller College of Business**—Centers in this college share expertise and serve businesses and communities across Indiana and elsewhere while helping students make valuable professional connections.

- [Center for Actuarial Science, Insurance, and Risk Management](#) conducts research and offers education in insurance and related fields. It also seeks support from the business community in such forms as endowed professorships, professionals-in-residence programs, and internship programs.
- [Center for Business and Economic Research](#) is an economic policy and forecasting research center, which produces in-depth studies on current issues, creates innovative web tools to analyze economic data, and holds quarterly meetings of the Business Roundtable and the annual Indiana Economic Outlook.
- [Entrepreneurship Center](#) promotes entrepreneurship through nationally recognized academic programs and projects. It assists both emerging entrepreneurs and maturing businesses and fosters entrepreneurship throughout Indiana.
- [H.H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling](#) serves the field of professional selling. It produces highly prepared college graduates ready for successful careers in sales and conducts research on issues confronting sales organizations, sales managers, and salespeople.

**College of Communication, Information, and Media**—Faculty and students explore the rapidly changing media and communication environment, from the continuing evolution of the First Amendment to the intersection of diverse technologies in the production of news across multiple platforms.

- [Center for Information and Communication Sciences \(CICS\) Applied Research Institute](#) has been a significant link to the corporate world for support and valuable human connections since 1987. Within this institute are six industry-supported laboratories—Convergence, Networking, Digital Media, Applications, Wireless

Innovation, and the Network Integration Center. The latter two focus on research projects sponsored by industry or government, while the other four are dedicated mainly to supporting the graduate academic program. In five related institutes (listed next), faculty members provide leadership and offer additional real-world opportunities to apply knowledge from the classroom.

- [CICS Internetworking Academy](#) focuses on the setup, management, and troubleshooting of multiple vendor networks. As the Cisco Area Training Center (CATC) for Indiana, the academy also trains all networking academy instructors in the state.
- [Digital Policy Institute](#) is an interdisciplinary association of faculty within CICS and other campus units who share a collective research interest in the structure of and competition within electronic communications industries and the public policy of digital information creation, storage, transmission, reception, and consumption in the 21st century.
- [Human Factors Institute](#) focuses on the impact of a good interface and the need to develop systems that can be easily used.
- [Institute for Wireless Innovation](#) recognizes the increasingly important role played by wireless technologies in voice, data, and video communications.
- [Software Testing Institute](#) tests the functionality, performance, and usability of software, web applications, and websites.
- [Student Media](#)—which include the award-winning *Ball State Daily News*, *Ball Bearings* magazine, NewsLink Indiana, Ball State Sports Link, WCRD Radio, and Cardinal Communications public relations agency—provide real-world opportunities for students to develop professional skills under the mentorship of faculty and staff.

**College of Fine Arts**—This college provides a number of modern teaching, learning, performance, and exhibition opportunities for students, faculty, and the community.

- [Atrium Gallery](#) promotes the appreciation of the visual arts for studio artists, educators, and designers. It serves as an important educational tool, providing opportunities for students, faculty, and the broader arts community to showcase works and view the artwork of others.
- [David Owsley Museum of Art](#) serves as a research, learning, and teaching resource for students, faculty, and the local community, with more than 11,000 works of art in its collection. The museum has continued to expand its collection and facilities with significant support from Ball family member David T. Owsley and other benefactors. More information on the museum is provided under [Subcomponent 3.D.4.](#)
- [Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass](#), generously supported by The Glick Fund, established by Marilyn and Eugene Glick at the Central Indiana Community Foundation, was built to promote the practice of the contemporary glass arts at Ball State and east central Indiana. The center's studio spaces, equipment, faculty, and staff support a broad-based and dynamic undergraduate and graduate curriculum in contemporary glass, as well as community outreach and education about the glass arts.

- [Music Media Production Studios](#) contain the latest and most sophisticated audio and recording technology to capture true-to-life digital sound. These facilities enable faculty and students to achieve their educational goals in digital audio recording, music technology research, computer music, and composition.
- [Sursa Performance Hall](#), named in honor of benefactors David and Mary Jane Sursa, provides an intimate concert venue for annual series of student, faculty, and guest solo and ensemble performance in a variety of genres, from chamber and choral music to jazz and concert bands. Its first-rate acoustical design and Sursa Family Concert Organ make it a musical jewel for the campus and the community.
- [Theatre and Dance Productions](#) provide thought-provoking, ethnically and culturally diverse, stylistically varied, and technologically enhanced stage performances for the campus and local community in University Theatre, Strother Studio Theatre, and the Cave Theatre.

**College of Sciences and Humanities**—Reflecting the diversity of its departments, this college offers students and faculty a rich variety of opportunities to explore and present scholarship in each of its recognized forms: discovery, teaching, application, and integration.

- [Applied Anthropology Laboratories](#) provide cultural resource management services, including archaeological site investigations and artifact analysis, for public and private agencies. The laboratory's research and services are provided by collaborations among faculty, students, and staff.
- [Aquatic Biology and Fisheries Center](#) promotes applied research in aquatic sciences, including studies of the [yellow perch population](#) in Lake Michigan, and ecological change on Indiana's Wabash River. The first of its kind in Indiana, the center serves as an important source of scientific expertise that is increasingly important in meeting the challenges for use and perpetuation of aquatic resources in Indiana.
- [Ball State Planetarium](#) allows faculty and students in astronomy and related disciplines to visualize data about the cosmos captured from optical, radio, infrared, and other telescopes and sensors. A new planetarium with enhanced capabilities for teaching, scholarship, and community outreach will be constructed with a lead gift from Indianapolis entrepreneur and Ball State alumnus Charles W. Brown, for whom the facility will be named.
- [Bowen Center for Public Affairs](#) empowers people who want to participate in their communities, advancing the ideals of civic literacy, community involvement, and public service. The center provides networking, training, and research opportunities through its Bowen Institute on Political Participation, Institute for Public Service, and Institute for Policy Research. For example, the Bowen Center conducts the Hoosier Survey before the Indiana General Assembly starts its session to gauge what Indiana residents believe is important public policy.
- [Center for Computational Nanoscience](#) transfers the technology of validated theory and computational tools from the academic-based center to development environments in a nanotechnology-based industry.
- [Center for Middletown Studies](#) builds on the groundbreaking research of Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd in the study of local communities. The center's research

program investigates the transformation of small town and rural America from the advent of the industrial age to the advent of the digital age.

- [\*\*Field Station and Environmental Education Center \(FSEEC\)\*\*](#) attempts to replicate Indiana's natural environments in six diverse properties. Students and faculty use these properties to study ecological diversity and change in wetlands, forests, tall-grass prairies, and successional meadows. They also conduct agricultural experiments. The Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Greenhouse, home to the [\*\*Wheeler-Thanhauser Orchid Collection and Species Bank\*\*](#), the largest university collection of orchids in the world, is the latest addition to FSEEC. This diverse family provides students and faculty a research model to examine questions of environmental adaptation, biodiversity, and related genetic and ecological issues.
- [\*\*Intensive English Institute\*\*](#) provides international students the opportunity to acquire and perfect English language skills to advance their education in English-speaking countries. It also offers faculty and students in applied linguistics and TESOL a laboratory to develop and test new pedagogies and study their linguistic and cultural impact on second language acquisition.
- [\*\*Micro-Imaging Laboratory\*\*](#) houses the university's most powerful microscopes and imaging technology. Faculty and students in several disciplines use the lab to examine samples as diverse as brain tissue and carbon nanotubes with confocal, transmission electron, and scanning electron microscopy.
- [\*\*Security and Software Engineering Research Center\*\*](#) is a public-private collaboration originally funded by the National Science Foundation as an industry-university research center. It promotes immersive learning opportunities and faculty research in cutting-edge software engineering problems and related issues in cyber security.
- [\*\*Social Science Research Center\*\*](#) engages faculty and students in policy analysis and program evaluation research principally for social service agencies and educational programs.
- [\*\*Speech Language Clinic\*\*](#) and [\*\*Audiology Clinic\*\*](#) serve the local community's communication disorder and hearing health care needs while providing students with opportunities for clinical experience.

**Teachers College**—Special centers and resources foster scholarship and knowledge discovery in the field of education.

- [\*\*Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development\*\*](#) provides an assessment, consultation, counseling, and advocacy service and offers courses and workshops throughout Indiana.
- [\*\*Center for School Innovation\*\*](#) helps schools, communities, and administrators develop innovative, entrepreneurial approaches to K–12 education.
- [\*\*Center for Technology in Education\*\*](#) promotes innovation of computer technologies through teaching, research, policy, and outreach to P–12 schools through long-term partnership building.

- [Counseling Practicum Clinic](#) is a training and research facility that provides counseling services to the community. Counseling may be delivered on an individual or group basis.
- [Neuropsychology Lab](#) was established as a research and teaching facility. It also serves the local community through assessment of and remedial planning for people with neurological disorders.
- [Professional Development Schools Network](#) is a collaborative planning partnership between professional education programs and P–12 schools for the professional development of teachers and the training of future educators.
- [Psychoeducational Diagnostic Intervention Clinic](#) provides psychological and educational services to the university and local community through consultation, assessment, intervention, training, and research.
- [Public School Study Councils](#) help improve education in member school systems in Indiana through the cooperative study of educational issues and problems, diffusion of effective educational practices, and participation in activities related to improving student achievement.

**Honors College**—Ball State’s [Honors College](#) collaborates with departments and colleges across the campus to enrich the educational experience of high-ability undergraduate students. Qualifying students may be enrolled in the Honors College or complete departmental honors. In either case, the students complete an honors-level thesis or creative project according to [specific guidelines](#). Examples of [past senior projects](#) are available online, along with an archive of [undergraduate honors theses](#).

**Graduate School**—Ball State’s [Graduate School](#) operates in collaboration with all seven academic colleges on campus to advance scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge among our master’s, doctoral, and specialist degree programs. Table 3.1 below provides data for the number of graduate-level dissertations, theses, research papers, and creative projects.

**Table 3.1: Graduate-Level Scholarship and Creative Work by Year**

| Academic Year | Dissertations | Theses | Research Papers | Creative Projects (3 Hours) | Creative Projects (6 Hours) | Total |
|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| 2004–05       | 57            | 121    | 122             | 39                          | 15                          | 354   |
| 2005–06       | 52            | 121    | 77              | 47                          | 20                          | 317   |
| 2006–07       | 39            | 113    | 85              | 24                          | 28                          | 289   |
| 2007–08       | 48            | 107    | 82              | 30                          | 29                          | 296   |
| 2008–09       | 53            | 113    | 82              | 27                          | 12                          | 287   |
| 2009–10       | 44            | 105    | 107             | 40                          | 21                          | 317   |
| 2010–11       | 60            | 118    | 94              | 31                          | 37                          | 340   |
| 2011–12       | 67            | 109    | 77              | 33                          | 40                          | 326   |
| 2012–13*      | 30            | 60     | 64              | 32                          | 11                          | 197   |

*\*Incomplete data for most recent reporting year.*

**Other Centers and Institutes**—As demonstrated earlier, Ball State’s commitment to immersive learning and academic research is evident in both the abundance and the quality of our centers, institutes, clinics, bureaus, and other research and outreach units. These units provide innovative and interdisciplinary research activities that expand beyond the borders of our campus to have an impact on Indiana, the nation, and the world. A complete alphabetical listing of [centers and institutes](#) is available on the university’s website.

## Awards and Recognitions

The university’s promotion and tenure process and its salary and merit process formally recognize faculty for completing such activities. Faculty members of extraordinary merit are also honored with the Outstanding Faculty Awards in scholarship and creative endeavor during Ball State’s Fall Faculty Convocation at the start of each academic year. In addition, the university showcases faculty and student research at its annual BeneFacta Day and Student Symposium as well as the [Ball State Research](#) online publication.

Ball State’s academic units also recognize the importance of mentoring students in scholarship and creative work that produces important and valuable collaborations. This recognition takes many forms. For example, the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Psychological Science have poster displays of student research. Student History Day is a decades-old event where graduate and undergraduate students present research papers in a professional conference environment. The Departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Physics and Astronomy, and Geological Sciences use year-end honors and awards ceremonies to display student research. The College of Architecture and Planning also exhibits faculty and student designs at its end-of the-year celebration of achievement.



Departments within the College of Fine Arts present student exhibitions and performances throughout the year, and the College of Communication, Information, and Media routinely competes for regional Emmy Awards against professional and collegiate entries with exceptional success. A fuller compilation of examples is available in the various college and department annual reports.

*(Media galleries illustrating student scholarly endeavors such as [science research activities](#), [musical performances](#), [theatrical performances](#), [art exhibitions](#), and architecture and planning design exhibitions are available online.)*

## **Student Symposium**

Ball State's Student Symposium recognizes and promotes the accomplishments of students who have carried out research projects, creative endeavors, and other scholarly activities and who have benefited from the mentoring of faculty advisors. The symposium poster session provides a forum for students, faculty, and the community to discuss research efforts, view creative works, and examine the connections between special projects and education. Participation is open to all Ball State students—undergraduate, graduate, and those from Burris Laboratory School and the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities—who have engaged in organized work, either inside or outside the classroom, and who were advised by a Ball State faculty mentor. Presentations can be posters, creative or multimedia displays, or other exhibits.

The Student Symposium is organized by the Sponsored Programs Office and has been showcasing student achievements since 1995. More than 1,000 student-faculty collaborative projects have been displayed from 2004 through 2013. A full listing of projects may be found in the [event programs](#).

## **Summary: Core Component 3.B.**

Over the past 10 years, Ball State has labored to reform its core curriculum, moving intentionally from the general education model of its 1985 program to a core curriculum with greater focus on epistemology, creative problem solving, and skills development within and across domains of knowledge. The “transformations” that have been identified link closely to critical thinking, and the phased implementation has enabled faculty to adapt their pedagogies and develop appropriate assessments within the constraints of the university's fiscal envelope.

The core curriculum is taken by every student. Its focus on how the university thinks about content has led to fruitful faculty discussions about majors, minors, and graduate programs. It is incorporated into the language of the new strategic plan (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Mission, p. 2*), which is the blueprint of the institution's future. That blueprint includes a commitment to diversity among faculty, staff, and students; a welcoming environment for intellectual growth and discovery; and not only a tolerance of, but a respect for, the differences that will allow the United States to continue to thrive as a pluralistic society in the 21st century.

The connection between core curriculum development and the systematic approach to university planning has produced a healthy conversation among Ball State's constituencies that has promoted and supported creative expression, intellectual inquiry, and constructive problem solving. These ideas have been institutionalized in the structures and procedures

of every college and have created celebrations for students and faculty that publicly validate the importance ascribed to this result.

### **Core Component 3.C.**

#### **The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.**

Faculty and professional staff make up two large groups of personnel who work diligently toward achieving Ball State University's institutionally stated goals of providing effective and high-quality educational programs and student services. This section addresses the roles these two groups play in helping the university deliver on its promises.

**Subcomponent 3.C.1.** The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the nonclassroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; and involvement in assessment of student learning.

Ball State has an appropriate number of faculty members to effectively perform the various roles expected of them. The university's [student-to-faculty ratio](#) is 16:1, and the number of full-time faculty members has remained steady, averaging 944 over the past four years. Faculty are also appropriately [credentialed](#) for their assignments. These credentials are discussed further under [Subcomponent 3.C.2](#). Ball State has a healthy combination of new and long-serving faculty members who provide both the fresh perspective gained from experience at other institutions and the history and institutional memory that a well-established university must have to adapt effectively to the changing circumstances of the new century.

Ball State faculty state clearly the learning objectives and expectations in their course syllabi, which are consistent with the [master syllabi](#) developed by their departments. Beyond the classroom, faculty also advise students and serve on committees at the department, college, and university levels that are responsible for the oversight of curriculum and expectations for student performance.

**Academic Advising**—When students complete 30 or more credit hours at Ball State or transfer 30 or more hours from another institution, they are assigned to a faculty advisor in their major area or home department. Faculty members have unique expertise and are valuable and natural mentors for the students in their programs. This advising is provided in a variety of ways in different colleges and departments. Some units have more centralized college or department advising systems, while others have individual faculty mentor assignments. The goal of each is the same: to maximize the opportunities for productive contact between faculty and students.

**Learning Assessment**—Ball State's *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* provides [general guidelines](#) for assessing student learning in each undergraduate course and program that units are required to follow. Graduate programs and certificates follow the same administrative guidelines as undergraduate programs. Committees at the university, college,

and department levels are formally responsible for leading the assessments. Depending on the program or unit, primary responsibility for collecting data, analyzing results, and making recommendations typically rests with the department or college. In all cases, the primary consumers of assessment results are the faculty responsible for the curriculum being assessed. The provost and vice president for academic affairs provides general oversight of the university's assessment program and reviews the college assessment reports.

**Faculty Teaching**—As directed by the university's [policy for the evaluation of teaching](#), Ball State's teaching evaluation committees at the university, college, and department levels are responsible for the oversight of faculty teaching. Each faculty member's teaching is evaluated by peers, chairs, or department committees and by students who take their classes. Teaching evaluations often employ additional information such as course syllabi, tests, teaching materials (in whatever medium they appear), grade distributions, etc. Current salary and merit documents for each department identify minimum annual expectations for faculty performance in teaching, scholarship, and service. These documents are reviewed annually by the University Senate's Salary and Benefits Committee and by the university provost. Teaching evaluation is discussed further under [Subcomponent 3.C.3](#).

**Subcomponent 3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.**

Ball State follows the principles accepted by the Higher Learning Commission in determining appropriate faculty credentials. Faculty members normally hold a terminal degree or one degree above the level at which they teach, or they possess professional experience satisfactory to the responsible department and dean and the university provost. The curricula vitae of all Ball State faculty are available for review. In addition, the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* (p. 81) outlines and describes qualifications and requirements for academic ranks:

1. There are four basic academic ranks: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. (After January 1991, no person was hired into a tenure-track position at the rank of instructor.) Qualifications for rank are set by the individual colleges and must be approved by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.
2. Advancement in rank is based on a continuing pattern of achievement throughout the faculty member's professional career in
  - teaching
  - scholarship
  - service in a professional capacity
3. A terminal degree in the faculty member's specialty area is usually required for either hiring at or advancement to associate or full professor. However, certain kinds of expertise, experience, and/or recognition may be accepted by individual colleges as appropriate qualifications for either rank, upon approval of the provost.

## Hiring Practices

Ball State's hiring practices serve to promote the selection of highly qualified individuals for academic positions. Specific processes and policies include:

**Three-Level Approvals**—Before a position is advertised, academic units must have a formal position description approved by the department chair, college dean, and university provost. This description must state the minimum degree and/or discipline-specific experience requirements. After a candidate is selected, hiring that person also requires the approval of the department chair, college dean, and provost. In this way, a variety of administrative perspectives are brought to bear on the functional qualifications of the candidate in relation to the academic goals and objectives of the unit, the college, and the university.

**Candidate Screening**—Before candidates for an academic position can be interviewed, Ball State's Office of University Compliance must verify that they have the minimum qualifications based on the advertised job description and the discipline of study. Academic units must provide a list of candidates to be interviewed along with transcripts for their latest completed degree. The university compliance staff verifies that the transcript reflects the minimum degree requirements. This has been the university's established procedure since 2004. A new requirement for a background check was added to the hiring process during the 2012–13 academic year.

In some cases, the Office of University Compliance makes additional inquiries about a candidate, often when a candidate's degree is not in the target discipline or when equivalent experience is cited as a possible requirement instead of a terminal or graduate degree.

## Hiring Record

A spreadsheet compiled by Ball State's Office of Human Resource Services lists [all academic hiring](#) since the time of the university's last Higher Learning Commission accreditation review in 2004. Analysis of this list provides a perspective on Ball State's hiring practices in relation to candidate qualifications. The 449 full-time faculty hired in more than 50 academic and professional units included both tenure and contract faculty. The analysis below provides more detailed information on the qualifications of hired faculty.

Of 235 tenured/tenure track faculty across 50 academic units:

- 233 (99 percent) were hired with obvious terminal degrees in their disciplines.
- Two (less than 1 percent) were hired with graduate degrees in their disciplines and equivalent experience (as determined by unit accreditation standards and/or procedures of the Office of University Compliance).
- No tenured/tenure track faculty were hired without a graduate degree as a minimum qualification.

Of 214 full-time, main campus contract faculty hired across 50 academic units (not including Burris Laboratory School or the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities):

- 89 (42 percent) were hired with obvious terminal degrees in their disciplines.
- 114 (53 percent) were hired with graduate degrees in their disciplines and additional professional experience (as determined by unit accreditation standards and/or procedures of the Office of University Compliance).

- 11 (5 percent) were hired with undergraduate degrees in their disciplines and additional professional experience (as determined by unit accreditation standards and/or procedures of the Office of University Compliance).

## Terminal Degrees

Ball State's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) maintains simple statistics reflecting the current number of tenure and contract faculty with terminal degrees. Many of these statistics are presented in the university's online [Fact Book](#) and updated annually.

As Table 3.2 below indicates, 90.4 percent of Ball State's tenure-track faculty and 33.3 percent of contract faculty have terminal degrees. These are categorical averages, and it is interesting to note that the College of Communication, Information, and Media, the College of Architecture and Planning, and the College of Fine Arts are all below 90 percent in tenured faculty with terminal degrees. However, architecture and communication both represent major areas of study in which professional practice is viewed as important and often the equivalent of a terminal degree. In the largest fine arts unit, the School of Music, professional performance credentials are also viewed as equivalent to a terminal degree.

Nearly 60 percent of contract faculty in fine arts have terminal degrees, significantly higher than the other colleges. The percentage of contract faculty with terminal degrees in the College of Architecture and Planning is nearly equal to the College of Sciences and Humanities.

**Table 3.2: Faculty Highest Terminal Degrees by Tenure Status**

| <b>Faculty Highest Terminal Degrees by Tenure Status - Fall Semester 2012</b> |                       |                    |             |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Academic College  | Terminal Degrees      |                    |             |
|   | Tenured/On Track      | Contract Full-Time | All         |
|   | <i>In Percentages</i> |                    |             |
| <b>Applied Sciences and Technology</b>  | 91.9                  | 10.0               | <b>51.6</b> |
| <b>Architecture and Planning</b>  | 60.5                  | 46.2               | <b>57.1</b> |
| <b>Miller College of Business</b>   | 97.1                  | 28.6               | <b>85.7</b> |
| <b>Communication, Information, and Media</b>                                  | 63.4                  | 6.5                | <b>38.9</b> |
| <b>Fine Arts</b>  | 82.4                  | 57.9               | <b>78.2</b> |
| <b>Sciences and Humanities</b>  | 97.0                  | 47.7               | <b>82.7</b> |
| <b>Teachers College</b>   | 100.0                 | 39.3               | <b>84.8</b> |
| <b>University</b>   | <b>90.4</b>           | <b>33.3</b>        | <b>72.7</b> |

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness

## Accreditation Measures

Since accrediting organizations generally have discipline-driven standards required for instructors, the number of accredited units on campus can be used as an additional, although indirect and approximate, measure of appropriate faculty credentials. Programs and departments that are not accredited advise the institution regarding appropriate instructional qualifications based on common norms within their disciplines. Commonly held standards within academia also drive such judgments.

## Qualified Faculty

This analysis of faculty credentials indicates Ball State's instructors are appropriately qualified. Although explicit minimum standards are not part of the university's guidelines, the institution maintains practices that prioritize hiring faculty—especially tenured faculty—with a minimum qualification of a terminal degree in their teaching discipline or a graduate degree and equivalent experience. This practice is consistently demonstrated by available data reflecting hiring practices since 2004.

### **Subcomponent 3.C.3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.**

Effective teaching is central to Ball State's mission. The university recognizes that regular, meaningful evaluation of faculty facilitates improvements in teaching and course content. Therefore, faculty members are evaluated regularly per established institutional policies using a variety of formats.

University policy states that yearly requirements for [evaluating faculty teaching](#) must include the completion of student evaluations and either a chair evaluation, peer evaluation, or review of portfolio. [Contract faculty](#) are not exempt from this yearly evaluation requirement. Procedural guidelines require these evaluation processes to be fair and systematic.

## Student Evaluations

Each academic department is responsible for developing procedures for the [yearly evaluation of teaching](#), which includes the use of online student course evaluations for all instructors. The online student course evaluation site is managed using Digital Measures Course Response. The student course evaluations are anonymous, and instructors do not see the results until after final grades have been submitted. All faculty participate in student course evaluations, including regular and contract faculty members as well as full- and part-time instructors.

Because of sheer numbers, the process of moving from paper to online evaluations in summer 2010 was a daunting task. However, the university provided sufficient resources for effective implementation, and [online student evaluations](#) are now employed for every course with more than four students, whether it's a traditional, online, hybrid, internship, or other type of course.

## Peer Evaluations

Academic departments are responsible for developing procedures to evaluate teaching. These include, but are not limited to, observations by peers and department chairs and/or evaluations of teaching materials or teaching portfolios. The procedures and forms used by departments must be approved by the respective colleges. The university's [Teaching Evaluation Committee](#) also reviews the procedures for evaluating faculty members at least every three years, including individual department policies.

## Administrative Evaluations

The university president prepares an annual report that serves as the basis for her annual evaluation by the Ball State Board of Trustees, which determines the length and conditions of



the president's contract. Similarly, the vice presidents each prepare annual reports that serve as the basis for their annual evaluations by the president.

Academic administrators are evaluated on a regular cycle. Deans undergo a 360-degree evaluation every five years or sooner at the discretion of the provost and vice president for academic affairs. Department chairs and directors of centers, institutes, schools, and other units are evaluated by their colleagues/faculties and college deans every five years, or sooner if their terms are less than five years or if department, unit, or college policy requires more frequent evaluations. This evaluation is in addition to the regular required teaching evaluations, if the administrator also serves as an instructor.

Nonacademic administrators are evaluated annually by their direct supervisors. Some specialized professional personnel are evaluated on professional standards and clinic skills.

### **Other Faculty Evaluations**

Clearly, regular evaluation of Ball State faculty is a university priority. Furthermore, Ball State recognizes the need for faculty to remain current in their disciplines and proficient in their teaching roles. The institution has a number of processes and programs that promote and verify instructors' currency in their areas of specialty. For example, Ball State maintains a [University Promotion and Tenure Document](#), and each college and department maintains [promotion and tenure documents](#). All collegiate and departmental promotion and tenure documents are reviewed annually by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Faculty are also evaluated for the following purposes:

- **Salary and Merit**—All academic units maintain current salary and merit documents, which are reviewed and approved at the unit level by salary and merit committees, department chairs, deans, the University Salary and Benefits Committee, and the provost. A parallel policy exists for nonacademic divisions, each of which has a salary and merit document approved by the Ball State Board of Trustees.
- **Release Time**—In order for tenured or tenure-track faculty to receive release time for scholarship, normally 3 credit hours per term, they must demonstrate a record of scholarly productivity. A comprehensive sabbatical program (special assigned leave with full or half pay) is available for full-time faculty members and professional staff for a single semester leave (full pay) or an academic year leave (half pay). Additional releases can be provided through grant and contract buyouts.
- **Graduate Faculty Status**—In order to gain initial appointment or maintain graduate faculty status, faculty members must demonstrate currency in their disciplines consistent with the expectations of the Council of Graduate Schools, of which Ball State is a member. Those desiring graduate faculty status must submit applications on a schedule reflecting the terms of appointment as regular, associate, or assistant graduate faculty members. These applications must reflect multiyear scholarly accomplishments and successful graduate teaching. Requests are evaluated at the departmental level, by the college dean, and by the dean of the Graduate School, according to criteria approved by the appropriate college and the Graduate School.



**Subcomponent 3.C.4.** The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Ball State supports faculty in maintaining currency in their disciplines and proficiency in their teaching by providing a number of resources that promote professional development and research initiatives. Examples include:

### **Sponsored Programs**

The [Sponsored Programs Office \(SPO\)](#) assists instructors and faculty members in the quest for external funding to carry out their research and other scholarly activities. SPO offers several programs—including the Aspire Internal Grants, Advance Program, and SUBMIT Program—to encourage professional development and scholarship, including the scholarship of teaching. SPO considers requests for support of journal page costs and subsidy of monograph publications. The Publications and Intellectual Properties Committee also considers and recommends to the provost university publication of original, unpublished faculty manuscripts.

### **Associate Provost**

The Office of the Associate Provost coordinates many programs that encourage professional growth and academic currency, including teaching support, research and scholarship support, program development, travel support grants, special leaves, and external funding support. For example, full-time faculty may apply to the university's [Creative Teaching Committee or Creative Arts Committee](#) for support of creative or experimental instructional activities. Qualified faculty may also participate in the [Educational Assistance Program](#), which provides tuition support for employees who wish to enroll in Ball State courses.

### **Educational Excellence**

The [Office of Educational Excellence \(OEE\)](#) is a widely used university resource that promotes the advancement of teaching through informed reflective practice. This office distributes a monthly faculty development newsletter outlining its offerings and initiatives, which include support in implementing innovative teaching practices, course design, curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment. OEE also offers teaching consultation and intervention services, faculty learning communities, new faculty training, several teaching awards and grant programs, and an assortment of workshops and seminars.

The new [Interactive Learning Space Initiative](#) aims to improve learning by connecting pedagogy, technology, and learning space design and thereby create a new type of learning community-centered educational experience. This experience will help prepare graduates to live and work in a world that requires collaboration and problem solving as essential life skills. A learning community can motivate its members to exceptional performance, especially when pedagogy, technology, and space are brought together and allowed to evolve.

[iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute](#) offers faculty assistance in designing online and hybrid courses. It employs the [Quality Matters](#) framework to inform the construction of active learning pedagogies for the digital learning space, making online and hybrid instruction more consistent and rigorous across the campus. Instructional designers work with faculty to ensure that

students in online and hybrid sections achieve the expectations embodied in program learning outcomes and assist faculty in the development of associated assessments.

## **Travel Support**

The economic recession and successive state budget cuts to higher education have produced a challenging environment for faculty travel support. In response to this need, the university president established the [President's Travel Fund](#) during the 2012–13 academic year. Initially funded at \$100,000 and administered by the provost, this program has proved to be a successful first effort to address essential travel for research and professional development. Departments and colleges have also responded creatively by actively seeking external support. In special instances, the Ball State University Foundation has directly supported travel when donors have made that possible explicitly, as in the [Terhune Program](#).

### **Subcomponent 3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.**

Ball State has a long history of providing a nurturing environment for learning with close, personal-professional contact between instructors and students. A host of examples illustrate student/faculty collaboration in the classroom and through independent study projects, undergraduate honors theses, graduate research projects, collaborative research, and immersive learning projects. Faculty/student collaborations like these have numbered in the hundreds since the university's last self-study report for the Higher Learning Commission.

All of these examples focus on the robust, vibrant, and diverse nature of campus student inquiry. In addition to these special projects, faculty are accessible to students for class advising, career counseling, and assistance with other aspects of student life and learning.

## **Senior and Alumni Surveys**

A number of sources confirm students' overall positive experiences regarding their ability to consult with faculty. Results from the [Ball State 2011–12 Senior Survey](#) include the following:

- When asked about the “ease of access to instructors,” respondents stated some level of satisfaction 89 percent of the time, with 70 percent of the respondents indicating they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”
- Of the respondents, 77 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at Ball State University.”
- More than 85 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “most Ball State faculty are friendly and helpful.”
- When asked about consulting with faculty outside of class about course work and career plans, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, with agreement 88 percent and 79 percent of the time, respectively.

Likewise, Ball State's [2012 Alumni Survey](#) of 2010–11 graduates yielded the following results:

- Of the campus alumni respondents, 51 percent indicated they occasionally interacted with faculty, and another 17 percent stated they often interacted with faculty.
- Responses to the statement, “I am satisfied with faculty advising in my department,” were overwhelmingly positive as 71 percent of alumni agreed or strongly agreed.

## Student Engagement Survey

The National Survey of Student Engagement found the perceived quality of student/faculty relationships is directly applicable to student accessibility to faculty. Specifically, data were gathered for four separate years (2004, 2007, 2008, and 2012) and two measurement periods (first year and senior year). For this analysis, responses with the highest ratings (5–7) were extracted from the original table and collapsed to compare the data collection periods.

In each survey, [student satisfaction increased](#) from the first year to the senior year—by 10 percentage points in 2004 and by 14 percentage points in 2007 and 2008. Therefore, when comparing the first-year experience to the senior-year experience, it appears students perceive the quality of their relationships with faculty more positively, which in turn should promote accessibility. The 2012 [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) also provides useful information about Ball State student/faculty interaction through the following questions:

- **“Are faculty members accessible and supportive?”**  
Results: 74 percent of first-year students say their faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic.
- **“How many students work on research projects with faculty?”**  
Results: 22 percent of students do research with a faculty member by the spring of their senior year.
- **“Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?”**  
Results: 51 percent of first-year students frequently get prompt verbal or written feedback from faculty members.
- **“How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?”**  
Results: 86 percent of seniors at least occasionally discuss career plans with faculty, while 14 percent never talk with faculty members about career plans.
- **“Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?”**  
Results: 40 percent of first-year students at least occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than course work.

In the area of [student and faculty interaction](#), the survey found: “While Ball State first-year students generally reported slightly lower levels of student and faculty interaction than comparison groups, seniors at Ball State reported significantly higher levels, evidencing

much growth in faculty and student interaction between the first and final year at Ball State.” Regarding the [quality of student/faculty relationships](#), Ball State students reported quality consistent with other Indiana public universities, institutions in the same Carnegie classification, and Ball State peer institutions.

In summary, Ball State provides and fosters a dynamic and vibrant environment for student inquiry with instructors. Both seniors and alumni responding to the Senior Survey and the Alumni Survey indicated an impressive level of satisfaction with their ability to interact with faculty on campus and within their programs of study. This was also the case in the National Survey of Student Engagement. This evidence—along with the many, varied, and successful student/faculty collaborative efforts on campus—speaks highly of the effort put forth by faculty in the form of accessibility and student support in learning.

**Subcomponent 3.C.6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.**

Staff members who provide teaching and learning support services to on-campus and online students are found in several administrative divisions at Ball State, including Academic Affairs; Student Affairs; Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications; and Information Technology. The professional staff in each division and office are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their development.

**Academic Advising**—Ball State has a central advising unit to handle all freshman advising, students who have not declared a major, and initial transfers. There is also a specialized unit for athletic advising. Academic advisors espouse the principles of their professional association, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. Advisors hold at least a master’s degree and average more than 19 years of professional experience. They meet frequently with representatives from the university’s colleges and departments to ensure that they have a current understanding of majors, minors, certificate progress, and the prerequisites of each.

**Learning Center**—Closely aligned with Academic Advising, this unit’s professional staff also hold either master’s or doctoral degrees. They work with faculty to develop curriculum support materials and provide tutorial services through undergraduate tutors, who are specially recruited for their subject matter expertise and ability to relate successfully with peers. The Learning Center is accredited by the College Reading and Learning Association and follows that professional body’s training program for student tutors, resulting in tutors earning a national certification.

**Writing Center**—This unit in the Department of English is supervised by a regular faculty member specializing in rhetoric and composition and is open to undergraduate and graduate students throughout the university who wish to develop their writing further and have their writing assignments critically examined. Assistance is provided by graduate students in rhetoric and composition and undergraduates with exceptional writing skills, under the supervision of the director. Tutors also have the opportunity to attend the East Central Writing Center Association conference once a year.

**Career Center**—Professional staff in this unit have attained at least a master's degree and average more than 17 years of professional experience. The center follows the professional standards of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). In addition, continuing education is provided through conferences and institutes of the Career Development Professionals of Indiana, Midwest Association of Colleges and Employers, and professionally developed webinars and resource materials. Graduate assistants are extensively trained before assuming any advising roles.

**Registrar**—This office has a professional staff of five, assisted by nine clerical staff and 11 student assistants providing clerical support, and follows the professional standards of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. A delegation attends the annual meetings of the national association and its state affiliate for continuing professional development.

**Scholarships and Financial Aid**—Of this office's 10 professional staff members, four are entry level and baccalaureate trained, while six are at administratively more advanced decision-making levels and have a master's education. They are assisted by 14 clerical and frontline staff. The unit follows the ethical standards and statement of principles of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Professional staff regularly attend national (NASFAA), Midwest (MASFAA), and Indiana (IASFAA) meetings, as well as the Federal Student Aid Conferences, for professional development.

**Counseling Center**—This unit provides both psychological and career counseling to Ball State's students, faculty, and staff through 10 doctoral-trained professionals, most of whom hold the Health Service Provider in Psychology designation. A psychiatrist and a psychiatric nurse practitioner consult one day per week. Three doctoral interns also provide assistance. The center is accredited by the Indiana Counseling Association and the American Psychological Association.

**Health Center**—This campus resource is a collaboration with IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital and is accredited through the hospital. In addition to the four assigned physicians, five nurse practitioners, and a large staff of registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and medical assistants, the center provides access to the complete facilities of the local hospital. It houses a pharmacy staffed by two registered pharmacists and two pharmacy technicians, a physical therapy unit staffed by one physical therapist and two physical therapy assistants, and a women's center directed by a nurse practitioner.

**Disability Services**—This office, formerly Disabled Student Development, coordinates services and accommodations for students with disabilities while also providing disability awareness programs and training for the campus community. Two professional staff hold master's degrees and are members of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), the professional organization for disability services providers in postsecondary education. The office abides by the professional principles of AHEAD, and staff regularly attend the AHEAD conference and the training meetings of its Indiana chapter. AHEAD offers several webinars and publications that serve as important resources for this unit.

**Multicultural Center**—Supervised by a master's educated director, this center brings together students of different genders, races, and ethnicities to discuss social and racial issues

and interact with each other. Staff members are Safe Zone trained (as allies to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning community on campus) and are members of the national Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the Association of Black Cultural Centers, and the Indiana Student Affairs Association. They attend numerous best-practices webinars sponsored by the Student Affairs Leadership Council.

**Housing and Residence Life**—Residence hall directors and assistants play an important role in ensuring student engagement in curricular and cocurricular activities that boost student success. They also help identify students in academic difficulty and work with faculty to assist them. Directors must have a master's degree prior to employment, and they complete six weeks of training that covers all aspects of their role. They also attend in-service training sessions throughout the academic year. Assistant directors must have a bachelor's degree prior to employment and be enrolled in a master's program. They also complete four weeks of training and have the same opportunities to participate in in-service programs.

Resident assistants (RAs) complete a 1-credit-hour course covering topics such as leadership, conflict management, time management, diversity, and college student development. An intensive one-week workshop before fall classes covers areas such as emergencies, policy enforcement, student academic success, and crisis management. Residence hall staff are provided travel funds to participate in regional, national, and international professional organizations such as National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Association of College and University Housing Officers–International (ACUHO-I), and Great Lakes Association of College and University Housing Officers (GLACUHO).

**Rinker Center for International Programs**—Established with generous gifts from philanthropist Marshall E. Rinker Sr. and the Marshall E. Rinker Sr. Foundation, this unit coordinates a variety of international study-abroad programs and assists international students and scholars with university admission requirements, visas, academic orientation, academic support (e.g., mentoring, advising, etc.), and cultural acclimation. It works closely with the Intensive English Institute to ensure that international students have the language and cultural skills for academic success in their chosen fields of study. The director holds doctor of jurisprudence (JD) and master of public administration (MPA) degrees. All but one of the professional staff members have master's degrees, and they have between five and 25 years of experience. Professional development involves NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Forum on Education Abroad at the regional and national levels. Staff also participate in webinars and attend international education conferences in the U.S. and internationally.

**Unified Technology Support**—UTS professionals provide information, guidance, and support services related to campus technology resources. Senior staff members hold master's degrees, and other professional staff hold bachelor's degrees. Together they average more than 12 years of experience. The professional staff supervises a number of graduate and undergraduate students who provide frontline support for routine inquiries and requests. Staff receive three phases of on-the-job training involving scenarios and role-play exercises with benchmarked pass rates. Mystery shoppers are used to ensure training was successful.

Ongoing support and professional development related to enterprise systems on campus such as Blackboard, Microsoft Office, and Webmail/Outlook involve online training and teaching

materials provided to staff with enterprise partners. UTS staff keep up-to-date on current technologies and applications through extensive online learning materials and online meetings to identify new features. These materials are used to build the UTS knowledge base and stay current with the latest upgrades, patches, and versions of campus systems.

**iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute**—Instructional technologists provide technical assistance to faculty and staff working in the online and blended learning spaces. Instructional designers help faculty develop appropriate pedagogies that make the best use of the chosen delivery platforms as well as assessments appropriate to programmatic and course learning outcomes. These professionals are appropriately degreed and have a wealth of experience that is upgraded through the same professional development activities as their UTS counterparts.

**University Libraries**—University Libraries employs 47 full-time equivalent professionals. The librarians have a minimum of a master's degree from an American Libraries Association accredited program. Many have a second master's, and a few have doctoral degrees. Professionals centered in the libraries' Information Technology or Business Operations have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in their fields. Some have advanced degrees, including doctorates. Classified support staff have, at minimum, 18 months of education beyond high school or equivalent experience. Upper-level positions require a bachelor's degree. Many classified staff have university degrees beyond the requirements of their positions.

The breadth of job-related experience varies relative to the position requirements. Entry-level professional positions are usually filled by recent master's program graduates who have also participated in internships. Middle and upper-level positions attract professionals with five to 29 years of experience. Continuing education is provided through professional conferences, internal development workshops, webinars, and online tutorials commensurate with position responsibilities.

**Veterans Affairs**—This office coordinates several types of educational benefits students can receive depending on their own or their parents' involvement with the military. The director holds a master's degree and has 25 years of experience. School certifying officials are audited each year by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Indiana Office, and the Indiana Office of Veterans Affairs to comply with all federal VA guidelines and rules. To keep abreast of changes, the staff studies the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators Listserv weekly and attends annual training in Indianapolis and St. Louis.

As a member of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) consortium, this office is also responsible for keeping up-to-date on all VA changes and following the guidelines for "military friendly" campuses per the SOC agreement. The staff attended the spring and fall meetings of the Military Family Research Institute (MFRI), specifically the Operation Diplomas Initiative, that discuss changes to VA policy and suggestions from MFRI for improving the academic success and transition of students from the battlefield to the campus. Staff are also members of state, regional, and national financial aid organizations, which provide continual training through various webinars, publications, and conferences. The U.S. Department of Education and the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana offer continual training regarding federal and state financial aid programs.



## University Support for Staff Development

Beyond the individual units, Ball State offers a variety of university-level professional development and training opportunities for staff members providing student support services.

- [Fee Remission Program](#)—Employees who meet the university's normal admission requirements may enroll for up to 6 credit hours per semester and have 100 percent of undergraduate fees waived.
- [Educational Assistance Program](#)—Employees who meet the university's normal admission requirements may enroll for up to 6 credit hours per semester and have undergraduate and graduate fees, exclusive of special fees, waived equal to the greater of 50 percent of the total fees or, for on-campus instruction, the contingent portion of the general fees. Employees on an approved leave for study may enroll for up to 18 credit hours per semester.
- [Staff Development Program](#)—This option is available if a department requests an employee enroll in course work to enhance his or her skills to meet the needs of the university or the employee's potential future assignment within the university. Under this program, the department may pay fees not covered by either the Fee Remission Program or the Educational Assistance Program.
- [Learning and Development Programs](#)—At no cost to employees, the Office of Learning and Development within University Human Resource Services offers dozens "of sessions to address learning needs of Ball State employees. Other offices on campus also provide no-cost training to keep employees' skills current. For example, University Libraries offer [specialized workshops](#) to faculty.
- [External Funding Support](#)—The [Sponsored Programs Office \(SPO\)](#) assists Ball State personnel in the search for external funding to carry out research, creative, and scholarly activities. Support includes identification of potential funding opportunities, guidance in proposal and budget development, and submission of applications to agencies. SPO offers workshops in proposal preparation and advises faculty and staff about research incentive programs and the Aspire internal grant program.

## Summary: Core Component 3.C.

Ball State has a talented, devoted, and appropriately credentialed faculty that fulfills its responsibilities with dedication. The university embraces new technologies and other opportunities to connect effectively with this generation of students, and we ensure that those who work alongside us—in dual credit programs, for example—express the same commitment and evidence the same preparation. We take great pride in our recruitment, promotion, and tenure procedures, which have continued to populate our ranks with talented faculty as one generation slowly replaces another. We are equally proud of the university's assessment program and accreditation results that affirm publicly the high quality of the learning experience Ball State provides.

Ball State's scholarship resonates with its teaching. Often students collaborate with faculty. The university is a community of learners, and that spirit includes the professional staff, whose expertise and dedication provide essential support to the institution's educational mission. The long and varied list of programs and offices enumerated in this section is not a pro forma

compendium, but rather a vibrant statement of commitment to success. It indeed “takes a village,” and Ball State has constructed one and populates it with deliberate care.

## **Core Component 3.D.**

### **The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.**

Ball State University is committed to providing excellent support for student learning and effective teaching through a variety of means and mechanisms. This section addresses the university’s student support services, learning support, academic advising, infrastructure for student learning and achievement, and support for effective use of research and information resources.

#### **Subcomponent 3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.**

##### **Pre-enrollment Support**

Ball State begins assisting students long before they start classes. Services and programs for prospective and pre-enrolled students help them learn about the university and college life, meet our students and faculty, apply for admission and financial aid, and confirm their enrollment once they are admitted. Examples include:

**High School Visits and College Fairs**—The Office of Admissions and Orientation strives to attract and enroll a selective and diverse student body through visits to high schools and attendance at college fairs. During high school visits, admissions representatives meet with students in an intimate, personalized setting to discuss academic and immersive learning opportunities, campus activities and social organizations, and scholarships and financial aid. In the college fair setting, contact is often brief, but students and their parents are able to learn about academic and social opportunities at Ball State.

**Welcome Center Visits**—Ball State’s renovated Welcome Center introduces students and their families to the campus. Weekday visit sessions consist of an admissions information session, a student-guided walking tour of the campus, and an optional academic appointment with a professor in the student’s major area of interest. Visitors learn about academic programs and immersive learning opportunities, on-campus service and resource offices, and student and residence hall life. Nearly 3,400 prospective high school and transfer students attended [campus visits](#) through the Welcome Center during the spring and summer 2011 semesters.

**Ball State Preview Days**—Three distinct Preview Day events target specific audiences. However, the mission of all Preview Days remains the same: to increase prospective student awareness of and interest in academic opportunities and campus resources.

- **Preview Days** are an opportunity for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to learn about and further explore Ball State’s academic programs, learning opportunities, and student organizations and resources; interact with faculty and current students;

and take a student-guided walking tour of campus. More than 65 percent of high school seniors who [attended Preview Days](#) in spring 2011 enrolled at Ball State in fall 2011.

- **Honors College Preview Days** applaud the academic achievements of all high school seniors who are eligible for admission to the university's Honors College program. Course curricula, international study programs, immersive learning opportunities, and previous research projects unique to the Honors College are discussed at this event. Participating students are able to meet with the associate dean of the Honors College, the director of the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry, current Honors College students, and admissions staff. More than 78 percent of prospective students who [attended Honors College Preview Day](#) in fall 2010 enrolled at Ball State in fall 2011.
- **Transfer Preview Days** target prospective transfer students, allowing them to further explore academic areas of interest, discover how the Learning Center enhances student academic success, and learn how the Transfer Indiana website assists in the transfer process. Prospective transfer students also meet with representatives from the Office of Academic Advising, admissions staff, and current transfer students. More than 75 percent of prospective students who [attended Transfer Preview Day](#) in spring 2011 enrolled at Ball State in fall 2011.

**Diversity Programs**—Ball State has designed recruitment programs for underrepresented minority high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to make them more aware of and interested in a college education and to portray Ball State as an institution where those aspirations can be fulfilled. These programs help the university achieve its goal of enrolling a greater number of minority students.

- **Explore Ball State Day** encourages the pursuit of higher education at Ball State among minority populations. This mission is accomplished by presenting academic programs and multicultural student organizations and resources, including the Asian American Association, Black Student Association, Latino Student Union, and Multicultural Center. Participants interact with faculty, current minority students, and admissions staff.
- **Multicultural Student Reception** fosters awareness and acceptance of Ball State among prospective, multicultural high school juniors and seniors. Participants meet with diverse alumni, current students, and staff from the admissions, housing, financial aid, and various other campus offices.
- **Summer Scholars** is an on-campus, academic-intensive program for African-American, Latino, and Native American students going into their sophomore, junior, or senior year of high school. This four-week program fosters awareness and acceptance of Ball State among minority populations through immersion in core academic courses, interactions with faculty and staff, and engagement in the Muncie community. Participants have the opportunity to interact and build relationships with other students, become familiar with Ball State, and explore other aspects of campus life. Through this program, prospective multicultural students are more likely to later enroll and experience academic and personal success at Ball State.
- **21st Century Scholars Day** raises educational aspirations and encourages the pursuit of higher education at Ball State among 21st Century Scholars, a program that assists low-income students from Indiana. This event highlights on-campus resources and support programs offered to all students in an effort to ensure academic and personal

success. The university's admissions, housing, financial aid, and student life offices are represented at this event.

**Transfer Student Advising**—In early 2012, Ball State's Office of Admissions created a new transfer coordinator position, which is responsible for offering a number of services for prospective transfer students, including counsel concerning the transfer process and admission criteria, reviewing and explaining transferability of college credit, responding to student inquiries, and serving as a liaison between transfer students and the Office of Academic Advising throughout the application process.

**Scholarships and Financial Aid**—A variety of resources are provided to help prospective students find ways to meet the costs of education. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid maintains a [comprehensive website](#) that provides up-to-date information about financial aid at Ball State and connections to other sources of financial aid information nationwide. The online Net Price Calculator assists in early financial planning for college, giving undergraduate students a preliminary estimate of federal, state, and institutional aid eligibility. This tool helps families gauge what aid their students may be awarded and to make arrangements to cover the cost of attending Ball State. It is easily accessible through a user-friendly URL, [www.bsu.edu/finad/calculator](http://www.bsu.edu/finad/calculator). Financial aid staff are available year-round, Monday through Friday, to accept walk-in appointments and meet with students and their families about financial concerns.

**Housing and Residence Life**—The Office of Housing and Residence Life educates prospective students and their families about [campus housing options and residence hall life](#). Prospective students can search for a compatible roommate through the Ball State Roommate Search. Housing staff also participate in many on- and off-campus programs for various offices and academic departments.

**Social Media**—In 2006, Ball State was among the first institutions in the nation to provide students a high-profile forum for blogging about their college experience. Each academic year, eight to 12 students were selected to share their daily activities, insights, photos, and videos online. Through the students' unedited, uncensored posts, prospective students learned about classes, activities, living on campus, immersive learning, and study-abroad programs at Ball State. The bloggers received training and equipment, including iPads and cameras, to document their experiences.

As media trends have evolved, blogs have become commonplace and undifferentiating. In their place, the university has created a social media community on Facebook just for prospective students. [Ball State Bound](#) begins engaging future freshmen as soon as they apply and are admitted to the university, fostering connections leading up to orientation and their first semester on campus. Along the way, the students learn more about Ball State, gain important information for their transition to college, ask questions, and start creating friendships with their classmates. A corresponding Facebook community called [Ball State Bound Family](#) helps the students' parents and families connect with the university.

**Yield Programs**—Once prospective students are admitted to Ball State, they are invited to special events that encourage them to confirm their enrollment. Annual receptions in the Indianapolis area, for example, allow admitted students to learn more about campus resources

by meeting with representatives from the admissions, housing, and financial aid offices as well as current Ball State students. One of these events is specifically for Honors College students, and another is for multicultural students. More than 95 percent of prospective students who [attended the Indianapolis honors and northeastern Indianapolis receptions](#) in spring 2011 enrolled at Ball State in fall 2011.

**Admitted Student Day**—Through this annual yield program, prospective students can further explore their academic areas of interest, interact with current Ball State students, and speak with faculty. In addition, personalized information sessions provide visibility of and access to staff from various campus offices and resource centers, including the Learning Center, Career Center, Health Center, Rinker Center for International Programs, Honors College, Housing and Residence Life, Scholarships and Financial Aid, Student Life, and Recreation Services. More than 75 percent of prospective students who attended Admitted Student Day in spring 2011 enrolled at Ball State in fall 2011.

## First-Year Support

As new students prepare for and begin their first year at Ball State, the university provides an array of programs, resources, and services to help them make a successful transition. Our programs for first-year students have been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* nine years in a row, as of summer 2013. From orientation and social activities to living-learning communities and international services, new undergraduate and graduate students have many opportunities to build friendships, settle into campus life, and get their college experience off to a strong start. Examples include:

**Orientation Programs**—Ball State's [orientation programs](#) for new undergraduate students are scheduled throughout the year and assist in the students' transition to Ball State. More than 45 different orientation sessions are offered throughout the year. The university conducts 18 two-day programs for incoming freshmen during June and July. Attendance at one of these programs is required for all new students who are pursuing a degree, and family members are strongly encouraged to participate. Diverse presentations facilitated by various campus offices are offered at each of the two-day programs. Topics include academic requirements, advising, financial matters, campus involvement, and residential or commuter life. Students meet with an academic advisor to register for classes, participate in assessment and placement testing, and engage with other new students through various activities.

Other orientation programs geared toward different types of new students include:

- **Transfer Orientation** is similar to the freshman programs. Ball State facilitates more than 20 one-day programs for incoming transfer students throughout the academic year. Attendance at one of these programs is required, and family members are encouraged to participate. Transfer student orientation introduces new students to various campus offices and resources, including the Career Center, Learning Center, Counseling Center, Health Center, and Academic Advising. Students meet with an academic advisor to discuss transfer credits and register for classes.
- **Graduate Orientation** is designed to connect graduate students to helpful on-campus resources and key components of the Graduate School experience. Orientation sessions are offered for on-campus and distance education graduate students. During orientation,

students interact with professors, learn about campus activities and social opportunities, and attend a resource fair and Welcome Week programming.

- **International Orientation**, provided by the Rinker Center for International Programs at the start of each semester, helps new international students understand the rules and regulations that apply to them, explores the differences between the academic systems of their home countries and those at Ball State, and assists with basic needs such as housing, banking, and locating campus and community services.

**Summer Bridge Programs**—Each summer, Ball State offers special educational and recreational programs that help new incoming students meet others, get a taste of college life, and build leadership and service skills before their first semester on campus. These are discussed further under [Subcomponent 3.E.1.](#) and [3.E.2.](#) Annual programs include:

- **Accelerate** has been sponsored by the Office of Housing and Residence Life since fall 2008. This one-week program is offered to matriculating students the week before the beginning of the fall semester. It pairs freshmen with Accelerate counselors who serve as mentors and guides, helping students to become more familiar and comfortable with their new living and learning environment. The goal is for new students to make a successful transition from high school to college life. Of the 183 students who [participated in fall 2011](#), 95 percent returned for the spring 2012 semester.
- **Cardinal Leadership and Service Seminar**, sponsored by the Office of Student Life, is a three-day institute offered to 100 degree-seeking students the week before the fall semester begins. This program focuses on leadership concepts and community service needs, providing students with early leadership and service experiences. A teambuilding course, seminars on leadership, a community service day, and small mentor groups help students build awareness and become comfortable with their new environment.
- **Early Start Program** is a [three-day, 1-credit seminar](#) sponsored by University College that gives incoming students a taste of both academic and social life on campus. Students move to campus a few days early in August and participate in a three-day workshop of their choosing. Many workshops are related to certain majors, but many are designed to be very general, appealing to a wide range of students. Students earn credit by actively participating in and completing work assigned. Program credit is assigned during the fall semester under the course designation ID 101.
- **Excel Mentor Program**, sponsored by the Multicultural Center since 1996, is for new matriculating underrepresented minority students. The program pairs first-time freshmen with sophomore, junior, or senior student mentors, giving them an opportunity to interact and build relationships with other students, become familiar with the university, and explore other aspects of campus life. This effort helps new students make a successful transition from high school to college life and be better prepared to engage and persist through the first year of their college career. [In 2011–12](#), key resources highlighted during the program were used by 50 percent of the participants during the fall semester and by nearly all students by the end of the academic year, and the students indicated they had a stronger precollege comfort level knowing an upper-level mentor was available for advice and counsel.
- **Outdoor Pursuits**, sponsored by the Office of Outdoor Pursuits in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center, includes different adventure trips for new students.



One option takes students to North Carolina for camping in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, hiking a portion of the Appalachian Trail, and whitewater rafting on the Nantahala River. Another trip features whitewater rafting along the Lower New River in West Virginia, a canopy tour through the New River Gorge, and a spring-fed water park with 40-foot water slides, water trampolines, and a zip line. These adventures provide an opportunity for students to challenge themselves and build confidence, teamwork skills, and friendships with other new students.

**Welcome Week**—This special week at the beginning of the fall semester helps new degree-seeking students become further acquainted with the university’s services and programs through numerous social, recreational, and academic events on campus. Approximately 80 upper-division students serve as guides to freshmen during this week. Events include a student activities fair, freshman convocation, small discussion groups exploring the [Freshman Common Reader](#), and sessions on goal setting and establishing academic expectations. The average attendance for Welcome Week is 3,000 students, reflecting a high level of participation.

**Housing and Residence Life**—The university’s housing office provides students with a supportive living environment that fosters learning and personal growth as soon as they move to campus. This office has played an important role in the development and continuation of Ball State’s [Freshman Connections](#) program. Staff work closely with faculty, academic advisors, and student mentors to provide meaningful learning opportunities within the students’ living environment. Living-learning communities within the residence halls create and extend student learning opportunities outside the classroom, heightening students’ intellectual and individual growth. These communities foster resident and faculty interaction through the integration of curricular and cocurricular experiences.

As Table 3.3 below indicates, the grade point averages (GPAs) of freshmen living on campus are significantly higher than those of freshmen living off campus, according to [Division of Student Affairs annual reports](#) from the past five years. This difference can be attributed to many factors ranging from the resources of staff and peer leaders to educational and social programming to the link with the Freshman Connections program and living-learning communities.

**Table 3.3: Comparison of GPAs for On-Campus and Off-Campus Freshmen (4.0 Scale)\***

| Academic Year | On-Campus | Off-Campus |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 2011–12       | 2.72      | 2.29       |
| 2010–11       | 2.74      | 2.20       |
| 2009–10       | 2.73      | 2.16       |
| 2008–09       | 2.76      | n/a        |
| 2007–08       | 2.74      | 2.17       |

Ball State students who reside on campus generally are quite pleased with their living environments. For example, 77 percent of respondents to the [2010 Quality of Life Survey](#) indicated they enjoy living in their halls. Additionally, nearly 80 percent of respondents indicated



they believe the environments in their halls promote academic success. Overall, the number of students planning on returning to the residence halls the next year increased 1.3 percent.

## **Transfer Student Support**

**International Student Services**—Staff from the Rinker Center for International Programs provide [advising services](#) to new international students on issues such as compliance with Immigration and Custom Enforcement, Internal Revenue Service, and Social Security Administration regulations. Students may choose to be matched with a local family through the [Friendship Family Program](#), which offers a personal contact in the community. International students are also encouraged to share their academic expertise and their personal and cultural perspectives through programs such as a speakers bureau, weekly cultural exchange, monthly coffee hours hosted by various community groups, and an annual international festival that includes a talent and fashion show, nation exhibits, and food tasting.

**Intensive English Institute**—Established more than 25 years ago, [this institute](#) provides year-round seven-week sessions of intensive English instruction for non-native speakers with a secondary school degree. The program consists of a seven-level curriculum, offering instruction from basic communicative English to rigorous, native-like academic work, with each level providing courses in distinct language skills (writing, speaking, reading, listening, etc.).

At the same time, the institute promotes an integrative approach through its project-based curriculum, which blends learning in the classroom with engagement in the broader university and Muncie communities. This engagement also extends into the technological realm, with many faculty involved in developing digital textbooks, teaching in interactive learning spaces, and piloting blended learning techniques. These innovative approaches are especially well suited to the needs of international students, who must learn a host of cultural and pragmatic norms as part of the language learning and acculturation process.

Because this program predominately trains non-native speakers to pursue subsequent undergraduate or graduate work at an American university, the program largely emulates the kinds of experiences students can expect in an American university setting, including small discussion-based classes, close work with instructors, and individual advising. In addition to this main goal, the institute also provides customized curricula for group-sponsored programs, including English teacher training, academic and cultural orientation, and academic and business English. Through this role, the institute is involved in working with intensive English programs in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya to foster a more global community of best practice within the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

## **Educational Support**

A numbers of programs, centers, and support services on campus help Ball State students enhance their study and leadership skills, explore potential careers, and engage with other students, diverse cultures, and the local community. Examples include:

**Learning Center**—This center offers free peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and workshops covering a variety of academic issues. It also provides a scholarly preprofessional experience for undergraduate and graduate student employees and strives to impact the

extended university community through faculty development efforts, learning technologies, and outreach programs at other sites. An extensive list of the center's [goals and objectives](#) is provided on its website.

One service provided by the Learning Center is [supplemental instruction \(SI\)](#), which is available free of charge for various classes in the University Core Curriculum. This academic support program is designed for large lecture classes and/or classes with high failure and withdrawal rates. An SI leader—a student who has already taken the class and has been trained in academic assistance—attends the class with a student, takes notes, and assists in reading the material again. The SI leader also holds up to two voluntary study sessions every week during the semester and designs activities and handouts that will help the student learn the material. Beginning in 2012–13, the Learning Center extended its services to include online tutoring sessions for students taking online courses.

The Learning Center is used by all levels of students. During the [2010–11 academic year](#), 3,081 students attended 13,887 individual and small group tutoring sessions, and 1,982 students attended 10,258 supplemental instruction sessions. More than 34 percent of all fall 2010 matriculates used Learning Center services. In 2009–10, almost 22 percent of all students on campus and 42 percent of freshmen used the center. Tutoring that year totaled more than 16,500 contact hours.

The center's effectiveness is documented by [grade results](#): students using Learning Center services earn higher grade point averages (GPAs) than those who do not. In addition, more than 84 percent of all 2010–11 clients earned passing grades in the course for which they sought assistance, and more than 72 percent of the grades in courses for which students received tutoring were C or above.

The Learning Center has also received the following [national recognitions](#):

- 2010 National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA)/Frank L. Christ Outstanding Learning Center Award for a four-year college
- First in the nation to receive the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) certification for its tutoring services program
- One of only three tutoring programs in the country that has achieved recertification, valid from 2010 to 2017
- Certification from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)

**Career Center**—Through a variety of services and programs, [this center](#) provides personalized support for each student and graduate to develop a clear career objective, obtain relevant experience, and learn the skills necessary to conduct a successful professional job search. While students may seek individual advisement for their job search needs, special programs are regularly offered to assist students in preparing for and seeking employment. Programs include the Cardinal Job Fair, Job Search Series, Career Information Day, Teacher Fair, and Coffee and Careers. KEY Careers, a program that began during freshman orientation in 2011, provides career assessments, exploration, and research connecting majors to career options for new freshmen.

Nearly 7,000 students attended Career Center [workshops and presentations](#) during the 2011–12 academic year. In 2010–11, [internship opportunities](#) posted on Cardinal Career Link increased by more than 30 percent—marking the second year of double-digit growth—and about 300 employers recruited on campus, including Cisco, Zimmer, Hershey, and Disney.

**Writing Center**—Since 1966, this center has worked with students, faculty, and staff who need writing support. The [Writing Center](#) offers one-on-one appointments for feedback, answers quick questions by instant messaging, manages online writing resources, and builds custom workshops, programs, and presentations upon request. A significant number of the students who use this resource are freshmen, but upper-level undergraduates as well as graduate students also benefit. These students represent majors from all seven academic colleges on campus. The Writing Center has seen an increase in the [number of appointments scheduled](#) over the past several years, from 1,634 in 2001–02 to more than 2,600 in 2010–11.

**Counseling Center**—Striving to meet the psychological needs of the Ball State community, the [Counseling Center](#) assists students in reaching their educational goals and improves the overall quality of life. A number of professional services include individual and group counseling, consultation and outreach programming, institutional testing, and professional training for selected master's and predoctoral interns. During the 2010–11 academic year, the center [received continuing accreditation](#) for eight years by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), denoting that a board-evaluated and fully functioning counseling service is available within the Ball State community.

**Student Life Programs**—The [Office of Student Life](#) fosters leadership development and personal responsibility, making the Ball State community aware of learning opportunities and activities that challenge students to become socially connected, civically engaged, professionally prepared, culturally aware, and personally accountable. Additional opportunities for engagement and personal growth are provided through the Excellence in Leadership and Student Voluntary Services programs (see below), Greek life, and more than 380 student organizations. This office regularly evaluates student satisfaction with its programming and uses the data to update and revise programming options.

**Excellence in Leadership Program**—This [two-year development program](#) prepares students to assume leadership and service roles within the university and society. The program offers nearly 60 workshops each year plus community service projects and mentor groups for participants. Students may choose to earn 1 academic credit for each semester of participation through the Department of Educational Studies in the Teachers College. The program has continued to gain popularity among students since its establishment in 1992, when 32 students participated in it. EIL had a record 218 participants during the 2010–11 academic year and a [record high overall attendance](#) of 6,661 students in 2011–12.

**Student Voluntary Services**—Since its founding in 1965, [SVS](#) has sought to improve and sustain the quality of life on the Ball State campus and in the surrounding communities by promoting education, leadership, and community development through community service, service-learning, and social awareness. SVS collaborates with more than 130 nonprofit agencies and schools to provide opportunities for Ball State students to engage in their local community. Each year, [about 2,000 student volunteers](#) contribute more than 26,000 hours of

service to the Muncie and Delaware County communities. (*A photo gallery showing student [community service](#) activities is available online.*)

**Multicultural Center**—[This center](#) is a resource for the recruitment, retention, and enrichment of students of color and a reference center. The staff educates the campus community on issues regarding race and diversity, provides academic advising for six student organizations involving 165 students, and offers programs such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, One World Lecture Series, and Annual Awards Ceremony, all of which are open to the university and Muncie communities. The center also facilitates the Excel Summer Mentor program for American-born multicultural students.

Multicultural Center staff collaborated with academic offices, administrative departments, and student organizations on many of the programs provided. Multicultural student organizations—including the Black Student Association (BSA), Latino Student Union (LSU), Asian American Student Association (AASA), and Spectrum—provided 85 programs in [2011–12](#), compared with 60 programs in 2010–11. Attendance reached an all-time high of more than 4,823 participants, versus 4,400 in 2010–11. Noteworthy programs included Unity Week and pageant, BSA’s Step Afrika, AASA’s fashion show, LSU’s citizen’s workshop, and Spectrum’s high rollers gay prom.

**Student Center Programs**—Ball State’s [L.A. Pittenger Student Center](#) provides a variety of social and cultural events for students through the [University Program Board \(UPB\)](#) and the popular [Late Nite](#) program, which was started in 2001 to provide support and maintain a safe and entertaining environment for students. In 2011–12, various programs throughout the year attracted a [total attendance](#) of 65,907, an increase of 10.4 percent from the previous year, and an additional attendance of 29,290 at UPB events and programs, an increase of 13.8 percent.

## Health and Safety Support

Ball State also invests in the health, wellness, and safety of its students. Examples of support programs in these areas include:

**Student Recreation and Wellness Center**—This award-winning, [\\$40 million facility](#) opened in 2010 with 400,000 square feet of space for students to exercise and participate in a wide variety of recreation events, including an area for outdoor pursuits. (*A media gallery with photos showing the Student Recreation and Wellness Center and other [nonacademic buildings](#) is available online, along with a video about the [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#).*)

**Health Center**— Ambulatory medical services and patient education are available for current Ball State students at the [Amelia T. Wood Health Center](#) on campus. Health care providers at the center are employed by IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie. Clinical services are provided through four units that work together to support the physical and mental health of students: Urgent Care Clinic, Women’s Center, Pharmacy, and Physical Therapy. These units recorded 26,293 [visits with students](#) during the 2011–12 academic year.

**Health, Alcohol, and Drug Education**—[This office](#) provides campus programming and services on topics related to student health, including tobacco cessation, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, sexual health, and general health and safety education. The [Peer Health Educators](#) program is a “student-educating-students” initiative focused on healthy lifestyle

management for college students in the areas of alcohol, drugs, smoking prevention and cessation, nutrition, sexual health, stress management, and other topics related to health and wellness.

**Counseling Center**—[This resource](#) provides individual therapy, group therapy, and numerous outreach programs. Since the 2007–08 academic year, Counseling Center staff have provided, on average, more than 800 outreach programs per year. In 2011–12, the total number of students attending these programs increased to more than 31,000. The university's [Suicide Prevention and Tracking Protocol](#) was used in 167 individual interventions during the 2011–12 academic year.

**Victim Services**—[This office](#) provides outreach and violence prevention initiatives to improve students' education and awareness. Activities focus on three national awareness campaigns: Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, and Stalking Awareness Month in January. This office also provides individual service and referrals to victims of crime.

**Public Safety**—Ball State's [Department of Public Safety](#) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, the first law enforcement department on a college or university campus in Indiana to receive such accreditation. The department was [reaccredited](#) in March 2011. The University Police Department, which serves the campus and the surrounding community, responded to 16,452 [calls for service](#) in 2011–12, a decrease of 9 percent from the previous year. University police also completed 3,996 [hours of training](#) in 2011–12, which represents an average of 121 training hours per officer. Ball State surpasses the Law Enforcement Training Board mandate of 24 hours of in-service training per year for police officers.

A number of security measures provide a safe environment for Ball State students and the campus community, including emergency phones on campus and an emergency messaging system, the Motorist Assist Program and Charlie's Charter campus escort service, and restricted residence hall entry. The Department of Public Safety also provides annual classes in self-defense, sponsors a Citizens Police Academy, and provides consultation to various entities in the university community.

**Emergency Preparedness**—Ball State's Crisis Management Team meets monthly to ensure policies, procedures, and resources are available to address [campus emergencies](#). This team of faculty and staff communicates to the President's Cabinet via the vice president for student affairs. Annual tabletop exercises are conducted with the cabinet, and continued improvements have been made for emergency notification to individuals via text messaging, e-mail, the university website, sirens, and voice communication through the fire alarm systems in new and recently renovated buildings. All fire safety systems are inspected annually, and required drills are performed and monitored by a campus safety specialist.

### **Other Ongoing Support**

Throughout their time at Ball State, students benefit from various support services and programs that help resolve problems and conflicts, provide legal and financial assistance, and accommodate disabilities. Examples include:

**Student Rights and Community Standards**—[This office](#) supports student success by promoting behavior standards and other policies outlined in Ball State's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. In addition to implementing disciplinary procedures, the office administers absence notifications, grade appeal procedures, and a small emergency loan program for students.

**Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs**—This [staff member](#) helps students resolve concerns, problems, or conflicts involving university policies, procedures, and decisions. This office's services also include facilitating student withdrawals from the university and responding to complaints about sexual harassment.

**Student Legal Services**—[SLS](#) provides legal services to currently enrolled students and recognized student organizations through counseling, referrals, preventative education, and reference materials. SLS provided services to 794 students during the 2011–12 academic year. More students are seeking power of attorney as a result of academic departments sponsoring international travel. More students are also seeking assistance with landlord/tenant issues due to a close working relationship with our Residential Property Management Association.

Overall, students are satisfied with the services. For example, 89 percent of students who completed an assessment survey following their appointment with an attorney indicated they believed SLS services made it easier to pursue their education at Ball State.

**Scholarships and Financial Aid**—Ball State is committed to providing a [wide range of services](#) to students and their families who apply for financial assistance, as described earlier in this section. As Table 3.4 below indicates, the total amount of gift aid, loans, and work aid provided to students has more than doubled during a 10-year period, exceeding \$261 million for the 2010–11 academic year. Additionally, the percentage increase in gift aid (145.5 percent over the 10-year period) has exceeded the percentage increase in loans (139.3 percent) and work aid (51 percent). Growth in both total financial aid and in scholarship and grant aid has exceeded the increase in tuition for the past nine years.

**Table 3.4: Financial Aid Provided to Ball State Students**

| Academic Year | Gift Aid      | Loans         | Work Aid     | Total Amount  |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2010–11       | \$104,076,834 | \$139,928,036 | \$17,522,591 | \$261,527,461 |
| 2009–10       | \$93,018,242  | \$131,460,643 | \$17,802,491 | \$242,281,376 |
| 2008–09       | \$83,095,376  | \$114,793,235 | \$16,005,627 | \$213,894,238 |
| 2007–08       | \$77,182,271  | \$99,796,153  | \$16,050,192 | \$193,028,616 |
| 2006–07       | \$71,043,294  | \$99,387,509  | \$14,881,572 | \$185,312,375 |
| 2005–06       | \$62,300,515  | \$96,227,147  | \$14,070,256 | \$172,597,918 |
| 2004–05       | \$59,868,380  | \$89,739,501  | \$14,727,398 | \$164,335,279 |
| 2003–04       | \$56,959,597  | \$75,846,619  | \$13,651,492 | \$146,457,708 |
| 2002–03       | \$49,119,771  | \$71,830,986  | \$12,795,496 | \$133,746,253 |
| 2001–02       | \$42,407,852  | \$58,484,877  | \$11,600,555 | \$112,493,284 |



In addition to financial assistance, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid also offers a payment plan through the Office of Bursar and Loan Administration to help students and their families meet their financial obligations. Staff members are available to answer questions about the payment plan and other financial aid inquiries.

**Disability Services**—Formerly Disabled Student Development, [this office](#) assists with accommodations and auxiliary services to make Ball State physically, academically, and technologically accessible to students with disabilities. Staff serve as a liaison with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Ball State faculty and staff. The office provides auxiliary services such as life-equipped shuttle and adapted recreation programs, academic accommodations ranging from readers/scanners to taped and electronic books and note takers, and technical accommodations such as voice recognition, Braille, and tactile graphics. During the 2011–12 academic year, 637 students [received at least one accommodation](#) through this office. The number of wheelchair users on campus was 43, more than any other school in Indiana or the Mid-American Conference.

An innovative initiative focused on the academic and social success of students with disabilities is the [Faculty Mentorship Program](#), which provides individualized assistance in adjusting to the complexities of university life. In 2010, the [freshman-to-sophomore retention rate](#) for students with disabilities was 87 percent, an increase from the previous year's rate of 78 percent and higher than the university's 79.6 percent retention rate for all freshmen. Ball State also helps students persist to graduation by providing financial resources. Through the Myrna Jean Bush, Adrienne Paige Gilbert, and Walter LeMonde funds, the university awarded \$13,645 in [scholarships](#) to 25 students with disabilities during the 2011–12 academic year.

Ball State has a long history of supporting students with disabilities. In 2010, the university was named by disabilityfriendlycolleges.com as one of [75 colleges and universities](#) in the U.S. that go above and beyond the mandates of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Subcomponent 3.D.2.** The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Ball State provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the transition to college and ongoing academic needs of students, as both spheres are known to have an impact on student success, satisfaction, and retention. Support initiatives in these areas include programs that are open to all entering freshmen as well as programs and services targeted to subpopulations of students, specifically student-athletes and students with disclosed disabilities. The processes used to place entering students into courses and programs upon admission to the university are also described.

### **Learning and Study Strategies Inventory**

Ball State administers the [Learning and Study Strategies Inventory \(LASSI\)](#) assessment to all entering freshmen during the summer orientation program. By doing this on the first day



of orientation, the scores are available to students and academic advisors when they meet to schedule first-semester classes. LASSI assesses 10 factors related to learning and study strategies: attitude, motivation, time management, anxiety, concentration, information processing, selecting main ideas, study aids, self-testing, and test strategies. Specific areas of strengths and weaknesses can be discussed when students meet with their advisors, and appropriate suggestions for support services can be made.

## Early Start Program

Ball State recognizes the value of summer bridge programs as a way to provide opportunities for academic support and adjustment to college before the start of fall classes in the freshman year. One of these offerings, the Early Start Program, provides credit assigned during the fall semester under the course designation ID 101. This program is discussed in detail with other summer bridge programs under [Subcomponent 3.D.1.](#)

## ID 101 Courses

Two other courses carrying the ID 101 designation also help new students prepare for college and choose a major:

**ID 101: A Freshman Seminar for Undecided Students**—This [seven-week course](#) is arranged by the University College's major/minor coordinator for new students who are undecided about their major. Typically, two sections (with a cap of 30 students) are offered each fall semester to undecided students identified through academic advisors. Students earn a letter grade at the end of the course. Through individual assessment, instruction in decision making, and exposure to university and community resources, undecided students establish their preferences, explore majors and career options, and prepare a major/career exploration portfolio with the goal of deciding on a college major by the end of the first semester.

**ID 101: Transition to College**—This [five-week course](#) is designed as a transition-to-college/study skills class for underprepared students. It is taught by professional staff from the Office of Academic Advising. Depending on instructor availability, offerings of this course range from three to five sections in the fall semester and one to three sections in the spring semester. Through personal reflection, class activities, and exposure to university resources, students discover their learning style and how to develop and use the skills necessary to be successful in college and life. The course increases student awareness of self as a learner, builds skills and confidence to engage with other students and the instructor, increases new student awareness of the campus resources, and provides an opportunity to explore majors.

Started in spring 2009, the course was targeted to freshmen on probation who were part of the Partnership for Academic Commitment to Excellence (PACE) program, which is discussed more fully under [Subcomponent 3.D.3.](#) Students are placed on academic probation when their cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0. The goal was to encourage these students to reflect on their fall semester performance and learn new academic skills. Feedback was very positive, and the university decided to also offer the course in the fall semester to reduce the number of freshmen on probation. Spring semester sections are still primarily for freshmen on academic probation, but other students not on probation are able to join if space permits.

## Living-Learning Communities

Ball State also provides learning support through the student residence halls on campus. [Living-learning communities \(LLCs\)](#) offer participants the chance to live with other students pursuing the same intended area of study, thus encouraging interaction both inside and outside the classroom. Faculty members from academic departments, schools, and colleges are involved to facilitate study sessions and advise students. Designated LLCs include Advanced Transfer, Business, Communication, Criminal Justice, Design, Discover Ball State, Early and Elementary Education, Emerging Media, Honors, International, Languages, and Nursing. The SURF (Students Uniting to Remain Free) LLC is focused on wellness/lifestyle choices.

These communities are part of the university's nationally recognized programs to provide a supportive environment for new students. Most freshmen with an identified major are assigned to the corresponding learning community, while returning students may request an LLC when renewing their housing contracts.

## Specialized Support

Two subpopulations of Ball State students are targeted for specialized learning support:

**Student-Athletes**—Admission decisions for student-athletes are made by Ball State's Office of Admissions. Special exceptions may be granted for student-athletes who do not meet the university's admissions standards. Such decisions are reached by the admissions office based on the applicant's talents and ability to succeed academically. The university's Academic Support Services for Student-Athletes programs address the unique needs of these students through workshops, study tables, supervised study sessions, tutoring, review of academic work, and grade monitoring.

**Students with Disabilities**—Ball State's [Office of Disability Services](#) (formerly Disabled Student Development) coordinates services and accommodations for students with disabilities, which students may disclose at any point in their enrollment. After a verification process, students become eligible for specialized services such as testing accommodations, classroom adaptations, labs devoted solely to adapted computer technology, access to print in alternative formats, class note takers, priority class scheduling, sign language interpreters, faculty mentors, accessible parking and transportation, adapted/accessible campus housing, and adapted physical education and recreation programs.

## Student Placement

The Office of Admissions is the institutional gatekeeper for accepting students for undergraduate study at Ball State (the Graduate School fulfills this role for applicants at the graduate level). [Admission Requirements for Undergraduate Domestic Admissions](#) outlines the standards for undergraduate admission for new students. New applicants are evaluated on the following criteria: strength of their high school curriculum (including their senior year) and successful completion of four years of English, three years of college preparatory mathematics (Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry), three years of science (two with a lab), and three years of social studies.

Academic performance is measured by grades in the above courses or GED scores, curricular patterns or grade trends in academic courses, and SAT or ACT scores. Ball State calculates an academic grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale based only on college preparatory and academic course work completed. Foreign language study is strongly recommended but not required, and participation in extracurricular activities such as sports, performing groups, student government, student publications, and civic and charitable organizations is considered.

Special placement considerations include:

**English**—Freshman placement in [English writing courses](#) is determined by the English Placement Criteria adopted in October 2006. Entering students are placed in the introductory course English 103: English Composition 1 unless their scores on standardized admission tests and their high school GPA fall in a range that places them in a lower introductory course, English 101: Fundamentals of English Composition. Students with strong scores are placed in advanced introductory courses, English 104: English Composition 2 or English 114: Honors English Composition. Students in the highest score range are exempt from taking any writing courses.

**Mathematics**—Most freshmen take a computer-based mathematics placement test during their orientation program. Students may be exempt from the exam if they have earned an SAT score of 750 or higher or an ACT score of 32 or higher, or if their intended major requires only MATHS 125 Mathematics and Its Applications. For math placement testing, Ball State uses the COMPASS System by ACT Inc., which assesses a student's aptitude and recommends placement into specific Ball State math courses.

Students who have taken calculus or statistics in high school may be able to earn college credit by passing a department-specific exam (credit by exam) in those areas or submitting Advanced Placement test scores. Changes in [mathematics placement test standards](#) are detailed in a report.

**Modern Languages**—Freshmen are placed in foreign language courses mainly by examination. Students may earn credit for previous language study through either national Advanced Placement tests or departmentally administered placement tests. Students with prior foreign language study who wish to continue studying their language at Ball State may take departmentally administered placement tests during the summer orientation program or at any time during the academic year. These tests help determine the appropriate class placement. Students who have completed more than two years of a foreign language in high school may not normally enroll for credit in the 100-level course of that language except in Chinese, German, and Japanese or with permission of the department chair.

Students placed in any higher-level language course will receive credit for the courses they test out of if they earn grades of C or higher in the advanced course. To receive placement credit, students must have taken the placement test and have a record of their score on file. International students who have completed high school studies in their native countries are not eligible for credit in the first- or second-year levels of their native languages. The number of [students placed in undergraduate courses](#) in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish is reported by the department for each year from 2008 to 2011.

**Honors College**—Freshman placement in Ball State's Honors College program is considered upon admission to the university for students who indicate an interest in being admitted to the program. Transfer students and students already enrolled at the university follow other application procedures. For new students, admission to the Honors College requires an Indiana Academic Honors Diploma or its out-of-state equivalent and a high school GPA of 3.6 (on a 4.0 scale) in college preparatory and academic courses. Other factors that may be considered are unusual strength of the high school curriculum—including the number of honors, advanced placement (AP), and international baccalaureate (IB) courses—as well as strong standardized test scores (SAT and/or ACT), extracurricular activities and leadership experiences (academic and nonacademic), and one or more letters of recommendation

**Business Honors**—The [Miller Business Honors Program](#) is a four-year, cohort-based academic and scholarship program in Ball State's Miller College of Business that provides a differentiated curriculum and developmental programming focused on academic, professional, networking, and social growth. This program, launched in 2008, accepts up to 24 freshmen each year. Through faculty review of a comprehensive online application, standardized test scores, and GPAs, approximately 10 students are selected for the Honors Program. Approximately 14 other students are chosen for the [Miller Scholars Program](#) using the same review process plus letters of recommendation and an in-person interview. These students also receive a merit-based financial aid package.

Miller Business Honors Program students take the same courses as other students in the college, except the pre-business and major core courses are offered as limited-enrollment, differentiated honors sections. These sections regularly subscribe to national norms for honors courses as they are considered either accelerated and/or enhanced. All students in the honors program are granted direct admission to the college rather than earning a certain number of credits first.

**Art**—Placement of students in Ball State's [undergraduate art programs](#) is determined by a School of Art admissions committee, which reviews applicants' academic records from high school transcripts, their SAT and/or ACT composite scores, and their portfolio of 10–15 works demonstrating studio art skills and other art-related abilities. Applicants for the [graduate program](#) must have an undergraduate degree in art and a GPA in art courses of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale. They must also pass a review by the department's graduate committee.

**Music**—The School of Music's [placement policies and procedures](#) apply to all entering freshmen and undergraduate transfer students who desire to major in music. Admission is based upon an audition on a primary instrument with appropriate faculty from that area plus a theory exam. Transfer students must be tested individually in both sight singing and written theory before they can be placed. Students may be admitted on probationary status when their music performance level is below the required major standing level. Students who enter at this level must be accepted into the program by the end of their first year of study.

**Theatre and Dance**—Students are placed in the [Department of Theatre and Dance's programs](#) following an audition that is required for admission to the acting, musical theatre, and dance majors. Auditions are not required for initial enrollment in the theatrical studies, design and technology, theatre education, and production (directing/stage management) options unless students apply for scholarships. Students who are accepted by the university

but not admitted to the acting or musical theatre programs may declare a theatre major with a theatrical studies option and reaudition after completing at least one semester on campus.

**Architecture and Planning**—Admitted freshmen interested in majors offered by the [College of Architecture and Planning](#) must complete a supplemental application to be considered for admission to the college. The admissions committee evaluates the applicant's academic index score, SAT or ACT scores, a required essay, the supplemental application, and additional optional materials such as a portfolio or letters of recommendation. Regardless of their intended major, all first-year students in the college follow a common curriculum and declare their major in the second year.

### **Subcomponent 3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.**

Ball State offers comprehensive and personal [academic advising](#) for all students. This includes unique programs for freshmen, honors students, and student-athletes as well as faculty advising for upper-level undergraduates and department-specific advising for graduate students. In particular, academic advising helps transfer, nontraditional, and undecided students navigate various complexities in their unique circumstances.

[Student satisfaction ratings](#) for Ball State's academic advising programs from 2004 to 2011 averaged 3.43 on a 4-point scale. The survey evaluates 24 aspects of student satisfaction, including how easy the advisor is to talk with, the advisor's knowledge of other services and major areas, and how productive meetings are with the advisor.

## **Freshman Advising**

To meet the unique needs of new students, Ball State's [freshman academic advisors](#) offer personalized, one-on-one support in areas such as course selection, choice of major, understanding the University Core Curriculum, introduction to their living-learning community, and referrals to other campus services. All freshmen are required to attend a preregistration advising session before meeting with their academic advisor or planning their next semester's schedule. In this session, students receive their advising portfolio and valuable information on how to prepare for class scheduling and the academic advising appointment. A comprehensive [Advising Handbook](#) is published annually and distributed to new students through the orientation program and academic advising meetings.

Students admitted to the Honors College are assigned to freshman advisors who specialize in the honors curriculum. After completing 30 credit hours, honors students are assigned to advisors in their major area of study while maintaining continued access to Honors College staff. New Honors College freshmen take the HONRS 100 seminar in the fall. This is a peer mentoring program from an Honors College upperclassman that provides an orientation to the Honors College.

## **Upper-Level Advising**

Once students [complete 30 or more credit hours](#) and declare a major, they are assigned to a faculty advisor in their major department. Students who declare more than one major can select their preferred department. Seven upper-level [Advising Centers](#) on campus are specialized

for individual departments and programs. These centers facilitate the assignment of faculty advisors and assist students with graduation applications, checklists, and verification; transfer course equivalencies; major/minor changes, additions, and deletions; and course request and registration instructions.

Faculty advisors help students understand the requirements for their major, monitor their academic progress, prepare long-range plans for completing degree requirements, and plan for graduate school and careers. Students with 30 credit hours who have not chosen a major remain with their advisor in the Freshman Advising Center.

### **Student-Athlete Advising**

All freshman [student-athletes](#) are assigned to an academic advisor who specializes in working with student-athletes, helping them comply with NCAA and Mid-American Conference (MAC) rules and regulations. Upon completing 30 credit hours, student-athletes are assigned to a faculty advisor in their declared major. They meet with their faculty advisor each semester to monitor degree progress and also meet with the coordinator of the Athlete Advising Center for all scheduling needs and to ensure continued compliance with NCAA and MAC guidelines.

The Student-Athlete Support Services program in the University College is committed to the academic success of student-athletes, providing individual monitoring and academic counseling, study table activities, workshops, enrichment study skills, coordination with tutoring, and other services.

### **Graduate Advising**

Academic advising for graduate students at Ball State is very similar to faculty advising with upper-level undergraduates. Each department defines the duties of its graduate program director independently based on the unit's needs.

### **Special Advising**

Two student segments at Ball State have special advising considerations:

**Transfer Students**—A key resource for [transfer students](#) is the Transfer Indiana website, which is a free service for anyone interested in learning about how courses transfer between participating colleges and universities, the degree programs offered, and the transfer process. Transfer students with 30 or more credit hours meet with an advising coordinator for evaluation in the Advising Resource Center.

**Nontraditional Students**—Ball State defines [nontraditional students](#) as those entering college for the first time at age 23 or older. Advising programs and services are tailored to help these students make the transition to college life. Because many nontraditional students access university programs online, Ball State has developed an online orientation and advising presence that addresses not only the transition to college life and successful academic performance, but also the particular issues associated with distance education. It is important that online, nontraditional students develop a sense of engagement and community that promotes retention, persistence, and program completion.



## Additional Services

Meeting the advising needs of a diverse student body is accomplished through multiple special services, programs, and resources, including Partnership for Academic Commitment to Excellence (PACE), Housing and Residence Life, and Career Assessment and Exploration Services for Freshmen.

**Partnership for Academic Commitment to Excellence—**[PACE](#) is a support services network administered by academic advisors. It was [originally designed](#) to assist freshmen on probation after one semester at Ball State in order to keep them academically eligible. New features and activities are introduced to better meet the needs of today's students. For example, the Student Panel on Success was added in January 2003, diverse workshops are held periodically, and the program was expanded in fall 2012 to include additional freshmen on probation whether continuing, reenrolling, or reinstated.

The program's primary feature continues to be increased student interaction with academic advisors. Students are required to meet with their advisor at least three times during the semester. Each appointment is specific in timing and nature. The usage and impact of the PACE program has been noted over the past several years:

- From 2001 to 2011, an average of 14 percent of fall semester matriculating students were [eligible for or participated in the program](#). An average of 31 percent of those students were off probation at the end of the spring term.
- From the [PACE student survey](#) in 2011, the two most common reasons students thought they were on probation were they didn't spend enough time studying and they had trouble managing their time. The top three things identified to help them become better students were making more time for studying, becoming more motivated/applying themselves more, and developing better study skills.
- Data from spring 2011 indicate the [mean cumulative grade point average \(GPA\)](#) of students in the PACE program increased by 25 percent, from 1.397 to 1.748. By comparison, the mean cumulative GPA of nonparticipants increased by only 10 percent, from 1.235 to 1.356. The difference in performance for the PACE semester was even more profound: participants earned a mean semester GPA of 1.981 versus 1.351 for nonparticipants.

**Midterm Deficiencies—**Academic advisors and housing staff play a significant role in helping freshmen raise their semester grades after early detection from a midterm deficiency. First-year students in danger of receiving a semester grade of C- or lower in a 100- or 200-level course are [sent a notice](#) to that effect during the eighth week of the semester. This midterm evaluation provides advance warning of poor course performance and is also sent to the student's academic advisor and residence hall director. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to respond appropriately to this information.

Advisors work with all freshmen who receive midterm deficiencies to develop a plan for improvement. To supplement this, staff from the Office of Housing and Residence Life (HRL) make at least two attempts to contact these students living in the residence halls. In spring 2010, housing staff tried to contact 1,491 such students. Almost 36 percent of the students reached agreed to receive HRL-provided support and referrals. Students are usually referred



to the Learning Center for tutoring or supplemental instruction or to their advisors or professors. Some students notified of midterm deficiencies are not interested in HRL referrals or support, or they cannot be contacted. Initial analysis suggests that students who had discussions with housing staff returned for the spring semester at a higher rate than those who had no contact.

**Career Assessment and Exploration Services for Freshmen**—This [relatively new program](#) provides first-year students with opportunities for career exploration through self- and career assessment information plus reflection and career planning activities. The program involves a three-step process:

- **Step 1:** Identification of vocationally at-risk freshmen. All new students complete the My Vocational Situation survey during the summer orientation program.
- **Step 2:** Knowledge + Experience + You (KEY) seminars. These engage freshmen in high-impact learning experiences to complete a personal career assessment, participate in group interpretation of the assessments, and discuss the results to encourage reflection.
- **Step 3:** National Career Development Month. In November, staff from Ball State's Career Center and Counseling Center plan and implement special activities in the residence halls and for Commuter Ambassadors groups.

Through coordinated career assessment and exploration, freshmen can identify their values, skills, interests, and personality traits and engage in career research to obtain accurate and helpful information to make sound career decisions. This type of program also leads students to improved career planning and increased use of the Career Center.

### **Advising Summary**

Overall, academic advising at Ball State offers something for all segments of the student body and is woven into the educational experience from orientation through graduation. A significant part of the advising program is geared toward first-time students to make sure they get started on the path to success. Visible and accessible programs are in place for students who need help academically or with career exploration. Advising for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students is very specific and targeted in their fields of study to help them meet the requirements for graduation and find success in their chosen careers.

**Subcomponent 3.D.4.** The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

With a campuswide wireless network and robust digital environment, Ball State is home to state-of-the-art resources, facilities, and infrastructure that provide students with the experiences they need to succeed on campus and after graduation. Examples of these supportive resources are found in the university's libraries, art museum, and each academic college.

## University Libraries

Ball State's [University Libraries](#) include Bracken Library in the heart of the campus and two branches that specialize in architecture and science-health science. Bracken Library contains 1,088,825 total titles, including books, microforms, audiovisual materials, software, government publication maps, musical scores, archival records, and other information sources, excluding titles that are part of subscriptions.

The recent evolution of Bracken Library reflects the fundamental changes that have taken place in the university as a whole to meet the needs of students, faculty, and Indiana citizens in the 21st century. In fact, the library anticipated some of these needs, which have been addressed across the campus through Ball State's 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 strategic plans.

In 2002, the newly appointed dean of University Libraries held conversations with students and faculty that revealed a gap between the libraries' existing programs and students' needs and expectations. These expectations included convenient access to librarians, a comfortable and friendly atmosphere, increased access to print and digital collections, new technology and software, and space for collaborative and individual learning, research, and study.

To close this gap, library staff focused and aligned programs, services, and collections over the next several years to provide students with a high degree of "customer satisfaction" in a changing environment. They created a growth agenda by making strategic choices that reset the direction of University Libraries. The vision focused on identifying and incorporating new technologies and library services, providing uniformly gracious services, maximizing online access to information resources, and building an infrastructure to transition the libraries to a predominantly digital environment.

University Libraries created a globalized setting for learning and research through infrastructure enhancements that facilitated and promoted access to services and collections via mobile devices, social media, and collaborative platforms. Other innovations included more public computers with easy access to productivity software, expanded collection access both on and off campus, browser-based integrated searching through a single discovery tool, and GPS-style navigation to locate materials within the libraries. Over the past 10 years, these elements and others have contributed significantly to University Libraries' success in supporting research, learning, and classroom instruction.

To achieve growth amid challenging economic times, the libraries committed to doing more with existing resources through organizational development, including reexamining activities and services and repurposing personnel vacancies. These efforts positioned Bracken Library to become one of the most heavily used facilities on campus. The increased use is attributable to convenient access to librarians who help with research projects and class assignments, extensive print and digital collections, excellent technology and software, and a variety of spaces for collaborative and individual learning.

Unique facilities added to the library since 2004 include:

- [Helen B. and Martin D. Schwartz Special Collections and Digital Complex](#), which houses an interactive learning center with a Microsoft Surface computer,

digital learning pods with high-powered computers, a digital archives viewing room, and an international newsroom with a digital newsstand that receives television broadcasts from around the world.

- [Tech Center](#), which offers services such as the Technology HelpDesk and Desktop Support, Hardware Repair, TechTime, the Technology Store, Instructional Classroom Support, and Equipment and Projectionist Services as well as the Concierge Desk and Faculty Apps Café.
- [Bookmark Café](#), which developed another important dimension of the libraries' role as a place for creative student engagement. By fostering group interactivity in a relaxed setting where food and conversation are a welcome part of the library experience, the café expanded the libraries' function as a social, learning, and gathering space. University Libraries also provides space for student-produced artwork, musical presentations, and plays—exposing students to the performing arts—as well as group study rooms and meeting spaces.

Librarians and paraprofessional personnel play a key role in the libraries' success by providing access to a rich array of collections and services for information discovery, investigation, and exploration. In response to student requests, Bracken Library is open 122.5 hours per week, including Sunday through Thursday until 3 a.m. These hours rank Ball State high among U.S. libraries that maintain late hours.

A significant increase in the number of students and others passing through the library turnstiles each day attests to University Libraries' success as a destination. The daily turnstile count is now about 6,600 during the academic semesters, and the annual count has grown from about 807,600 in 2002–03 to more than 1.6 million in 2011–12, an increase of 98 percent. Beyond these counts, the transformation of University Libraries from a repository to a learning destination can be witnessed in the activity of students, working individually and in groups and with print, audio, and digital resources to challenge themselves and the boundaries of the 21st century. *(A photo gallery showing [Bracken Library](#) facilities is available online.)*

## David Owsley Museum of Art

Ball State's historic [David Owsley Museum of Art](#) is a valuable research, learning, and teaching resource for students and instructors across the campus, with more than 11,000 works of art in its well-rounded collection. The museum is completing another major renovation that will increase its exhibition space by about 50 percent and expand the display of its collection of art from Asia, Africa, Mesoamerica, and the Pacific Islands.

Like University Libraries, the Owsley Museum has transformed itself and its programming to embrace the broader academic community. Today it is home to students of history, philosophy, language, culture, and literature as much as to students of art. Chemistry students have even used the collection to understand how works are dated scientifically. The museum is also a destination for the local community in east central Indiana.

In March 2010, the museum received its fourth consecutive accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM), placing it among a small minority of AAM members and an even smaller number of university affiliated museums that carry this designation. *(A photo gallery showing the Owsley Museum and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

## College of Applied Sciences and Technology

The School of Nursing's [Simulation and Information Technology Center](#) is a comprehensive learning facility featuring both physical and virtual resources for hands-on student experiences. Located on three floors in the Cooper Science Complex, this 8,100-square-foot center provides state-of-the-art medical equipment, lifelike animated adult and child manikins, and centralized control rooms for running simulations. *(A photo gallery showing the Nursing Simulation Center and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

The [Child Study Center](#), under the auspices of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, provides high-quality, participatory infant/toddler and preschool laboratory experiences for more than 175 students enrolled in child development courses each year. The center is also used as an observation site for other classes and a research site for doctoral students and/or faculty. It provides a rich environment for collaborative research among several disciplines.

In addition, hospitality and food management students manage, prepare, and serve gourmet cuisine to the public at [Allegre Restaurant](#) in the Applied Technology Building.

## College of Architecture and Planning

Ball State's architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation programs share the [Architecture Building](#), which includes a five-level glass-walled atrium that offers settings for exhibits, special events, and informal meetings among students and faculty in a pleasant lounge atmosphere of plants and comfortable furniture. Most activity takes place in 25 studios where students have their own areas for design and graphics courses and projects. Students work with 3-D modeling and animation software, video filming and editing equipment, and live interactive media in their studios. The addition of 62-inch interactive plasma screens for design review and critique puts Ball State ahead of most other schools and large architecture firms.

Several labs in the building support experiential learning in the college. Students design and construct prototypes of building and furniture components in the [Digital Fabrication Lab](#) and create interactive stereoscopic 3-D design presentations in the [Digital Simulation Lab](#). The [Preservation Lab](#) provides technology and equipment for analyzing and assessing materials from historic buildings. *(A photo gallery showing the Digital Fabrication and Simulation Labs and other of [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

## Miller College of Business

The new [A. Umit Taftali Center for Capital Markets and Investing](#) in the Whiting Business Building provides a technology-rich classroom and laboratory that simulates a real-world financial environment like Wall Street. This dynamic space includes computer stations with the latest analytical software, large-screen TVs carrying business news networks and the Bloomberg Professional news feed, and electronic ticker tape data boards scrolling stock prices. Students become familiar with relevant computer trading applications and gain hands-on experience in the workings of financial markets, financial modeling, and valuation. Classes using this facility include Finance Investments and Student Managed Investment

Fund, Statistics, and Marketing Research. *(A photo gallery showing the Taftali Center and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

Another valuable learning resource in this college is the Networking and Security Lab, in which business students learn how to protect corporate networks from security breaches by playing the role of would-be hackers.

## **College of Communication, Information, and Media**

A crowning facility on campus, the [David Letterman Communication and Media Building](#) provides technologically advanced recording studios, control rooms, and editing suites for telecommunications students to produce innovative content for emerging media. In making award-winning films and video, students work with the latest high-definition cameras on the market and the same kind of equipment found in top production houses and film studios in Hollywood, New York, and London. *(A media gallery showing the Letterman Building and other [academic buildings](#) is available online, along with a video about the [Letterman Building](#).)*

Students also have access to resources and equipment managed by the [University Teleplex](#), including a production truck, two studio and control rooms, and one of the world's largest and most sophisticated virtual production studios, where digitally generated sets provide realistic environments for live newscasts, performances, and other programs. *(A photo gallery showing the virtual studios and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

Visual imaging, graphics, integrated media, and information technology labs in the [Art and Journalism Building](#) and [Ball Communication Building](#) support students' work in journalism, telecommunications, and the [Center for Information and Communication Sciences](#). These buildings also provide space for student media organizations, including *The Ball State Daily News*, Ball Bearings, Ball Points, WCRD Radio, NewsLink Indiana, Ball State Sports Link, Cardinal Communications, and the American Advertising Federation. A new [Holden Strategic Communications Center and Unified Media Lab](#) to teach collaborative journalism will be completed during the 2013–14 academic year. *(An online media gallery includes a short video about the [Unified Media Lab](#).)*

## **College of Fine Arts**

Ball State's acoustically tunable, 600-seat [Sursa Performance Hall](#) is a premier concert venue for the School of Music with a world-class pipe organ. In the adjoining [Music Instruction Building](#), the [music media production studios](#) feature high-end equipment for composing, recording, mixing and mastering, computer music, web technology, and digital media. Sursa Hall networks to these production facilities so students can digitally record concerts or produce live broadcasts and webcasts. Nearby, theatre and dance students perform in the 410-seat [University Theatre](#), which is equipped with sophisticated lighting and sound systems for mainstage productions, while the Strother and Cave theatres in the Arts and Communications Building provide intimate venues for studio and experimental shows. *(A photo gallery showing the Music Instruction Building, Sursa Hall, and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

In the visual arts, students studying a variety of two- and three-dimensional art forms work in spacious studios and state-of-the-art animation and photography labs in the [Art and Journalism Building](#), which also includes the [Atrium Gallery](#) exhibition space. Across the campus, the new

[Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass](#) houses the university's new art glass major and includes hot and cold shops, a project preparation and critique room, and an exhibition gallery. *(A media gallery showing the Art and Journalism Building, Glick Center, and other [academic buildings](#) is available online, along with a video about the [Glick Center](#).)*

## College of Sciences and Humanities

Among 20 academic departments spanning the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural, mathematical, and computer sciences are a variety of laboratories, workshops, and field experiences that encourage students to creatively solve problems and test ideas using the latest technologies under direct faculty mentorship. Active learning pedagogies involve students in the theory and practice of each major and minor.

Among the science departments, a culture of sharing promotes novel applications of sophisticated equipment and interdisciplinary collaboration among students and faculty. For example, in the [Micro-Imaging Laboratory](#) which houses confocal, transmission electron, and scanning electron microscopes—neuroscientists exploring brain structures introduced the capabilities of the transmission electron microscope to experimental nanoscientists, who now use it to measure the properties of carbon nanotubes. Similarly, two ion chromatographs are located in different departments so that one could be permanently set up for analyzing anions and the other for cations. Their usage by faculty and students in biology, chemistry, and geological sciences strengthened the foundation for the new interdisciplinary environmental science PhD program. Likewise, the Beowulf parallel computing facility is essential to and widely used by faculty and students conducting research in astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, mathematics, physics, and computer science.

Ball State's [Field Station and Environmental Education Center](#) manages six properties on campus and across Delaware County that reflect the forest, successional meadows, tall grass prairies, and wetlands that characterize Indiana's natural environment. The new Dr. Joe and Alice Rinard Greenhouse in [Christy Woods](#) will house the [Wheeler-Thanhauser Orchid Collection](#), the largest university collection of this diverse family in the world. Together these properties facilitate faculty and student scholarship in conservation biology, ecology, environmental science, geology, and natural resources.

The [Ball State Planetarium](#) in the Cooper Science Complex supports one of the nation's largest undergraduate astronomy programs. Capable of simulating the night sky at any place on Earth at any time of the year, the planetarium serves the educational needs of both Ball State students and school groups from local communities. [Planetarium usage reports](#) detail the activities of this facility. To further enhance this resource, the university will construct a larger, more capable planetarium that features a state-of-the-art star projector and integrated full-dome video projection system. The new facility, to be named the Charles W. Brown Planetarium, will be the largest and most sophisticated of its kind in Indiana and one of the most advanced in the country, joining the ranks of the Hayden Planetarium in New York City and the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. *(A photo gallery showing renderings of the new planetarium and other [proposed facilities](#) is available online.)*

Other facilities such as the [Applied Anthropology Laboratories](#) assist students and faculty in analyzing artifacts from archaeological digs. The [clinics of the Department of Speech Pathology](#)



[and Audiology](#) give undergraduate and graduate students required practical experience for licensure while providing more than 1,000 clients from Delaware and surrounding counties much needed, affordable access to speech language pathologists and audiologists. And in the newly renovated North Quad Building, the World Languages and Culture Laboratory uses three digital televisions to connect students to satellite feeds from around the world. The lab enhances listening and speaking skills among students studying Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and Chinese and promotes a deeper appreciation of the cultures where those languages are used. *(A photo gallery showing North Quad and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

## Teachers College

[Burris Laboratory School](#) on the Ball State campus provides valuable teaching and learning experiences for the university's education majors while steadfastly guiding K–12 learners toward their full potential. Established by the Teachers College, Burris provides an environment for developing, demonstrating, and disseminating effective and innovative teaching practices while offering an exemplary preservice clinical program for teaching majors, accommodating research, and operating an educationally sound K–12 instructional program. This mission is based on the belief that all students can learn and will be empowered to develop their fullest intellectual, social, artistic, and physical potential. Burris has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Newsweek* as one of the nation's best high schools.

Teaching majors also receive important [technological support](#) through the iCare Corner and iStudio in the Teachers College. [iCare Corner](#) is a convenient walk-in service where students can take their laptops to resolve technical issues. The [iStudio](#) media lab supports research and development of emerging technologies for teaching and learning, produces digital content for and with faculty and students, incorporates emerging technologies into teacher education using a studio pedagogy and outreach technologies for field experiences, and facilitates immersive learning experiences that implement teaching and learning technologies in schools and communities.

This year, the 10-story Teachers College Building is undergoing renovations that will make it more conducive to student learning. Improvements include new lighting and upgrades to heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing, electrical, and communications systems as well as better life and fire safety systems. *(A photo gallery showing the Teachers College facilities and other [academic buildings](#) is available online.)*

### **Subcomponent 3.D.5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.**

Throughout their academic careers, Ball State students receive guidance and support outside the classroom to make effective use of research and information resources. A variety of units and services on campus help students expand and improve their abilities in this area, including the following.

## University Libraries

Ball State's libraries provide a variety of [instructional and information services](#) students. Examples include:



- **Instructional services** promote [information literacy](#), which is defined as the ability to determine what information is needed, access it, evaluate it critically, and incorporate, use, and understand the information in context. In addition to the standard offerings, faculty are able to request an [instruction session](#) tailored to the particular needs of their students. Each academic year, between 833 and 1,046 instruction sessions are provided for [more than 15,000 participants](#).
- **Information services** teach [research skills](#) and coach users in applying these skills to new situations. Library staff are available to assist on site as well as by e-mail, live chat, or text messaging through [“Ask a Librarian”](#) services. Students needing more extensive advice or consultation on research topics can also schedule appointments with a library staff member. An average [30,000 reference-related questions](#) are handled by the library staff annually.

A fuller discussion of the University Libraries is provided under [Subcomponent 3.D.4.](#)

### **Unified Technology Support**

UTS provides [basic support](#) that enables students to use the technology tools required to access and use information effectively. Students can call the HelpDesk for hardware and software assistance, and [TechTime](#) provides hands-on help if required. In addition, an extensive library of how-to instructional video clips is always available on numerous topics through [TechClips](#). For more advanced skills and knowledge in technological tools, Emerging Technology Support provided [media software training and certification](#) for many years until those responsibilities were recently transferred to iLearn. In addition to several course offerings on specific software, Ball State has partnered with [lynda.com](#) to provide training on a variety of software applications.

### **Research Integrity**

When students choose to research topics involving the use of human or animal subjects or biosafety, Ball State’s [Office of Research Integrity \(ORI\)](#) has the federally required review boards available for ethical practices. The office has undergone an evolution within the past 10 years from one which addressed primarily human (IRB), animal (IACUC), and biosafety (IBC) ethical concerns to a unit addressing these areas plus issues involving significant financial conflict of interest and conflict of commitment (SFCI/COC), radiation safety (RSC), and the responsible conduct of research (RCR). This growth has been fueled by changing research integrity expectations from the federal government and the research ethics industry. All Ball State students completing research must be mentored by a faculty advisor, or the faculty advisor must attest to the student’s abilities to carry out an independent research project.

### **Research and Academic Effectiveness**

Research design and statistical analysis services are available to students from the [Office of Research and Academic Effectiveness](#), formerly known as Research Design and Analysis. In 2004, about 57 percent of research projects involved a student as the [principal investigator](#). By 2008, [student research projects](#) comprised approximately 52 percent of the clients served but decreased to about 37 percent by 2010 as the unit underwent staffing reductions and reorganization due to the economic challenges facing the state and the university. In November

2011, this unit moved from the Office of Information Technology to the Office of the Associate Provost and funding was restored.

## **Research Literacy**

Ball State faculty are primarily responsible for ensuring that students have the content and theoretical grounding to engage in productive scholarship appropriate to their degree level. Engaging their curiosity and creativity in disciplined investigations is challenging in a world overrun with easily accessible data. Students need guidance to discern among the data and commentary—those that reflect systematic investigations resulting in the advancement of knowledge and not merely collections of opinion and convenient data.

In this context, the university's faculty are acutely aware that any definition of academic rigor must include skills in research literacy. This understanding is enshrined in the [University Core Curriculum](#). The transformations of that curriculum codify the steps from an initial encounter with the environment through the creation to the application of new knowledge. That understanding also undergirds the curricula of each department and interdisciplinary program. The results of this concern with research literacy can be seen in the research products our students have completed. A fuller discussion, with examples, is provided under [Subcomponent 3.B.5](#).

## **Summary: Core Component 3.D.**

Ball State has a well-defined support network to facilitate the intellectual growth and social maturation of its students in a safe and healthy environment. Beginning well before matriculation, prospective students are introduced to a welcoming yet challenging institution. The university does not hide its high expectations, but the community value of collaboration is emphasized. As a learning community, faculty work in partnership with their students, and that undergirds the institution's commitment to excellence in the myriad of services that help students succeed.

We recognize that our students come from diverse backgrounds, that they espouse different beliefs, that their families and home communities are not equally well resourced, that they are not equally healthy, mature or well-prepared for the challenges ahead. We have accepted the responsibility to "level the playing field," as much as possible, with opportunities to address inequalities constructively with the advice and guidance of well-trained professionals.

The university's human assets can rely on a campus filled with accessible physical assets—Bracken Library, the Learning Center, the Writing Center, the Health Center, the Counseling Center, Advising Centers, the David Owsley Museum of Art, theatres, and recreational facilities in addition to state-of-the-art classrooms, clinics, laboratories, studios, performance venues, and the latest technology.

Ball State also assists students in accessing these assets responsibly. Just as we must conduct ourselves with integrity of purpose, so must our students in their learning, their research and creative endeavors, and their social and community interactions. We are one community, responsible for one another, and we try to model that for our students.

## Core Component 3.E.

### The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

Ball State University supports its claim of making the educational experience of students enriching. This section includes discussion of how cocurricular and certain special curricular programs fit the institution's mission and contribute to students' educational experience.

**Subcomponent 3.E.1.** Cocurricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

**Subcomponent 3.E.2.** The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

A hallmark of a Ball State education—and cornerstone of the university's mission and strategic plans—is the hands-on, real-world [immersive learning](#) experiences beyond the classroom that enrich and transform our students' academic careers. A key component of these creative, collaborative, interdisciplinary projects is that they have a lasting impact on a community partner such as a business, agency, or nonprofit organization. Immersive learning is discussed in more detail under [Criterion 1, Subcomponent 1.D.1.](#)

### Building Better Communities

One of the best examples of immersive learning and community engagement is the [Building Better Communities \(BBC\) Fellows](#) program. This immersive learning experience assists Ball State's BBC initiative with its mission to use university expertise to enhance community, economic, and business development throughout Indiana. For example, two student teams partnered with the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program in Delaware County to increase its volunteer base. Other BBC Fellows [past projects](#) are listed on Ball State's website.

### Student Research

Also enhancing the educational experience in a variety of disciplines are meaningful research opportunities starting early in students' academic careers, giving them valuable experience and an advantage over peers at larger institutions. Students work side by side with faculty mentors and become familiar with state-of-the-art equipment used by professionals. For example, the Department of Chemistry provides an [intensive summer research program](#)--one of the largest undergraduate research programs in chemistry in the nation—even for freshmen and sophomores. *(A media gallery with a video and photos showing student research in [science, technology, engineering, and math \(STEM\)](#) fields is available online.)*

While it is possible for student projects to receive external funding, Ball State's [Aspire Internal Grants Program](#) provides university funding for research and creative projects specifically targeted to students. Categories include graduate creative arts, graduate research, undergraduate creative arts, undergraduate research, and travel support for professional

meetings staff. Of the 207 total internal grants awarded for the 2011–12 academic year, graduate students received 71 grants and undergraduates received 18 grants. The number of funded projects has ranged from 161 to 219 each academic year since 2002–03.

## Cocurricular Programs

Ball State offers a large number and variety of cocurricular programs that are congruent with the mission of the university. The [mission statement](#) of the Division of Student Affairs provides guidance for developing and implementing programs and activities that enhance student learning, provide opportunities for personal growth and development and civic engagement, and nurture appreciation of diversity, civic responsibility, and the cultivation of leaders.

Examples of out-of-class programs that build upon the curricular experience include [living-learning communities](#), [service learning](#), the [leadership minor](#) through the Excellence in Leadership Program, and comprehensive [customer service training](#) developed and administered through the Career Center.

Four [learning outcomes](#) are assessed through the Division of Student Affairs:

- Students will demonstrate competence in life skills gained through participation in programs such as living-learning communities, career exploration opportunities, student employment, student organizations, and other cocurricular experiences that support academic excellence.
- Students will demonstrate multicultural competence and active citizenship through participation in multicultural organizations, community service projects, campus diversity programs, and civic engagement opportunities.
- Students will demonstrate leadership competence through involvement in residence halls, Greek letter organizations, student organizations, and other cocurricular experiences that promote engagement with the university.
- Students will demonstrate behaviors consistent with institutional values, including academic integrity, civility, personal wellness, and respect for others and their property.

In 2011, [several assessment projects](#) involving 1,594 students were conducted by eight departments in the Division of Student Affairs, investigating what students learned from participating in programs and activities that were provided. Additional assessments were conducted by departments within the Division of Student Affairs in 2011–12.

**Competence in Life Skills**—Individual growth and development of students through participation in student clubs and campus activities continues to be a strength of Ball State. The university has more than 380 active student organizations and a vital residence life program housing approximately 34 percent of the student body. Students also benefit from programs such as the [Online Career Center Assessment](#) and participation in [Counseling Services](#).

Examples of cocurricular experiences in which student participation builds life skills include:

- **Student Organizations**—[Campus organizations](#) run by students include sports clubs, academic honorary societies, fraternity and sororities, and affinity groups.

Faculty and professional staff advisors work with each of the recognized student organizations. Involvement in student organizations on campus provides an avenue for developing skills related to leadership, organization, time management, teamwork, communication, financial management, critical thinking, and stress management.

- **Living-Learning Communities**—About a third of all students in the residence halls participate in one of our 13 [living-learning communities \(LLCs\)](#). Intentional structure and programming provide students with opportunities for staff and faculty engagement that positively affect student retention, persistence, and academic success and open communication for career exploration. [Assessment data](#) indicate LLC students participate more regularly in study groups, have more contact with faculty members, and have a higher fall semester grade point average and fall-to-spring retention rate than students not living in an LLC.
- **Summer Bridge Programs**—Pre-enrollment [summer programs](#) are an innovative approach to helping new students adjust to the university and be more successful in their freshman year. Seven separate programs were available for the fall 2012 entering class. These programs are described in [Subcomponent 3.D.1](#). In summer/fall 2012, [518 students participated](#) in summer bridge programs, and data indicate their [retention rate](#) from the fall to spring semesters was 82.4 percent, compared with 79.6 percent for freshmen who did not participate.
- **Campus Employment**—Various student jobs on campus provide meaningful opportunities to enhance life skills while earning some income. [Nearly 4,800 students](#) are employed in offices and departments throughout the university, providing a mutually beneficial relationship. Many of these jobs have important responsibilities and provide excellent experience, from being a resident assistant in student housing or a lab assistant for a professor to serving as a tutor in the Learning Center or a note taker for the Office of Disability Services (formerly Disabled Student Development).

**Multicultural Competence and Citizenship**—Ball State is committed to diversity and multiculturalism on campus. One performance metric of the 2007–2012 strategic plan involved increasing the percentage of students from underrepresented groups to 15 percent of total undergraduate enrollment. While that goal has yet to be reached, the [percentage rose](#) from 8.1 percent in 2006–07 to 11.9 percent in 2011–12. Among freshmen, the numbers reached 13.8 percent. The 2012–2017 strategic plan continues the university’s commitment to diversity with the aim to [increase underrepresented minority populations](#) to 17 percent of the freshman class. Sustained efforts to increase the diversity of the campus community are required.

Examples of cocurricular programs that foster multicultural awareness and active citizenship include the following:

- **Multicultural Center**—A component of [this center’s mission](#) is to offer collaborative cultural programs for the campus community. To that end, Multicultural Center staff collaborated with academic departments, administrative offices, and student organizations on 31 of its 55 programs for the [2011–12 academic year](#). Several other student organizations on campus also provide support and programs for students of various racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds.

- **Institutional Diversity**—Headed by an assistant provost, the [Office of Institutional Diversity \(OID\)](#) helps to foster a safe and welcoming environment on campus for all. The university's equal opportunity and affirmative action policies use a broad definition of diversity referring to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, national origin, ancestry, age, and citizenship. OID is not only committed to programming for students, but it also supports several faculty development programs, including the Diversity Associates Program, Developing Pedagogies to Enhance Excellence Seminar, and Diversity Seminars, which encourage faculty to explore the relevance of diversity in classes.
- **International Recruitment**—To provide a more global view to everyone on campus, the university has increased efforts to recruit students from countries other than the United States. The 2007–2012 strategic plan included a goal of achieving 5 percent of total enrollment coming from international origins. Although this ambitious goal was not achieved, [international enrollment](#) increased to 3.4 percent from the baseline of 2.4 percent. The university's interest in internationalizing the student body continues, as evidenced by the 2012–2017 strategic plan goal of 1,000 international students.
- **Study Abroad Programs**—Students returning from study-abroad experiences contribute a new and different international voice within the campus community. Recognizing this, Ball State encourages student participation in a variety of study-abroad programs. Since the university's last accreditation in 2004, study-abroad enrollment has remained fairly stable at more than 600 students per year.
- **Student Voluntary Services**—During the [2011–12 academic year](#), 1,935 Ball State students volunteered their time and talents to needs on campus and in the local community through 1,795 placements sponsored by Student Voluntary Services. These students' total volunteer service increased by 1,808 hours from the previous year to a total of 27,365 hours. *(A photo gallery showing student [community service](#) activities is available online.)*

**Leadership Competence and Engagement**—Ball State provides numerous opportunities for students to develop, enhance, and practice their leadership skills on and off campus. Examples of cocurricular programs that foster student leadership and engagement with the university include:

- **Excellence in Leadership**—This [two-year development program](#) for emerging campus leaders incorporates three strategies: weekly workshops, keynote speakers, and retreats and conferences. In the 2011–12 academic year, 37 workshops and events involved 6,661 participants. In addition, the university's leadership studies minor increased from 246 credits generated in 2009–10 to 492 credits in 2010–11.
- **Residence Hall Community**—Student organizations in the [residence halls](#) are also involved in leadership and service. Notable programs include the Student Action Team's 24 Hours of Service, with 250 volunteers at 20 locations in the Muncie community in 2010–11; the National Residence Hall Honorary's Coins for Kids, which raised \$7,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation in 2012; The Chicken Launch to raise funds for the Muncie Mission; and numerous social and educational programs in each residential unit.



- **Greek Community**—In 2011–12, [fraternities and sororities](#) on campus sponsored 74 educational programs with an attendance of 10,350 individuals, participated in four leadership conferences and retreats involving 106 members, donated \$71,584 to charitable organizations, and provided 28,453 hours of service to the community, an increase of 8,000 hours over the previous year. Additionally, 98.6 percent of fraternity and sorority members participated in community service activities.

**Behavior Reflecting Institutional Values**—Ball State students are given high expectations for their personal behavior and their responsibilities in the campus community. The preamble of the [Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#) for students states:

“Students of the university have an obligation to fulfill the responsibilities incumbent upon all citizens, as well as the responsibilities of their particular roles within the academic community. All students share the obligation to respect:

The fundamental rights of others as citizens;

The rights of others based upon the nature of the educational process;

The rights of the institution; and

The rights of students to fair and equitable procedures determining when and upon whom penalties for violation of campus regulations should be imposed.”

Through participation in groups such as the [Residence Hall Association](#), [Black Student Association](#), and [Student Government Association](#), students are involved in the university’s governance structure and have opportunities to provide input into important issues on campus. Many opportunities are also available for civic engagement through student organizations, service learning experiences, and campus and community volunteer programs.

### **Summary: Core Component 3.E.**

Consistent with its community values, Ball State has worked relentlessly to remove artificial barriers that separate the curricular from the cocurricular. Collaboration serves the interests of students best. As this component—and the criterion—demonstrates, reinforcing common values and common expectations and establishing high standards for intellectual performance and personal integrity involve the efforts of many units across the campus. Faculty and staff are united in their pursuit of student success and support each other’s efforts, programs, and expertise.

## **Criterion Four—Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

To ensure the rigor and integrity of the curricula that faculty deliver to undergraduate and graduate students, Ball State University embraces the assessment of student learning and the evaluation of supporting activities. Student learning outcomes flow from the intentional design of curricula. Outcomes are carefully measured, often using direct and indirect measurements. The analysis of the resulting data leads to thoughtful discussions about courses and curricula and change—where change is needed.

Our approach is intentional, and the conclusions are part of accreditations and periodic program reviews, in addition to annual reporting from the departments to the colleges to the provost. This section provides much detail about how Ball State plans and executes assessment and evaluation. It will show how curricular and cocurricular units work collaboratively to create the most productive environments for student learning within a diverse student body. It will also show how these efforts connect with the university's goals for retention, persistence, and timely graduation.

### **Core Component 4.A.**

#### **The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.**

Consistent with its vision and mission, Ball State University grants doctoral, specialist, master's, bachelor's, and associate degrees through its seven academic colleges. All of the university's colleges, departments, and schools demonstrate responsibility for the quality of their educational programs. The following summary describes exemplary efforts as well as general explanations of how quality is exhibited at Ball State through such dimensions as program review and accreditation, credit evaluation policies, and the success of graduates.

**Subcomponent 4.A.1.** The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

**Subcomponent 4.A.5.** The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Institutional planning and decision making at Ball State are amply supported by data obtained from continuous assessment by the university and individual units. The [Office of Institutional Effectiveness \(OIE\)](#) is a fully staffed, internally funded unit that addresses the growing and evolving demands of both internal and external constituents for evidence regarding student outcomes and administrative decision making. Ball State uses multiple methods to systematically collect student feedback. Well-established procedures enable the university

to undertake program-based, department-based, and university-wide assessment, and these procedures continue to be revised and refined to serve and strengthen the institution's planning efforts.

## Unit Accreditation

A major aspect of Ball State's ongoing assessment activity involves external reviews of academic programs and departments. Most of the university's 48 academic units are periodically reviewed for [accreditation by national or regional organizations](#). Formal records of [unit accreditation reviews](#) are available in the online resource room. A fuller discussion of unit accreditation is provided under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.A.1](#).

## Program Reviews

In past years, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) also required an internal and external review of all academic programs every seven years, which ensured units not subject to national or regional accreditation still underwent formal outside review. ICHE has since made this review voluntary, but Ball State has maintained a [cycle of academic unit reviews](#) and has integrated the process with an annual evaluation of progress toward the goals and objectives outlined in the university's current strategic plan. [Guidelines for academic program reviews](#) and [external reviewers](#) specify the [type of information](#) to be provided. These guidelines have evolved over the past 10 years to provide the most useful information to the units, reviewers, and administration. Copies of [reports from past reviews](#) since 2004 are available [for viewing](#).

**Subcomponent 4.A.2.** The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

**Subcomponent 4.A.3.** The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

All of Ball State's academic units have established clear procedures and protocols to ensure the appropriate evaluation of credit granted to undergraduates who transfer in and to graduate students who wish to have courses from other institutions applied toward Ball State degrees. These unit procedures and protocols comply with university policies related to credit evaluation.

## Undergraduate Transfer

Ball State's policies and procedures governing [undergraduate transfer credit](#) are defined in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. Undergraduate applicants with previous college experience follow the same application procedures as students with no postsecondary experience. Admission decisions are based on the applicants' academic records at all educational institutions attended. The following core policies determine a transfer student's admissibility:

- Transfer applicants must be in good academic standing and eligible to return immediately to the institution they last attended.
- Applicants must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for all transferable course work attempted.

- Remedial and vocational credits are not transferable, as well as courses from institutions that are not regionally accredited (i.e., Middle States Association, North Central Association, New England Association, Northwest Association, Southern Association, Western Association). However, transcripts from all such institutions attended are still required.
- Students who apply for admission to Ball State while enrolled at another college or university may be admitted with incomplete transcripts based on their cumulative GPA at their current institution. Admission granted under these circumstances will be withdrawn if the student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.0.

Along with Indiana's other state-assisted colleges and universities, Ball State collaborates with the [Transfer Indiana](#) office in maintaining the Indiana Core Transfer Library, an electronic resource that lists more than 80 common undergraduate courses and how they transfer among all participating institutions. This course-by-course equivalency library does not have program-specific information, but it does provide prospective students with baseline course equivalencies by course and by institution.

Only course credit can be transferred to Ball State; grades do not transfer. All admitted transfer students meet with a professional academic advisor before their initial enrollment. Official Ball State course equivalents are established by the academic advisor in consultation with the appropriate academic department. Department chairs or their designees approve all courses transferred to a program that are not covered by articulation agreements. Credits associated with the Indiana Core Transfer Library are automatically accepted without departmental approval. Students can go on Ball State's website to see if their [classes will transfer](#).

An example from the School of Nursing illustrates how Ball State departments evaluate credit from other universities. Students admitted for a baccalaureate program in nursing submit official transcripts of completed undergraduate course work for evaluation according to policies in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and the [Baccalaureate Nursing Program Handbook](#). An academic advisor evaluates transfer credits for relevance to the nursing program and University Core Curriculum requirements. The School of Nursing evaluates all transfer credits for relevance to the baccalaureate nursing program on the basis of didactic and clinical content and hours.

Transfer of credits for nursing courses from other baccalaureate nursing programs is considered on an individual basis according to a review of academic records and course syllabi. A student who wants to transfer nursing course credits from another program must submit the course descriptions, syllabi, content information, and related clinical information to the associate director of the baccalaureate nursing program for review. Following this review, the student receives a letter documenting the status of the course materials submitted for transfer credit.

## **Graduate Transfer**

Policies and procedures governing [graduate transfer credit](#) are outlined in the university's *Graduate Catalog*. Students who want to transfer graduate work completed at another institution for credit toward their Ball State degrees must ensure the work satisfies specific Graduate School policies, such as completion at a regionally accredited institution. The Graduate School does not give credit for experiential learning. Transfer hours cannot be used toward a master's

degree at Ball State if they have been used toward a previous degree. Graduate School admissions personnel review potential transfer hours and indicate to the relevant academic department when transfer hours can be used toward a degree. Academic programs have discretion to allow transfer courses to count toward program requirements or electives.

Graduate students pursuing a master's degree requiring 44 or fewer credit hours may transfer up to 9 hours. If the master's degree requires 45 or more credit hours, students may transfer up to 15 hours. Students seeking a specialist degree may transfer up to 6 hours. Doctoral students must complete 48 of the required 90 credit hours at Ball State. Individual departments may have more restrictive rules that take precedence. Other transfer rules include:

- Students must complete their degree's research requirement at Ball State.
- Credit hours for courses with credit/no-credit or pass/fail options cannot be transferred unless the academic department approves.
- Credit hours for correspondence courses cannot be transferred.
- All work for master's and specialist degrees must be completed in a six-year time limit. All work for a doctoral degree must be completed within seven years, with a mechanism for "certifying" out-of-date classes by showing the student has been engaged professionally in the field.

Graduate students also meet with department representatives who determine the relationship of previous credit to a current course of study. For international students, the [Rinker Center for International Programs](#) provides initial screening and recommends transferable credits, but individual departments determine which courses are accepted in their programs.

**Subcomponent 4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.**

Ball State's academic departments maintain authority over prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, and access to learning resources. This authority is exercised through continuously monitoring the curriculum and making changes as needed based on annual reviews of course evaluations, specialized accreditation criteria and external program reviews, and adherence to professional guidelines. Each unit initiates curricular additions and changes through departmental committees.

Each academic college at Ball State also has a curriculum committee to review and act upon changes proposed by departments. The [Graduate Education Committee \(GEC\)](#) and [Undergraduate Education Committee \(UEC\)](#) of the Faculty Council, one of three units of the University Senate, are charged with reviewing, evaluating, and revising policies and programs at their respective levels. Their voting membership includes faculty and students.

Examples from two different colleges illustrate authority over these assessment dimensions at the academic unit level:

**Speech Pathology and Audiology**—In the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, baccalaureate and master's curriculum committees have authority over program curricula. These committees and other faculty maintain authority over prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning. They review annually the results of student learning outcome measurements, continued adequacy of current student learning outcomes, and course content.

Course and curriculum changes are based on Council of Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Pathology (CAA) accreditation criteria, student and faculty feedback, and aggregate results of the Praxis II Exam in Speech Pathology and Audiology, administered by the Educational Testing Service for the American Speech and Hearing Association. Depending on the state, this examination is used for state licensure or national certification.

**Theatre and Dance**—Of the 115 courses listed in Ball State's catalog for the Department of Theatre and Dance, approximately 75 percent have prerequisites ranging from previous course work to department chair approval. Prerequisites are maintained and carefully enforced for all relevant courses within each of the department's seven program options. Sequential learning of skill sets is managed to ensure progress from general knowledge of a topic to a more refined level of expertise. Rare exceptions to prerequisite requirements must be approved by the primary departmental advisor.

Rigor of courses and expectations regarding student learning are maintained by individual faculty members and monitored by the department's curriculum committee. Master syllabi are created and maintained for all courses. The assumption underlying course and curriculum expectations is that these expectations align with the talent and motivation of the students admitted for study. Students applying to Ball State who indicate a potential major in the department complete a supplementary application and select an audition or interview date and location.

## **Course Rigor**

Ball State accepts responsibility for providing students with a rigorous education, and toward that end, a University Senate task force made up of faculty from each college plus student representatives was formed in January 2012. The Academic Rigor Task Force completed its work and submitted [its report](#) to the Senate early in January 2013 semester. The study group collected data on grade inflation, students' academic engagement, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, the new core curriculum, immersive learning, expectations of external accreditors, and other relevant issues. Among its recommendations, the task force suggested that the university:

- develop longitudinal studies to assess the impact of existing programs and initiatives on student engagement, critical thinking, and problem solving
- define the topic of academic rigor broadly
- require the establishment of departmental program goals to address discipline-related ends to which faculty and students should strive



In response, the university provost [charged academic deans](#) with the responsibility to assess and plan for rigor in each of their respective colleges.

## Faculty Qualifications

Departments uniformly work across all programs to ensure faculty are academically and experientially qualified to accomplish the mission, goals, and expected student outcomes. Search committees maintain high standards and are committed to recruiting and retaining faculty with nationally recognized credentials. A fuller discussion of faculty qualifications is provided under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.C.2.](#)

Ball State's policies governing graduate faculty status mandate that faculty quality remain consistently high. Faculty cannot teach graduate courses unless they hold at least associate graduate faculty status. Special status is required for regular and doctoral endorsement faculty, as outlined in the university's [Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook](#). To retain their status, graduate faculty must undergo regular review of their recent scholarly accomplishments. Ball State's Graduate Education Committee recently subjected all departmental graduate faculty policies to a thorough review.

## Learning Resources

Two examples illustrate how Ball State maintains and exercises authority over access to learning resources:

**Libraries**—University Libraries provide access to learning resources for all students. The main facility, Bracken Library, is open more than 120 hours weekly, and students can access online course reserves, full-text databases, and other resources 24/7. Professional librarians provide research assistance both in person and remotely via chat, telephone, and text messaging. With authentication through a proxy server, students taking classes remotely have full access to online resources and may have print resources mailed to them upon request. A fuller discussion of the university's library resources is provided under [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.D.4.](#) (*A photo gallery of [Bracken Library's facilities](#) is available online.*)

**Technology**—Ball State's information and communication technologies infrastructure also controls access to learning resources through policies and systems such as the following:

- User accounts are automatically generated once the users' affiliation with the university is verified, and these accounts are terminated when the individuals leave the university.
- Users access all learning resources with the same sign-on.
- Firewalls and intrusion detection systems are in place to protect systems and data.
- Data governance procedures allow access for only authorized individuals, and these procedures are reviewed regularly.
- Secure wireless and mobile access to learning resources is provided.

These systems are managed through a coordinated approach to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations as well as interoperability practices.

**Online Education**—Responsibility for academic rigor and faculty qualifications reside with the departments and colleges offering online courses. Content for online courses follows the same master syllabus as on-campus courses. Similarly, the contribution of online sections to the achievement of programmatic learning outcomes is no different from on-campus sections.

Departments and colleges collaborate with the [Division of Online and Distance Education \(DODE\)](#) and, in particular, [iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute](#) to ensure pedagogies appropriate to digital delivery platforms have been incorporated into online and blended sections. Department faculty collaborate on course design with iLearn's instructional designers, who apply their expertise in technology and digital pedagogy. DODE also assists in the administration of Ball State's online presence through advertising, maintaining records of online offerings, and creating business models to ensure affordable access by students and sufficient, quality faculty to teach.

### **Dual-Credit Program**

Ball State's dual-credit [College Transition Program](#) began in 2002 with a mission to foster partnerships between the university and high schools. The program promotes college preparation for high school juniors and seniors by assuring quality instruction and offering students an experience that is otherwise unattainable before they enter college. Dual-credit courses are available through two delivery methods:

- on-site distance education courses taught in high schools by qualified high school instructors certified by university academic departments
- online distance courses taught by Ball State faculty

Ball State currently partners with 18 Indiana high schools, primarily in east central Indiana, and had more than 1,000 juniors and seniors enrolled in online and on-site courses during both the 2010–11 and 2011–12 academic years. Through the dual-credit program, students enroll in more than 50 on-site courses and 30 online courses. They take the courses with other high school students rather than with Ball State undergraduates. The average class size is 12 students.

The [Division of Online and Distance Education](#) is the central contact point between the university's academic departments and high schools wishing to affiliate with our College Transition Program. Two staff members—a full-time assistant director of online and distance education and a full-time program coordinator—administer these relationships. The program is growing, and administrators are working with academic departments and high schools to expand the number of courses offered and the number of high school teachers certified to teach on-site courses.

**Academic Quality**—To ensure the academic integrity of the College Transition Program, the [policies and procedures](#) established for it conform to the standards of the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), of which Ball State is a member. All high school instructors who participate in the program must have the same credentials as Ball State

adjunct faculty. In January 2014, program administrators plan to submit an application to become accredited by NACEP.

Ball State is also listed as a preferred provider of dual-credit courses in Indiana. The Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) created the preferred providers list in December 2011 for high schools seeking quality postsecondary partnerships for dual-credit programs. ICHE compiled and approved the list after reviewing dual-credit programs statewide. This list includes all Indiana colleges and universities that are accredited by NACEP or that submitted review materials to the Indiana Dual Credit Review Subcommittee for approval.

**Course Equivalence**—High school teachers participating in Ball State’s dual-credit program use the same course materials that university faculty use, and they conduct courses using the same standards as on-campus courses. In addition, Ball State faculty members serve as liaisons to the high schools. These faculty liaisons—along with department chairs and college deans—review and approve applications from high school instructors. Faculty liaisons also coordinate orientation and professional development sessions for high school instructors who plan to teach in the dual-credit program. These liaisons visit high schools to observe dual-credit classes, and they answer questions from high school instructors via phone or e-mail.

The NACEP accreditation body requires that faculty liaisons conduct an annual visit to schools, which is what most Ball State academic departments do. However, the Department of English has taken the requirement a step further as its liaison often conducts two visits per year.

An example from the Department of English illustrates how an academic unit determines the equivalence between on-campus courses and dual-credit courses taught in high schools. The English department has a dedicated faculty member for evaluating these classes. The director of the Writing Program reviews all applications and reapplications for instructors in the dual-credit program. Each instructor must meet minimum requirements for credentials and submit teaching materials that align with the goals of the [Writing Program](#) and the [University Core Curriculum \(UCC-21\)](#). Dual-credit instructors are mentored via a departmental liaison and are observed twice during the academic year. The instructors are required to follow all course policies that regular Ball State Writing Program classes follow for textbook selection, assignments, grading, student attendance, and student evaluations.

**Subcomponent 4.A.6.** The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).

Ball State uses multiple methods at the unit, university, state, and national levels to evaluate the success of its graduates. Academic departments vary in the amount of data they collect. Some units (e.g., anthropology, geography, and mathematical sciences) maintain current records of employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs. Other departments acknowledge the need for further information and are partnering with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

(OIE) to improve the data stream. In addition to alumni surveys, OIE employs data from the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System (WIS) and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to assist in tracking students after graduation. The university will also expand its postgraduation data acquisition efforts through a closer partnership between academic departments and the Ball State Alumni Association, among other initiatives.

## Departmental Data

Four examples from different colleges illustrate departments' use of surveys and other data sources to ensure degree or certificate programs accomplish their purposes:

- **Nursing**—In the College of Applied Sciences and Technology, the School of Nursing uses program outcome data and graduation rates along with indirect measures such as student exit, alumni, and employer surveys to promote ongoing undergraduate and graduate program improvements. Pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) have been above the national mean (95.97 percent in 2012, versus the national rate of 90.34 percent), as required by the Indiana State Board of Nursing. Nurse practitioner (NP) certification pass rates approach or exceed internal benchmarks (about 85 percent for adult NP, and nearly 100 percent for family NP). Respondents to the exit and alumni surveys report they are employed, and employer satisfaction is consistently high.
- **Business**—All departments in the Miller College of Business consult with business advisory boards one to three times per year to ensure students' preparation includes the skills necessary for employment in the relevant business specialty areas.
- **Journalism**—In the College of Communication, Information, and Media, the Department of Journalism uses alumni advisory boards to critique its curriculum and to ensure its programs prepare students effectively for advanced study or employment.
- **Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning**—The College of Architecture and Planning and each department within it have advisory boards comprising alumni and professionals who advise, guide, and support the programs and provide connections to the industry.

The use of outside input will spread throughout the university under Ball State's 2012–2017 strategic plan, which asserts that “every college and professional program will have an external advisory council” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Goal 4, Objective 2, PI 95, p. 17*).

## Institutional Surveys

Ball State's [Office of Institutional Effectiveness \(OIE\)](#) administers a university-wide senior survey sent to all graduating students. This survey, first used in December 2011, asks graduates about their experiences at Ball State, their satisfaction with various aspects of their enrollment, their educational and personal growth, and their current/planned employment and further education. The results of the [most recent senior survey](#) for the 2011–12 academic year are available on the Ball State website.

OIE also administers alumni surveys to measure recent graduates' perceptions of their experience at Ball State, including how well the university prepared them for work and further

study. The [2012 alumni survey](#) focused on alumni who graduated one and five years prior, or in academic years 2010–11 and 2006–07. Results of these surveys include:

- After five years, 83 percent of the 2006–07 graduates were employed full-time, 7 percent were employed part-time, 2 percent had some type of student employment, and 7 percent were not employed. Of those not employed, 38 percent could not find employment, 22 percent had other reasons, 28 percent were raising a family, and 6 percent were pursuing further education.
- After one year, 63 percent of the 2010–11 graduates were employed full-time, 14 percent were employed part-time, 11 percent had some type of student employment, and 11 percent were not employed. Of those not employed, 51 percent could not find employment, 34 percent were pursuing further education, 10 percent had other reasons, 3 percent were raising a family, and 3 percent reported recently being laid off.
- Of the alumni employed full-time five years after graduation, 73 percent were working in their major or in a field related to their major. After one year, 76 percent were employed in their major or in a related field.
- Of the graduates employed full-time after five years, 87 percent said that they were very satisfied or satisfied with their current employment. After one year, 80 percent were very satisfied or satisfied with their employment.
- After five years, 75 percent of graduates were pursuing or planning to pursue further education. After one year, this figure was 81 percent.

OIE has expanded its use of alumni surveys to include summer baccalaureate graduates. Separate surveys cover students who graduated one year ago and five years ago, and both surveys ask about their current employment and further education. The one-year alumni survey asks about graduates' satisfaction with various programs, services, and experiences at Ball State, while the five-year survey asks whether what the students learned at Ball State has helped them in their chosen professions.

OIE also conducts a [graduate student exit survey](#), and a graduate student alumni survey will be developed and regularly administered in the future.

## **Scholarships/Fellowships**

Another indicator of graduates' success is the number of scholarships and fellowships they receive. Over the past decade, about 75 Ball State students have won [major national and international scholarships](#), including eight Goldwater and seven Udall recipients. Since 2010, three students were finalists for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship—the first finalists in Ball State's history—and another student became the university's second-ever Truman Scholar. A running list of [past recipients](#) of major national and international scholarships is maintained on the Honors College website.

## **Internship Participation**

High rates of participation in internships also indicate student success. From [2004 to 2012](#), Ball State granted [internship credit](#) to 8,241 students. Their experiences enabled them to apply relevant knowledge and skills in the content areas of their specializations. Each year, for

example, the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences places more than 120 students in internships; the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology places between 90 and 100; and the Department of Social Work places between 60 and 65, excluding students whose classes incorporate fieldwork but are not primarily internships.

Many other Ball State students participate in noncredit internships, although details about these experiences rely on survey responses or reports from employers and students. In addition, Ball State's [Career Center](#) collects information on students and alumni who participate in on-campus job interviews. Employers also visit the campus for job fairs and often return to Muncie for follow-up interviews. The Career Center makes every effort to verify the number of job offers and acceptances that result.

## **National Data Sources**

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Student Tracker system is being used by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to report on the number of Ball State baccalaureate graduates who reenroll for graduate and professional school at other universities across the country and the number of these who subsequently graduate. NSC results were recently obtained for the past five years of Ball State baccalaureate graduates, and a [report is available](#). Information on earlier cohorts is also being collected and will be submitted to NSC.

## **Summary: Core Component 4.A.**

The evidence shows that all colleges, departments, and schools at Ball State demonstrate responsibility for the quality of their educational programs. The university has consistently maintained specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes and a process of regular external reviews for other units. Since the Indiana Commission for Higher Education policy regarding regular internal and external review of all academic programs is now voluntary, Ball State's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and academic departments—under the supervision of the provost and the academic deans—are maintaining a cycle of unit reviews to ensure program effectiveness for student learning and to promote continuous improvement throughout the university.

Other initiatives related to educational quality include:

- **Technology Support**—Ball State is deploying institution-wide software systems and emerging technologies to promote educational quality and continuous improvement. The new campuswide Banner data system, part of the university's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiative (described under [Core Component 4.C.](#)), was introduced in 2012 to help academic units maintain and exercise authority over course prerequisites. New Blackboard modules, including Blackboard Outcomes and Blackboard Analytics, will facilitate monitoring the connections between course assignments and specific curriculum goals and the evaluation of student learning.
- **Academic Rigor**—The university accepts responsibility for providing a rigorous education to all of its students. With the completion of the academic rigor task force report and its delivery to the University Senate, the colleges and departments, under the leadership of the provost, will assume responsibility for developing specific recommendations and implementing them. That process is already under way.



## **Core Component 4.B.**

### **The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.**

Ball State University recognizes assessment as a strategy for measuring, understanding, and improving student learning, having as its goal a higher-quality education. Academic departments devote considerable effort to gathering evidence of student learning. Without exception, all colleges, departments, and schools at Ball State engage in programmatic assessment of student learning and consider it an essential way to identify areas for growth and improvement. Academic departments and schools identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities their programs are designed to instill in students, determine assessment measures, and collect and examine assessment data.

Each year, every department reports its assessment results to its college dean, and numerous examples demonstrate that departments take effective action on the results. The following information elaborates on this evidence and cites some exemplary efforts to address this criterion.

**Subcomponent 4.B.1.** The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

**Subcomponent 4.B.2.** The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and cocurricular programs.

Ball State's 2012–2017 strategic plan states the university is “focused on learning outcomes.” All academic departments have specific, clearly stated [student learning outcomes](#) that are assessed regularly and used to suggest curriculum and pedagogical changes.

The assessment program of every academic unit at Ball State includes at least one direct measure of student learning that demonstrates explicitly how well students have acquired knowledge, work-related skills, or abilities targeted by the department or a specific learning experience. Direct measures include:

- comprehensive written and oral examinations
- standardized tests (e.g., [Educational Testing Service Major Field Exam](#))
- licensing examinations
- faculty evaluation of student portfolios
- faculty juries (e.g., [School of Music](#))
- performance artifacts

- business plans
- evaluations of students by practicum and internship supervisors, outside professionals, and community partners

In addition, indirect measures of learning ask students to reflect on what they have learned and experienced. These include student ratings of program quality and student self-assessment, focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews. Not all units use all of these direct and indirect measures.

In smaller departments, assessment data are typically collected from every student in every course each semester. In large departments that may enroll thousands of students in dozens of sections each semester, assessment data may cover only a subset of courses in a given year and be obtained through random sampling rather than collected from every student.

## Core Values

Some academic units, such as the three departments in the College of Architecture and Planning (CAP), display a core set of beliefs espoused by their programs. CAP calls these the [TIBs \(This I Believe\)](#):

- We believe in the power of the studio.
- We believe in learning without borders.
- We believe in multidisciplinary integration.
- We believe in the perpetual learner.

These beliefs form the foundation that connects curricula to the criteria of the college's three accrediting bodies, the National Architecture Accreditation Board (NAAB), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Accreditation Board, and the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). The accreditation criteria are the student learning outcomes of each program and can be traced to the courses and experiences that contribute to their fulfillment, as is apparent in the self-study reports prepared for program reaccreditation in each department—[architecture](#), landscape architecture, and urban planning during the 2012–13 academic year.

**Teacher Education**—Similarly, Ball State's teacher education programs, which involve six of the seven academic colleges on campus, not just the Teachers College, share a common "conceptual framework" that is summarized in graphic form on the cover of the [Professional Education Unit Assessment Handbook](#). Highlighting "expertise," "engagement," and "context" and the elements of each, the logo quickly introduces one to the fundamentals of the unit assessment program that are more fully developed at "decision points" in the educational plan for each preservice teacher in a Ball State program. This structure is implemented through [rGrade](#), a Ball State database that captures examples of artifacts, records the analyzed results of assessments, and produces reports for use in curriculum and pedagogical modification.

The implemented assessment program for teacher education produced not only a successful reaccreditation of all of the teacher education programs following the Professional Education Unit's most recent accreditation visit in 2011, but 23 teacher education programs also received national recognition through their respective professional associations.

As part of the reaccreditation, each institution also had to strive toward reaching “target” for at least one of the six standards. Ball State reached target for Standard 2: Unit Assessment System. As a result, the university was selected for the 2011 Board of Examiners (BOE) training in November of that year. Ball State was chosen because of its distinctive combination of achievement, complexity of the professional education community, and continued and extensive experience with successful accreditation. Together these factors made Ball State the ideal place for BOE nominees to learn about standards, processes, and expectations of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly NCATE).

## **Major Field Exams**

Learning outcomes have been assessed for many years at Ball State. For up to 20 years, senior majors in many departments have taken the appropriate major field exam sponsored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). A [current list of these departments](#) is available for review.

By way of illustration, the Miller College of Business uses this exam to ensure business graduates have relevant content knowledge in all areas of business. Data are collected each spring in the capstone classes that all business majors take, and these data are used to evaluate individual majors and the college as a whole. The average ETS score of Ball State business majors has improved the past three years:

- 2010—70th percentile among students taking the test at 618 schools
- 2011—75th percentile among students taking the test at 259 schools
- 2012—79th percentile among students taking the test at 438 schools

In 2010, an emphasis on “continuous improvement” led Miller College of Business faculty to examine the ETS data broken down by major and to observe that cross-major knowledge (e.g., marketing knowledge among finance majors, finance knowledge among management majors) needed improvement. Faculty identified and disseminated ways to integrate cross-functional knowledge into upper-division courses. Performance in cross-major knowledge was also a special focus in 2012–13, and Miller College will scrutinize its ETS results again.

## **Professional Abilities**

In departments that emphasize performance-based assessment, direct outcomes include external demonstrations of students’ professional abilities. One of the best examples of this approach is the news curriculum in the College of Communication, Information, and Media (CCIM). Based on the recommendations of alumni and professional advisory panels and the results of the faculty’s own environmental scan, the dean of CCIM tasked a group of telecommunications and journalism faculty with the responsibility to create “a distinctive, innovative news and information program that will attract national attention, research partnerships with industry, and the best students from across the country.”

CCIM developed a news curriculum from the ground up, shattering the disciplinary silos that separated expertise. Graduates of the program had to be able to appreciate the opportunities and challenges presented by print, video, audio, radio, and mobile platforms and to exhibit the

ability to adjust nimbly to the evolving formats offered by new technology and demanded by consumers. Program graduates also had to function comfortably across platforms, which is the professional direction that news communications is taking in the 21st century. The success of this curriculum is best measured by the employment record of its graduates. The program produced its first alumni in May 2013. However, in addition to test scores, student creations—stories in various formats across different platforms—have been embedded in the curriculum and assessed by faculty. All classes and all students are also expected to submit class projects to various student media outlets that are independently judged by editors and possibly published. Assignments from this curriculum will be tied to the Unified Media Lab when it opens in 2014. (A video about the [Unified Media Lab](#) is available online.)

Other examples that illustrate these outcomes include:

- **Philosophy and Religious Studies**—Undergraduate students in a philosophy and religious studies course produce and edit [Stance: An International Undergraduate Philosophy Journal](#), the only undergraduate journal of sufficient quality to be listed in *The Philosopher's Index*. Members of this class have performed especially well on the student learning outcomes of transferable career skills, integrating disciplinary knowledge, and professional ethics. *Stance* received the 2010 Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Philosophy Programs from the American Philosophical Association/Philosophy Documentation Center.
- **English**—Each year, undergraduate immersive learning students in the Department of English produce [The Broken Plate](#), a literary magazine that won a 2011 award as the best student literary magazine in Indiana.
- **Journalism**—Many [student media organizations](#) within the Department of Journalism (e.g., *Ball State Daily News*, *Ball Bearings*, *Cardinal Communications*, and the American Advertising Federation) receive national, regional, state, and local awards each year.
- **Telecommunications**—Media [programs and projects](#) in the Department of Telecommunications have been recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (two gold Student Academy Awards), Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (more than 30 regional Emmy Awards), Indiana Association of School Broadcasters, Indiana Broadcasters Association, Sports Video Group, and Fox College Sports.
- **Music**—The [jury system](#) in Ball State's School of Music is a useful example of "value-added" assessment. At the end of each semester, all music majors complete a juried performance to evaluate their progress in studio classes. This performance also provides feedback as students work toward the "gateway" assessment of junior standing. Typically students complete a minimum of four juries before attempting the junior-standing assessment. Students decide to seek junior standing in consultation with their studio teachers. As students progress through the undergraduate program, repeated evaluation of their performances provides a clear basis for assessing what they have learned at Ball State. The School of Music is also considering collecting data from students' admission auditions to provide a baseline for later comparisons.
- **Theatre and Dance**—[Acting Showcases](#) in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago give graduating students in the Department of Theatre and Dance the opportunity to connect with agents, producers, and directors—those who have the potential to

affect their lives and launch their respective careers. The associated benefits from this endeavor include heightened visibility for the academic program, critical networking with industry professionals, enhanced recruitment of students and faculty, and program assessment by active professionals in the field.

## **Graduate Programs**

Academic departments at Ball State are also required to have assessment plans in place for graduate programs. Some departments, such as educational psychology, may conduct assessment as part of a student's doctoral defense, but all departments are required to conduct an evaluation of doctoral students at the end of their second year, before reaching candidacy. Assessment at the master's level may also be accomplished through master's level comprehensive examinations, public presentation requirements, and thesis/creative project defenses.

## **Special Impact Programs**

Ball State's emphasis on assessment extends to programs that have a special impact on students. For example, the [Rinker Center for International Programs](#) established learning outcomes for all study-abroad experiences that encompass:

- personal development (e.g., adapting effectively when presented with change)
- career preparation (e.g., foreign study that takes advantage of unique local resources)
- interpersonal communication (e.g., improved foreign language competency)
- global citizenship (e.g., increased awareness of the interdependence of global systems)

The Rinker Center first measured the extent to which students achieve these goals as a result of study-abroad experiences in 2012 and will collect and compare predeparture and returnee surveys annually. The center will also implement programmatic changes to introduce new learning content and activities to assist students in their achievement of these outcomes, which will be revisited in 2014.

Ball State's [Honors College](#) has also established student learning objectives, such as critical analysis of human artifacts and effective written and oral communication. Faculty who teach in the Honors College meet annually to review assessment data from the previous year and chart changes or adjustments to the curriculum as appropriate.

## **Core Curriculum**

At the university-wide level, academic assessment begins with the [common core curriculum](#) required of all undergraduate students at Ball State. The initial phase of the new University Core Curriculum was implemented starting with the fall 2010 freshman class. Enough students have progressed through this curriculum for the university to begin the core curriculum assessment process, as mandated by Ball State's 2012–2017 strategic plan (*Goal 1, Objective 6, PI 37, p. 10*), in fall 2012. The Tier 3 experience requires that students demonstrate writing at the college level and reflect upon their experience of moving from judgment to action.

In summer 2013, faculty have been developing rubrics to be used to evaluate student writing and reflective thinking from the artifacts created in the Tier 3 experiences. During 2013–14, faculty will be asked to tag specific assignments so that Blackboard Outcomes can then randomly select from those tagged artifacts for assessment against the established rubrics. This evaluation will be conducted during summer 2014 by faculty who will be trained to use the rubrics. Information gained from the assessment and evaluation process will then be used to make decisions about possible changes in the core curriculum. Additional areas for assessment will be reviewed for possible inclusion after the initial assessment work is completed.

## **Writing Proficiency**

Baccalaureate students at Ball State must demonstrate that they are proficient writers by passing either an exam (WPP 392) or a specific course (WPP 393). Both of these were developed to assess the writing and critical reading skills of students. WPP 392 ([Writing Proficiency Exam](#)) is a proctored, timed-writing exam taken in a computer-mediated environment. Offered twice in the fall and spring semesters and once in the summer, the exams are graded holistically by a committee of readers from departments across the campus.

Students who do not pass after two attempts can complete the requirement by taking WPP 393 ([Writing Proficiency Course](#)). The class size for WPP 393 is limited to 10 students, and they work one-on-one with their instructor to create a portfolio of four essays that mirror the critical reading and writing process students need to demonstrate in order to be successful in the Writing Proficiency Exam.

The writing exams and portfolios are graded holistically by a committee of readers drawn from departments across the university. The information gathered through these assessment tools is shared regularly with individuals and university groups, such as departments, committees, and offices. Since the program moved to its current format in summer 2010, the general pass rate for the Writing Proficient Exam has been about 70 percent. Additionally approximately 10 percent of students pass the exam after the second attempt. Students who do pass the exam take the course. The general pass rate for the Writing Proficiency Course has been 98 percent.

## **Student Affairs**

Assessment also extends to Ball State's Division of Student Affairs and its [cocurricular outcome](#) goals that all students demonstrate life skills, multicultural competence, active citizenship, leadership, and behaviors consistent with institutional values. This division developed a [comprehensive assessment program](#) for all of its units. In an effort to be more transparent and to identify performance improvements, each unit implements at least one assessment project each academic year, with at least one study conducted in each of the outcome areas. Studies use direct measures such as academic status changes (e.g., withdrawals) and indirect measures such as satisfaction surveys, use of program services, and lifestyle and leadership assessments.

To take one example, the Career Center investigated whether [online career assessment](#) would effectively engage freshmen to use additional career programs and services early in their college careers. The study compared three groups of freshmen:



- students who were given results of an online personality measure plus matching career interest information
- students who received additional access to on-site Career Center assistance plus one career development program
- students who received neither intervention

Students who used the online career assessment later made better use of the Career Center's programs and services (e.g., selecting a major) than did the other groups, indicating that online options effectively engage freshmen with the career development process. As a result, messages are being developed for the orientation program to motivate freshmen to participate in the online career assessment.

Building on these and other efforts, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) facilitated a workshop for 30 staff members within the Division of Student Affairs in summer 2012. This workshop helped the group to fine-tune existing learning outcomes and projects, collaborate across departments on future assessments, and identify campus resources that support current efforts, including the OIE-sponsored student surveys.

### **Indirect Evidence**

All of Ball State's academic departments provide direct evidence of their efforts to promote and assess specific student learning objectives, such as knowledge, skills, and effective writing. Indirect evidence that such assessment is relatively broad-based at Ball State comes from students who recognize and reflect on the gains they have made and the effectiveness of the education they received. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered by Indiana University to measure the extent to which students engage in practices that are empirically shown to promote learning and success. NSSE was administered to [Ball State's first-year students and seniors](#) in the spring semesters of 2004, 2007, 2008, and 2012.

[Eight NSSE items](#) provide indirect evidence of the university's effectiveness in helping students achieve several broad learning goals. Responses of Ball State seniors in 2008 and 2012 were compared with responses of NSSE's 2008 and 2012 national samples of seniors from institutions in Ball State's Carnegie classification, Research University/High Research Activity, or RU/H. These items ask about the extent to which the university contributed to students' knowledge, skills, and personal development. Results are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: 2008/2012 Ball State–NSSE Comparison (Seniors)**

| <i>To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (Percent very much or quite a bit)</i> | Ball State University<br>2008 | Other RU/H Institutions<br>2008 | Ball State University<br>2012 | Other RU/H Institutions<br>2012 |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Acquiring a broad general education  | 86 percent                    | 84 percent                      | 82 percent                    | 81 percent                      |
| Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills   | 80 percent                    | 72 percent                      | 77 percent                    | 74 percent                      |
| Writing clearly and effectively  | 73 percent                    | 73 percent                      | 73 percent                    | 74 percent                      |
| Speaking clearly and effectively   | 71 percent                    | 69 percent                      | 73 percent                    | 70 percent                      |
| Thinking critically and analytically   | 85 percent                    | 86 percent                      | 84 percent                    | 87 percent                      |
| Analyzing quantitative problems  | 72 percent                    | 76 percent                      | 68 percent                    | 78 percent                      |
| Using computing and information technology   | 85 percent                    | 81 percent                      | 79 percent                    | 79 percent                      |
| Working effectively with others  | 81 percent                    | 77 percent                      | 80 percent                    | 77 percent                      |

In 2008, the percentage of seniors reporting that their experiences at Ball State contributed “very much” or “quite a bit” to achieving each goal was within plus-or-minus 2 percent of the national percentage on four of the eight items, below the national percentage (72 percent vs. 76 percent) on the item “analyzing quantitative problems,” and at least 4 percent above the national sample on “acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills” (80 percent vs. 72 percent), “using computing and information technology” (85 percent vs. 81 percent), and “working effectively with others” (81 percent vs. 77 percent).

In 2012, the percentage of seniors reporting that their experiences contributed “very much” or “quite a bit” to achieving each goal was within plus-or-minus 3 percent of the national percentage on seven of eight items and below the national percentage (68 percent vs. 78 percent) on the item “analyzing quantitative problems.” Thus, in both recent administrations of NSSE, Ball State seniors were comparable to seniors from other RU/H institutions in the national sample with respect to several broadly stated student learning objectives, with the exception of analyzing quantitative problems. With respect to the last item, however, more than two-thirds of seniors reported that their Ball State education contributed “very much” or “quite a bit” to their skill in analyzing quantitative problems.

**Graduate Surveys**—Other indirect evidence comes from recent Office of Institutional Effectiveness [surveys of Ball State graduates](#), one of 2008–09 graduates conducted in 2010 and another of 2007 graduates conducted in 2012. Findings of these surveys included:

- More than 94 percent of all respondents indicated their experiences at Ball State prepared them very well or satisfactorily in the areas of intellectual and personal

growth, speaking, listening, problem solving, analysis and evaluation of ideas, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

- More than 85 percent reported they were very well or satisfactorily prepared for a career and further education.
- About 93 percent reported their Ball State experiences prepared them very well (50 percent) or satisfactorily (43 percent) in the area of writing skills.
- Math was the lowest-rated academic skill, with 21 percent of 2008–09 graduates and 16 percent of 2007 graduates reporting poor preparation in this area. The university has begun to address this issue by a course redesign initiative that will improve student learning and reduce the number of D's, F's, and withdrawals in the primary core curriculum math class, MATH 125.

**Student Ratings**—Finally, the evaluation of teaching plays a primary role in providing Ball State students with the best possible educational experience, and faculty annually evaluate their teaching by a variety of means, including student ratings of the quality of instruction. Ratings by students are conducted each year on a regular schedule, and ratings are collected in at least one class per year for every faculty member whose assignment includes teaching. Students are invited via e-mail (with reminders every three days) to complete online evaluations for all courses with four or more students. To increase participation, timely completion of evaluations allows students early access to their final grades.

The statistical data gathered from [student ratings](#) are summarized by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and overall results have been consistently good. Student evaluations are used for personnel decisions such as progress toward tenure, merit pay, and promotion. They are not generally used for program assessment, although individual instructors may make changes in pedagogy in response to the comments they receive from students.

#### **Subcomponent 4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

Academic departments and cocurricular programs at Ball State recognize that the purpose of assessment is improved student learning and have developed procedures for reviewing and acting on assessment data. Assessment plans and reports for various programs are available in the [accreditation online resource room](#). Examples from three different colleges illustrate how departments use assessment information to improve student learning:

**Psychology**—Every bachelor's graduate in the Department of Psychological Science has completed the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Exam in Psychology since 2003. From the beginning, ETS mean scores of Ball State psychology majors have been compared with mean scores from two relevant groups of institutions: those similar to Ball State in Carnegie classification and located in the Midwest, and the entire national population of colleges and universities using the ETS Major Field Exam in Psychology. From 2003 to 2010, Ball State psychology majors consistently matched or outperformed both of the comparison groups on mean total score and almost all subscores and assessment indicators provided by ETS.

The exception came in the neuroscience areas (physiology, sensation, and perception), where students at more than 50 percent of the comparison institutions scored higher than Ball State's students. From 2003 through 2011, psychology majors at Ball State were not required to take any courses covering neuroscience topics (such courses were only electives) despite rapid growth in the importance of this area to the field of psychology. In response to this situation, a tenure-line faculty member was hired in 2009 to take all responsibility for teaching the neuroscience-related courses. In 2011, the university's senior psychology majors for the first time achieved higher mean scores in all areas of the ETS exam—including the neuroscience subscale and assessment indicator—than students at comparison schools. As of fall 2012, all new psychology majors are required to take a course in the biological basis of behavior.

**Nursing**—Ball State's School of Nursing has used assessment evidence to modify its curriculum and improve its four-year graduation rate. After observing that 10–15 percent of nursing students repeated one of the clinical courses regardless of how these courses were taught, the school overhauled its curriculum by converting two 6-credit-hour courses to three 4-hour courses, reorganizing other content into two new courses, and moving material of special interest to many nursing students (psychiatry/mental health and pediatrics) earlier in the course sequence.

After making these changes in 2010–11, the school predicted that students admitted to the program would be more motivated to pursue nursing as a career and show more commitment to succeeding in the rigorous curriculum. The retention rate among nursing majors increased from 92 percent in 2010 to 98 percent in 2012. The four-year graduation rate for this cohort will also be monitored as further evidence of the effectiveness of the curricular changes.

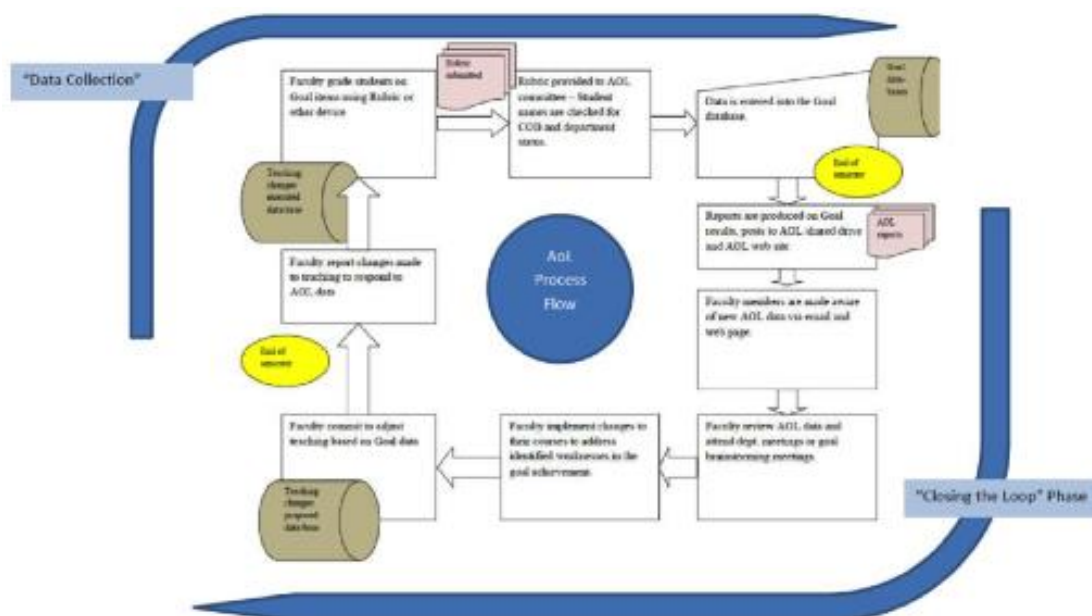
**Business**—In the assessment loop used by the Miller College of Business (see Figure 4.1 below), data are collected for half of the college-level goals each year, while evidence for the other half is reviewed in preparation for closing the loop. For this latter process, quarterly brainstorming sessions examine how the data collected the previous year can be used to improve teaching and learning. The schedule is maintained on the college's [Assurance of Learning \(AOL\) website](#), and minutes of these meetings are accessible to all faculty. In addition, faculty members who use evidence gained from assessment to make improvements in their classes (typically 20–35 percent) report back to the AOL committee.

As an example of this process, business faculty recently used several years of evidence and experience to modify the entrepreneurship curriculum to better address changes in the field, the industry's criticism of academic practice, and the importance of continued learning after graduation. Specifically, the introductory course now comes earlier to expose more students to entrepreneurship and give them more lead time to enter the major or minor based on their experiences in the course. Subsequent entrepreneurship courses focus on the creativity and opportunity recognition process, application of engineering and design principles to an entrepreneurial opportunity, production of a business model and plan that a student defends before an outside panel of business professionals, and a consulting course that teaches long-term entrepreneurial decision making through research.

This new curriculum more effectively immerses students in each stage of the entrepreneurial process, allowing them to acquire not just content knowledge but also the critical-thinking,

problem-solving, and collaboration skills and experiences necessary to take advantage of future business opportunities.

**Figure 4.1: Miller College of Business Assurance of Learning (AOL) Process**



**Mathematics**—Several years of indirect evidence from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and alumni surveys indicated that Ball State graduates experienced difficulty analyzing quantitative problems. Coupling these findings with direct evidence from the core curriculum assessments and low classroom performance (D and F grades and withdrawals), the Department of Mathematical Sciences took the following actions:

- MATHS 111, the algebra-focused pre-calculus class, was redesigned in spring 2011. The changes were implemented in fall 2011. The course topics and pedagogy were altered to place preparation for calculus (MATHS 132, 161, 165) at the forefront. A custom textbook was adopted. Input from faculty about areas of student weakness in preparation for calculus was used in redesigning the course.
- MATHS 108, the intermediate algebra class, was redesigned in spring and fall 2012. The course topics and pedagogy were altered to focus on preparation for MATHS 111 and MATHS 201 (Mathematics for Elementary School Teachers). A custom textbook—a slight modification of the textbook for MATHS 111—will serve both MATHS 108 and MATHS 111 students.
- The department is working to ensure that all entering freshmen pursuing a business or STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) major take the Mathematics Placement Test, which is believed to be more effective in accurately placing students than the use of ACT/SAT scores.
- Department faculty worked to “flip the classroom” using a new technology known as Vizi-Swap—created at and spun-off from Ball State—to supplement a text for MATHS 125, the primary core curriculum mathematics course for non-STEM and non-business majors. The goals were to increase understanding of mathematics as an analytical tool

for everyday life and to increase critical thinking. This course was piloted in 2012–13, and assessments of student performance were forthcoming in summer 2013.

**Subcomponent 4.B.4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.**

At Ball State, assessment is largely the work of the teaching faculty in each academic department and school, since those areas have the greatest influence over the formulation of learning goals, pedagogical practices to attain learning goals, and best ways to assess student learning outcomes. All faculty participate in the assessment of student learning at some point—identifying learning objectives and measures, grading student work and collecting other data, and deciding on proposed program changes as voting members of their departments.

In the Miller College of Business, for example, assessment committees are especially inclusive and broad-based, with more than 30 faculty members (40 percent of the college's faculty) participating on unit assessment committees or the college's steering committee. In some other departments on campus, such as those using studio-based learning (e.g., architecture, fine arts), faculty panels or juries assess student performance. Some departments (e.g., biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematical sciences) require faculty to participate in the assessment of student learning in order to be eligible for merit salary increases.

### **Unit Assessment Plans**

Each academic unit at Ball State has created an assessment plan detailing its student learning objectives and how they are to be assessed, and each has designated a faculty member other than the department chair to serve as the unit's assessment coordinator. This coordinator helps to ensure the quality (e.g., reliability and validity) of assessment data and procedures and their relevance to the department's student learning objectives. The assessment coordinator typically chairs a unit assessment committee made up of other faculty in the department. These committees meet regularly and produce annual assessment reports for their units.

For example, the Department of Psychological Science conducts internal reviews of its academic programs more or less continuously. Assessment data are shared with all faculty members, and any of them can propose a program change to the appropriate departmental committee. These committees—all made up of and elected by teaching faculty—discuss the proposals and recommend changes in the curriculum or assessment procedures for approval by the full department. Once a change is made, new assessment results are used to evaluate how effective it was in improving student learning, with further input used to start the process again.

In other units, outside advisory boards add further impetus to change. Examples include:

**Mathematical Sciences**—In this department, the Actuarial Science Advisory Board helped to improve students' readiness for job seeking in 2013 by recommending increased usage of the university's Career Center programs, especially those focused on resume preparation and interviewing skills.



**Residential Property Management**—In addition to providing students with scholarships and opportunities for job shadowing, internships, employment, and mentoring, the advisory board to this program helped the faculty improve guidelines for the job shadowing process and the organization and sequencing of courses to better synchronize the major, minor, and graduate programs. The advisory board also assisted the program in developing a recommended internship knowledge and skills checklist, which was adopted by the Institute for Real Estate Management in its *Employers Guide to Real Estate Management Internships*.

**Elementary Education**—In April 2013, this department's external advisory board made several recommendations, including more classroom experience prior to student teaching and higher admission standards for students entering the program. The department has already begun modifying courses to increase and improve classroom experiences and is also considering ways to improve the selection and retention of students to ensure that they are successful.

**Journalism**—In 2011, this department's news track used an advisory board meeting involving six experienced national news media professionals to evaluate its preparation of students to deliver news content for web, mobile, broadcast, and print media. The professionals commended the overall program and applauded early efforts to create new delivery applications for smartphones and tablets. They also encouraged making requests through the Freedom of Information Act. Now students in the news track—as well as the graphics, photo, and magazine tracks—may choose a three-hour immersion course (NEWS 397) in which they have created tablet applications for student media groups (e.g., *Ball Bearings*, Ball State Sport Link) that are some of the first of their kind in the U.S. In addition, *Ball State Daily News* student journalists increasingly use Indiana's Access to Public Records Act to request documents from public agencies, including the university. They have produced stories on employee health insurance, police department complaints, campus renovations, and safety.

Some departments hold annual retreats or other meetings to discuss assessment, curriculum development, program initiatives, and learning goals. Examples include:

**Criminal Justice and Criminology**—At this unit's 2012 retreat, faculty were assisted by the Office of Educational Excellence to develop recommendations to improve the undergraduate curriculum, maintain continuous assessment of program outcomes, and provide more individualized student advising for diverse careers in the justice field.

**Biology**—In contrast to the annual retreat format, this department's curriculum committee holds "brown bag" discussions throughout the academic year. In 2012, faculty addressed consistently weak student performance on the sections of the ETS Biology exit exam dealing with cell and molecular genetics by implementing new assessment procedures, raising course performance expectations, and tracking individual students to ensure they followed the recommended course sequence before taking the exam.

## Other Effective Practices

A number of other policies and activities also reflect Ball State's effective practice in assessment:

- Both direct and indirect assessment of student learning is used, incorporating both faculty and student perspectives.
- Many departments and colleges use results from their assessment programs to maintain national accreditation, which requires good assessment practices.
- Academic colleges monitor the assessment activities of their units. This effort includes establishing regular reporting of results, determining the success of the college and its units on the basis of the departmental and school reports, reporting the results of that assessment to the university's provost and vice president for academic affairs, and taking action to benefit student learning.

Faculty from each college are voting members of the university's [Academic Assessment Committee](#), which is responsible for examining and discussing assessment programs and activities, identifying relevant issues, disseminating information about university-related academic assessment issues and programs, recommending policies for academic assessment, and providing advice to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE).

The results of some of Ball State's assessment practices have been presented and published. Examples include the following:

- **Philosophy and religious studies, sociology, and English** faculty obtained Lumina Foundation funding to create and implement unique discipline-specific applications of learning theory to address student learning problems. Over three years, 3,742 students were taught in classes modified as a result of work from this project, which was found to increase student learning and retention. The paper on this project appeared in 2009 in the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.
- **Psychological science** faculty published empirical work on the most effective ways of including material on diversity in undergraduate classes in *Teaching Psychology* (2013).
- **Geography** faculty studied the effects on learning of classes held in a group-oriented classroom as part of Ball State's Learning Space Initiative partnership with Steelcase Industries. The results were presented at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in April 2013.
- **Natural resources and environmental management, physiology and health science, computer science, criminal justice and criminology, theatre and dance, and family and consumer sciences** faculty found that integrated use of Panopto videos and corresponding iClicker questions increased active learning and student engagement across their respective disciplines. These results were disseminated in a Ball State faculty white paper.

- **Biology** faculty studied the differences in outcomes between lecture and non-lecture classroom processes in an introductory course for nonmajors. Their paper was under review at the *Journal of College Science Teaching* in summer 2013.

## Institutional Support

In a variety of ways, Ball State's [Office of Institutional Effectiveness \(OIE\)](#) assists departments, schools, and colleges with the considerable effort required to create assessment procedures and materials that document student success in attaining learning objectives. For example, this office leads classroom assessment working groups for interested faculty and conducts a variety of assessment workshops, including general interest sessions and specific workshops for faculty interested in particular assessment topics. OIE also helps units develop or revise assessment plans, including choosing goals and assessment techniques and a process for putting results into action.

This office also assists with data analyses related to assessment or institutional projects—designing surveys and other instruments, coding data, entering data, and analyzing data, including qualitative results. If needed, the staff:

- designs, conducts, and interprets the results of focus groups
- conducts, records, transcribes, and summarizes the results of individual interviews
- creates, administers, and interprets the results of standardized tests and assessment surveys
- helps design student portfolios and schemes for evaluating them

OIE regularly [surveys freshmen, sophomores, graduating seniors, and alumni](#) and can generate separate reports by program and combine student responses from multiple years to create department-specific reports. This office also maintains historical records on many departmental characteristics, including counts of majors, average class size, and descriptive information about students such as class level distribution, grade point average, retention rates, and graduation rates.

Finally, this office helps fund faculty travel to national or regional conferences focusing on assessment-related issues and conducts a summer grant program that supports full-time academic year faculty so they can carry out assessment projects during the summer. The staff consults with deans and departments chairs to identify appropriate projects.

In 2011–12, OIE staff assisted with more than 150 special projects in various units on campus. Their consultative services were used by 20 academic departments, all colleges and schools, and 25 other campus offices or centers. In spring 2012, two assessment workshops were provided to 60 faculty and staff members. The office also awarded a number of summer assessment grants:

- **Summer 2011**—Grants totaled \$37,500 for 41 faculty members to conduct 25 projects within their respective departments, schools, and colleges.
- **Summer 2012**—Grants totaled \$40,100 for 48 faculty members in 19 academic units to conduct 23 projects (37 proposals submitted). Funded projects included

efforts to integrate Blackboard Outcomes into the Assurance of Learning (AOL) system in the Miller College of Business and to improve the assessment of student learning outcomes in design studios in the College of Architecture and Planning.

### **Summary: Core Component 4.B.**

Ball State rigorously assesses student learning outcomes in ways that are consistent with the cultures in its colleges, departments, and programs. Many of these units are affiliated with professional organizations that establish learning outcomes and other criteria. In those cases, the units have responded in ways that affirm the university's commitment to seeking national recognition.

Departments and programs that do not have professional accreditation opportunities have developed their own learning outcomes and procedures. Those units have been guided by the understanding that curricula are intentional acts of faculty, and those intentions represent the aspirations faculty hold for students' achievement. As such, those intentions form the learning outcomes that are measured in ways that provide performance data useful to faculty.

Ball State recognizes that to be authentic, assessment data and procedures must reflect the values and epistemologies of departments and programs. The university's academic diversity requires it to appreciate and affirm the approaches to "knowing" in assessment as it appreciates and affirms the diverse scholarly approaches represented among its faculty. It is the faculty, after all, who are charged with the continuous improvement of the educational experience and the integrity of the curricula. Whether guided by disciplinary and professional accreditations or by their own intentions and aspirations for student success, our faculty have approached assessment creatively. Appropriate data are acquired, analyzed, and used. These actions testify to Ball State's commitment to academic rigor and integrity and to public accountability.

### **Core Component 4.C.**

#### **The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.**

Ball State University's approach to improving its rates of student retention, persistence, and completion involves providing students with high-quality, engaging educational experiences. It also involves practical steps such as targeted advising informed by retention, persistence, and completion data; locating bottlenecks where more sections can be provided by reallocating faculty resources; and collaboration among academic departments as demonstrated in the sciences, where collaboration has informed course and lab section scheduling across units to facilitate students' ability to get into prerequisite, corequisite, and sequential courses required in their major and minor programs. All colleges have been involved in such efforts.

In addition, the Division of Academic Affairs has eagerly collaborated with the Division of Student Affairs, which has made a broad-based commitment to student persistence and completion by creating opportunities for students to connect with their peers, engage in

campus activities, and be challenged in a supportive academic environment. All of these efforts will benefit from the ongoing research of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

**Subcomponent 4.C.1.** The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

In *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, Ball State set goals for retention and graduation that were clear, ambitious, and appropriate: achieve a first-year retention rate of 80 percent by 2012 and achieve a six-year graduation rate of 60 percent by 2012 and 65 percent by 2015 (*Goal 1, Objective A, PI 2–3, p. 4*). The university's *Retention Synopsis* provides comparative data for the persistence of first-time, full-time matriculates for a given cohort, defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as full-time, degree-seeking, fall matriculates.

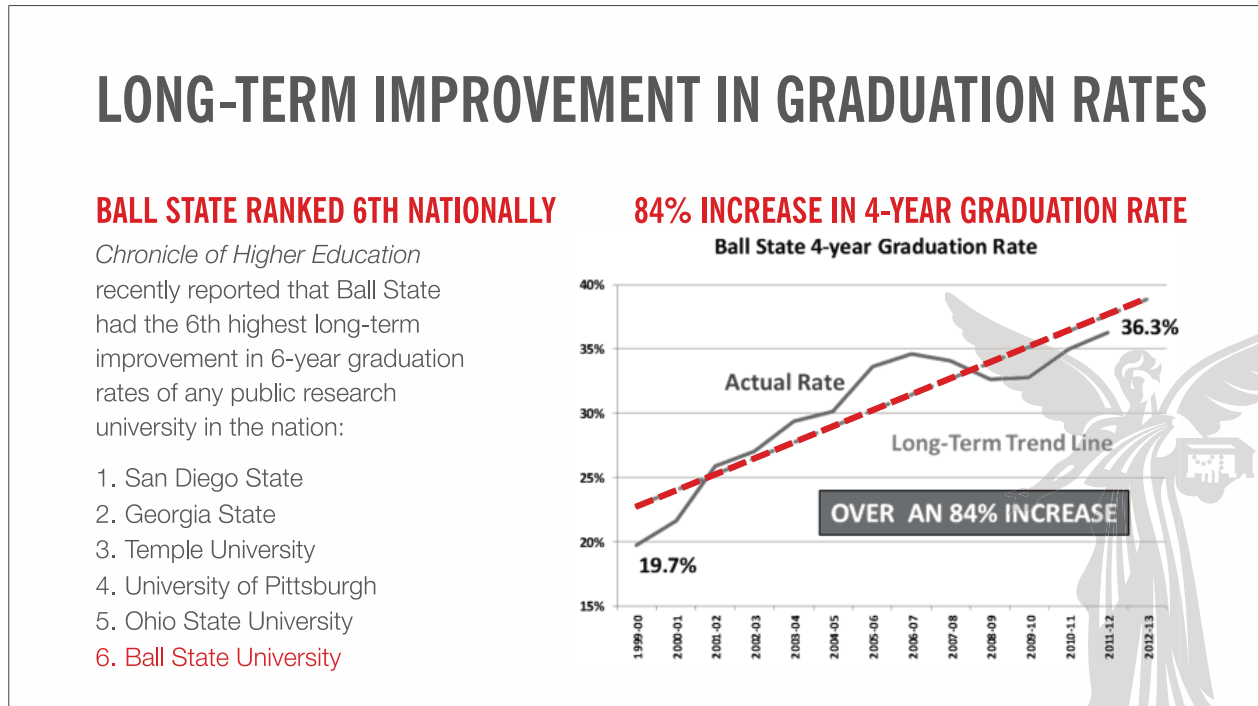
Ball State's first-year retention rate improved from 74.5 percent for the 2004-05 cohort to 79.6 percent for the [2010–11 cohort](#). Changing federal financial aid regulations adversely affected the [2011–12 cohort](#), whose retention rate dipped to 78 percent. These changes deal primarily with the frequency of the review of academic progress. Under the new regulations, the academic record of each student is reviewed at the end of every enrollment period (fall, spring, and summer) to determine if the student meets the minimum standards in place to measure progress. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid eligibility is defined as maintaining a grade point average consistent with university graduation requirements and staying on pace to graduate and complete a degree within a maximum time frame.

At Ball State, a student is required to earn 67 percent of the hours attempted in order to stay on pace to graduate and, thus, to be eligible for financial aid. Of the 144 students affected by the federal changes who did not return to Ball State for their sophomore year, 66 continued their education at more affordable institutions such as branches of the Ivy Tech Community College system and regional campuses near their homes.

During the six-year period when retention rates rose, the academic disqualification rate for first-year students declined as a result of a proactive commitment by the university. A change in Ball State's [academic disqualification policy](#), the expanded living-learning communities on campus, and increased opportunities for student engagement in special summer bridge and student life programs helped increase and sustain the retention of first-year students. Additional information about these efforts is provided under [Subcomponent 4.C.3](#).

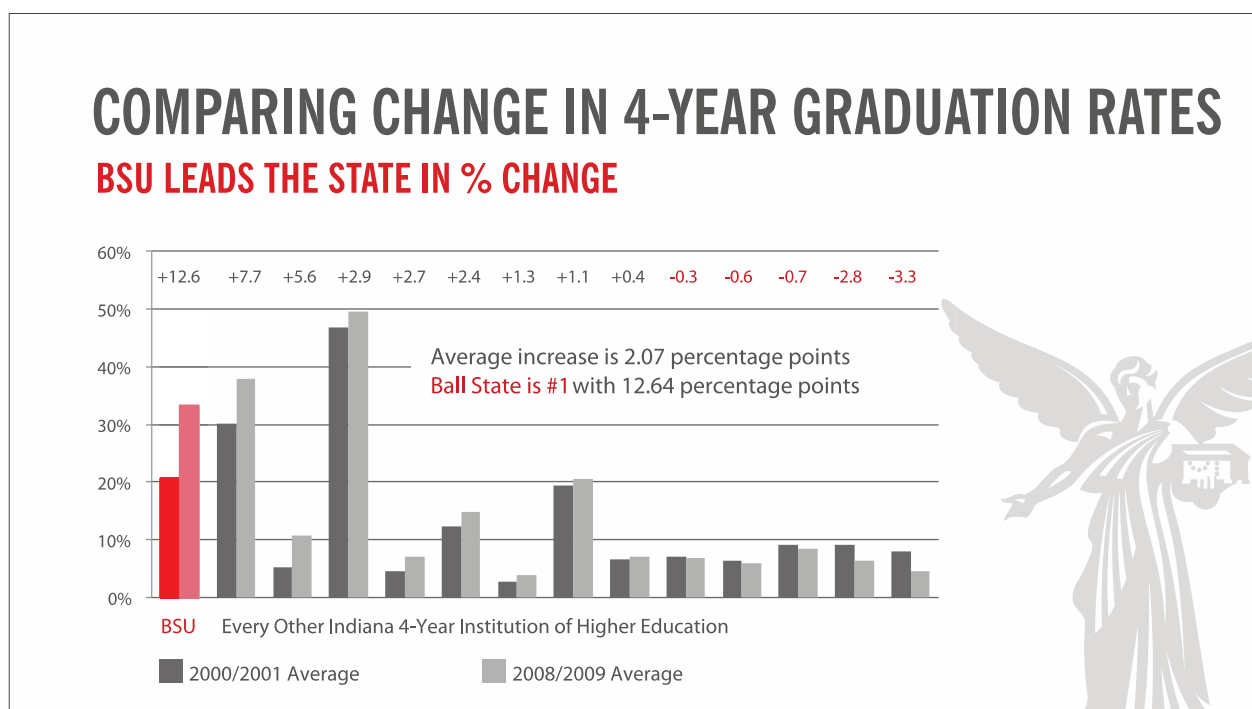
Graduation rates are also rising as a result of the university's strategic initiatives to boost student success. Ball State's [six-year graduation rate](#) increased to 56.6 percent with the 2005–06 freshman cohort after slipping to 55.4 percent with the 2004–05 cohort. Likewise, the four-year graduation rate rebounded to 36.3 percent with the 2007–08 cohort, surpassing the previous high of 34.6 percent with the 2002–03 cohort (see Figure 4.2 below). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ranked Ball State sixth in the nation for improvement in graduation rates among public research institutions between 2001 and 2008.

Figure 4.2: Long-Term Graduation Rates



Ball State's 2012–2017 strategic plan will enhance the quality of the academic experiences for all students. Target retention rates will roll forward in the new plan, with the goal of achieving and maintaining a first-year retention rate of 80 percent. The target four-year graduation rate is 50 percent, and the target six-year graduation rate is 65 percent (*Goal 1, Objective 2, PI 10–11, p. 8*). Student success initiatives will continue to emphasize a strong academic profile of the student body as well as career assessment, internships, and transfer students.

Figure 4.3: State Comparison of Graduation Rates





### **Subcomponent 4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

Effective improvement efforts require accurate and comprehensive information about students, their needs, and the factors that affect persistence and completion. Ball State's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) annually collects and analyzes retention and graduation data in support of external agency reporting and internal decision-making processes. For example, OIE reports to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) the retention and graduation rates for first-time, full-time Ball State undergraduate students who graduate four, six, and eight years after enrolling.

The university's most comprehensive annual source of data on retention and graduation is the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), which tracks 10 first-time, full-time undergraduate student cohorts over an 11-year time span disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. CSRDE also provides Ball State with information on retention and graduation rates for institutions that are similar in mission and student composition. Other data collection and analysis initiatives include:

**Common Data Set**—OIE collects information for the [Common Data Set \(CDS\)](#), a collaborative effort designed to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all stakeholders involved in student transition to higher education and to reduce the reporting burden on data providers. The CDS uses clear, standard data items and definitions to determine the relevant student cohort for each item. Data items and definitions used by the U.S. Department of Education in its higher education surveys guide the continued development of the CDS.

**Student Flow Model**—OIE is developing a larger “student flow” model of tracking that follows all Ball State students every semester through the receipt of a degree. Enrollment, retention, and graduation rates as well as time to degree, cumulative grade point averages, and cumulative credit hours earned are tracked for all students in a cohort. The major cohort groups are new freshmen, new transfers, new graduate students, students in living-learning communities, and adult learners. These flow models will be deployed as a series of searchable pages on the OIE website, where users can disaggregate the data by gender, race/ethnicity, academic program and college, test score bands, residency status, and cohort year.

**Published Reports**—OIE publishes a regular series of [Ball State Fact Book](#) and [departmental profile reports](#) online as a series of PDF documents. In the future, these profiles will be redeployed as searchable online reports so internal and external stakeholders can quickly understand the status of university enrollment, retention and graduation rates, degrees conferred, and other data of interest.

**Empirical Studies**—OIE also conducts its own empirical studies on variables affecting persistence and completion. For example, a [2012 OIE study](#) found that from 2005–06 to 2010–11, the median number of semesters to complete a bachelor's degree at Ball State was 10, and the mode was nine (summers are included as a semester). According to the data, students who take fewer average credit hours per semester take longer to graduate. More surprisingly, this study found that students who changed majors took fewer semesters to complete their degrees than did other students. Perhaps students who change majors later increase their course loads to make up for lost time, or maybe students who decide

to change their field of study are more fully engaged in the academic purposes of college. Regardless of the explanation, OIE's empirical approach to understanding and promoting degree completion suggests that in addition to encouraging students to take heavier course loads, it may be important to not discourage them from changing to a major they decide is more appropriate.

In 2012–13, OIE conducted a [study of factors affecting the retention of 2011–12 freshmen](#). A number of differences in retention rates were identified across demographic groups, colleges, majors, and academic enrichment programs. Students were better retained if they participated in the Honors College and residence hall living-learning communities. Many significant relationships were identified between retention and students' responses to the [Summer Orientation Survey](#), [MAP-Works survey](#), and [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#). Significant relationships were also identified between retention and grades in courses taken by large numbers of first-year students. Several actionable tactics were suggested by the study results and have been shared widely. These are described under [Subcomponent 4.C.3](#).

## Unit Data Collection

Several academic departments at Ball State also collect student retention and completion data for their external accreditations. One of the most advanced practices is the [Decision Points Model](#) used by the Professional Education Unit. In this model, each teacher education program identifies key assessments for monitoring student progress and guiding decisions about student performance. The assessment's accuracy is determined through data review to ensure that knowledge, skills, and dispositions are measured as prescribed by program and state standards, specialized professional associations (SPA) of represented disciplines, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly NCATE).

Consistency of the assessment procedures is maintained using common unit assessments (e.g., the Unit Dispositions Assessment and the Unit Digital Portfolio Assessment), allowing for comparison within and across student performance over programs, semesters, years, course instructors, gender, and other dimensions.

Remediation and appeal procedures allow units throughout the university to implement the Decision Points requirements fairly for all students and across all programs, and multiple surveys (e.g., exit survey) obtain students' views of the evaluation guidelines, satisfaction with their program, and perceptions of fairness and accuracy. As an example of this feedback loop, more than 10 percent of graduating special education majors in 2011 disagreed on the exit survey that they were prepared to work effectively with students having linguistic differences. As a result, teaching strategies for students with linguistic differences were added to three special education courses beginning in spring 2012.

Other examples of unit data collection efforts at Ball State include:

- **Social Work**—Students in this department are tracked at each level of the program, and additional demographic information is included in the department's annual report to the Council on Social Work Education.
- **Journalism**—This department participates in the annual survey of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and

creates a student profile report that tracks graduation rates and the success achieved by minority students.

- **Business**—The [Miller Business Honors Program](#) and the accompanying [Miller Scholars Program](#) is a four-year, cohort-based, comprehensive academic and scholarship program that consists of a differentiated curriculum and developmental programming focused on academic, professional, networking, and social growth. Retention, persistence, and completion of programs are tracked for each of the approximately 80 students at the end of each semester through verification of course progress, grade achievement, and future semester planning. Academic advising is required at least once each semester for the first four semesters. Students are then assigned to faculty advisors. A year-end survey is also conducted to assess student-perceived levels of importance and satisfaction regarding program offerings.

## Indirect Evidence

With too many students nationwide failing to complete a bachelor's degree within six years, it is useful to examine correlates of persistence and completion that are under the control of university policies or practices. One measure of an institution's overall success in these respects is seniors' answers on selected items from the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#), such as "How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?" and "If you could start over again, would you go to the *same institution* you are now attending?"

Table 4.2 below displays these and other relevant items organized in groups labeled "engaged learning," "supportive relationships," and "practical support," the last of which includes academic advising. This table compares responses of Ball State seniors in 2008 and 2012 to responses from NSSE's 2008 and 2012 national samples of seniors from institutions in Ball State's Carnegie classification, Research University/High Research Activity, or RU/H.

**Table 4.2: 2008/2012 Ball State-NSSE Comparisons (Seniors)**

|  | Ball State<br>2008 | NSSE<br>2008 | Ball State<br>2012 | NSSE<br>2012 |
|--|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>Engaged learning:</b> <i>Percent done or plan to do before graduation</i>   |                    |              |                    |              |
| Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment                                      | 85 percent         | 77 percent   | 81 percent         | 78 percent   |
| Community service or volunteer work  | 80 percent         | 75 percent   | 78 percent         | 76 percent   |
| Study abroad   | 27 percent         | 23 percent   | 23 percent         | 23 percent   |
| Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements                             | 35 percent         | 34 percent   | 33 percent         | 37 percent   |
| <b>Supportive relationships:</b> <i>Quality of your relationships with people at your institution (1 = unfriendly,</i> |                    |              |                    |              |

|   |            |            |            |            |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <i>unsupportive, sense of alienation,<br/>7 = friendly, supportive, sense of<br/>belonging)</i><br>(Percent 5 or greater shown)                       |            |            |            |            |
| Relationships with other students   | 85 percent | 81 percent | 86 percent | 82 percent |
| Relationships with faculty members  | 80 percent | 73 percent | 81 percent | 78 percent |
| Relationships with administrative<br>personnel and offices  | 48 percent | 51 percent | 52 percent | 57 percent |
| <b>Practical support:</b> <i>To what extent<br/>does your institution emphasize each<br/>of the following? (Percent very much<br/>or quite a bit)</i> |            |            |            |            |
| Providing the support you need to<br>help you succeed academically  | 72 percent | 68 percent | 71 percent | 70 percent |
| Helping you cope with your<br>nonacademic responsibilities<br>(work, family, etc.)  | 25 percent | 26 percent | 28 percent | 28 percent |
| Providing the support you need to<br>thrive socially  | 60 percent | 36 percent | 39 percent | 39 percent |
| Overall, how would you evaluate<br>the quality of academic advising you<br>have received at your institution?<br>(Percent excellent or good)          | 63 percent | 64 percent | 71 percent | 71 percent |
| <b>Overall satisfaction:</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| How would you evaluate your entire<br>educational experience at this<br>institution? (Percent excellent or<br>good)                                   | 87 percent | 85 percent | 87 percent | 85 percent |
| If you could start over again, would<br>you go to the <i>same institution</i> you are<br>now attending? (Percent definitely<br>yes or probably yes)   | 84 percent | 80 percent | 82 percent | 82 percent |

**Engaged Learning**—In 2008, the percentages of Ball State seniors reporting that their educations included “engaged learning” was 4 to 8 percentage points higher than the NSSE normative group on three items, and 1 percentage point higher on the fourth item. On these same items in 2012, the percentages of Ball State seniors were similar to the NSSE normative group on three items, and 4 percentage points lower on the item “Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.”

**Practical Support**—The percentages of 2008 Ball State seniors reporting that they received “practical support” during their time at Ball State were 4 percentage points higher than the NSSE normative group on “Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically,” 24 percentage points higher on “providing the support you need to thrive socially,” and similar to the normative group on the other two items. In 2012, Ball State students were similar to the normative group on all four items.

**Supportive Relationships**—The percentage of Ball State seniors reporting satisfaction with their relationships with other students was 4 percentage points higher than the NSSE normative group in both 2008 and 2012, and the percentage reporting satisfaction with their relationships with faculty was 7 percentage points higher than the NSSE normative group in 2008 and 3 percentage points higher in 2012. However, the percentage reporting satisfaction in their “relationships with administrative personnel and offices” was 3 percentage points lower than the NSSE normative group in 2008 and 5 percentage points lower in 2012.

**Overall Satisfaction**—On the two summary questions, Ball State seniors were 2 percentage points higher than the normative group in both 2008 and 2012 in rating their “entire educational experience” at Ball State as “excellent or good,” and on the item “If you could start over again, would you go to the *same institution* you are now attending?” Ball State seniors were 4 percentage points higher in responding “definitely yes” or “probably yes” in 2008 and equal to the normative group in this same percentage in 2012.

Ball State seniors completing the NSSE survey in 2008 and 2012 were generally very satisfied and were involved in activities related to persistence and completion. They generally equaled or exceeded seniors from other RU/H institutions in NSSE’s national sample with respect to supportive relationships and academic support. Support from administrators and academic advising were average in comparison with the normative group.

Very similar perceptions were also reported in the one- and five-year Alumni Surveys described earlier. For example, 95 percent of alumni reported a very positive or positive attitude toward Ball State one year after graduation, while 92 percent of alumni had a very positive or positive attitude toward Ball State five years after graduation.

**Subcomponent 4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.**

Ball State’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a [comprehensive study](#) to examine factors related to the fall 2012 reenrollment of fall 2011 new, full-time, baccalaureate-seeking first-year students. Only the spring semester cumulative grade point average (GPA), spring semester credit hours, and fall semester credit hours proved to be significant predictors of retention in a logistic regression analysis. Significant predictors of spring semester cumulative GPA included listing the Honors College as an important reason to attend Ball State, coming to class prepared, being more likely to participate in activities to enhance spirituality, and identifying student blogs as an important source of information about Ball State.

Actionable tactics suggested by the study results include:

- emphasizing the Honors College
- working to ensure that students come to class prepared
- recruiting students with higher levels of family financial contribution to college costs
- providing support for students who need to care for dependents
- emphasizing graduates’ career success and national rankings of academic programs

- providing students with options that allow them to remain at Ball State if they are considering changing majors
- promoting college visits, including Ball State Preview Days
- following up on cues from MAP-Works and other sources where students may be indicating they are experiencing attrition-prone behaviors

This study also supports current efforts to facilitate students' awareness of their success in first-year courses while they are enrolled in those courses.

## **Improving Retention**

Several factors have contributed to improvements in Ball State's first-year retention rate. For one, the university's efforts to strengthen the academic profile of admitted students produced a lower disqualification rate for first-year students. Also, beginning in 2006, students who previously would have been disqualified for having a first-semester grade point average (GPA) of 1.0 or lower were given the opportunity to participate in a program called Academic Made, in which they met regularly with their academic advisor and attended study skills or similar workshops. Over a two-year period, an additional 30 students persisted to the sophomore year, increasing the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate to 77 percent for the 2006 freshman cohort and to 78.3 percent for the 2007 freshman cohort.

Following the success of the Academic Made program, the university changed the disqualification requirements to allow first-time matriculates earning below a 1.0 GPA to be placed on probation if they participate in the [Partnership for Academic Commitment to Excellence \(PACE\)](#). PACE is a collaborative effort by many campus departments to provide services to support freshmen on probation in improving their performance. These support services include increased interaction with advisors, individual tutoring, workshops, assessment of study skills, and personal counseling.

In 2011, Ball State created the position of retention and graduation specialist. This individual is responsible for working with students at risk of not returning to the institution in order to discover the underlying reasons for their situation and to direct them to appropriate resources and services to remedy the problem.

The university has also implemented several other programs and initiatives that are helping first-year students make a successful transition to college and boosting retention, persistence, and completion rates.

## **Freshman Connections**

Throughout its 16-year evolution, the [Freshman Connections](#) program has enhanced the academic achievement and persistence of new students by providing opportunities for them to interact with their peers and faculty through a variety of extracurricular activities, including cultural and social events. Special living-learning communities, a common reader, and a common writing experience also connect freshmen with each other and with the university. In 2008, a [Commuter Ambassadors](#) program was added to Freshman Connections. In this program, upper-level student ambassadors help first-year commuter students make connections on campus, and monthly workshops address needs specific to commuter students. With the



implementation of this program, commuter retention jumped from 68 percent for the 2007 cohort to above 74 percent for the 2011 cohort.

Ball State is consistently recognized for the excellence of its first-year programs. For example, in 2012 *U.S. News & World Report* invited college presidents, chief academic officers, deans of students, and deans of admissions from more than 1,500 schools to nominate up to 10 institutions with stellar examples of first-year experiences. Ball State was included among 23 colleges and universities mentioned most often by these educational leaders. In fact, *U.S. News* has ranked Ball State's programs for first-year students among the top in the country for nine years in a row as of fall semester 2012.

## Summer Bridge Programs

Ball State's [Summer Bridge Programs](#) give new students an opportunity to get a head start on college by helping them meet other students, build confidence, learn leadership skills, and become more familiar with the university. The programs vary in duration and focus. Many are offered at times that allow students to participate in multiple programs. Examples include:

- [Accelerate](#), sponsored by the Office of Housing and Residence Life, allows first-time freshmen to move in early and participate in experiences focused on getting involved in their residence hall, tools for achieving academic success, learning about campus, making friends, and other opportunities to promote a successful transition to Ball State.
- [Cardinal Leadership and Service Seminar \(CLASS\)](#) allows freshmen to move to campus early and gain valuable experience in the areas of service, citizenship, leadership, and success.
- [Early Start](#) focuses on academics by offering a four-day, 1-credit seminar sponsored by the University College. Freshmen interact with other students and popular professors while learning about an interesting subject of their choice.
- [Excel Summer Mentor Program](#) for first-year students of color is a four-day experience that features workshops designed to introduce participants to the college experience and resources that support academic and social development.
- Outdoor adventures such as [whitewater rafting](#) and [backpacking](#), sponsored by the Office of Recreation Services, introduce students to unique environments as they get to know each other and learn about upcoming college opportunities.

Students who participate in these programs return for their sophomore year at a significantly higher rate (82 percent for the [2011–12 cohort](#)) than the general freshman retention rate.

## Living-Learning Communities

Ball State's [Living-Learning Communities \(LLC\)](#) are either major-based (e.g., Business, Communication, Education, Nursing) or interest-based (Discover, Emerging Media, International). Students who participate in these programs benefit from learning teams that offer advising and immersive programming in the residence halls and in the community, often related to the major or focus area of the LLC. These learning teams include academic

advisors, career advisors, librarians, faculty, residence hall directors, other professional staff, and student staff.

The effects of these communities on student success have been examined using surveys, focus groups, and an analysis of [MAP-Works](#) comparative data. Students reported that living close to others in the same major is beneficial in terms of creating study groups and adjusting to the university. Students in a major-based LLC have an increased commitment to their chosen major compared to students in an LLC not based on a major. Students also expressed a desire for more connections to their courses, and in collaboration with University College, a change in how freshmen are enrolled in various courses and assigned to their residence hall and room was implemented for the fall 2012 semester.

MAP-Works data indicate that men participating in a living-learning community were less likely to be on academic probation than other men. The fall-to-spring retention rate for all LLC students was 94 percent, compared with 92 percent for other students. It appears that [interventions by residence hall directors](#) with students receiving midterm deficiency notices were helpful in getting students to meet with an academic advisor or faculty member, seek tutoring, or visit Ball State's Learning Center.

## **21st Century Scholar Support**

Since 1990, Indiana's 21st Century Scholars program has made strides toward ensuring that every student can afford a college education. Through this initiative, income-eligible seventh and eighth-graders who fulfill a pledge of good citizenship are guaranteed to receive up to four years of undergraduate tuition at any participating public college or university in Indiana. In fall 2012, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education funded a full-time position to be staffed by an AmeriCorps member to work with first- and second-year 21st Century Scholars at Ball State.

The 21st Century Scholars support specialist is housed within the Office of Admissions and works collaboratively with a variety of campus offices and services. The goals of the support program are to create a sense of community among 21st Century Scholars on campus, provide support and advocate for the scholars, encourage scholars to excel by getting involved on campus, and ensure the scholars maintain financial aid eligibility. This position is funded for two years.

Additional performance measures outlined by the Scholar Corps grant include that scholars obtain a cumulative GPA 20 percent above their baseline peers, that scholars will persist to their next year as a full-time college student at a rate 25 percent better than their baseline peers, and that, as a result of member support, scholars will participate in a minimum of eight hours each month in educationally purposeful activities intended to increase their academic performance, on-time graduation rates, college access, community engagement, financial literacy, and college persistence.

## **Immersive Learning Experiences**

The university's 2012–2017 strategic plan continues to place immersive learning at the center of a Ball State education—striving to provide every undergraduate student with one of these opportunities, maintain a minimum annual participation level of 4,200 students, and offer at

least one of these experiences through every undergraduate department each year (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Goal 1, Objective 3, PI 24–30, p. 9*). In recent years, more and more students have participated in immersive learning experiences as part of interdisciplinary student teams that solve problems for community partners. Students use their classroom instruction to create business plans, websites, documentaries, content and applications for emerging media, and publications designed to have a lasting impact. Students develop career-making connections and demonstrate real-world experience to future employers.

In 2012–13, a total of 4,414 students and 39 departments participated in immersive learning experiences. Ball State's goal is that all departments will offer immersive learning experiences, and all students who wish to participate in immersive learning will be able to do so. Immersive learning is described in greater detail under Criterion 1, [Subcomponent 1.D.1](#). (A set of [online videos](#) and the [immersive learning website](#) provide examples of these projects.)

### **Building Better Communities Fellows**

One of the most popular hands-on learning options for faculty and students is called [Building Better Communities \(BBC\) Fellows](#), which enhances the economy and quality of life in Indiana by directly helping local businesses and organizations to improve services, quality, and competitiveness and develop new job opportunities. Other BBC Fellows goals include developing a more educated workforce and increasing the number of college graduates who stay in Indiana. The program creates new business connections for students in a wide variety of disciplines, increases their potential for employment in Indiana, and provides professional field experience. BBC Fellows enhances students' academic experiences and increases the number of students participating in immersive learning. The Building Better Communities initiative is discussed more fully under Criterion 1, [Subcomponent 1.D.1](#).

### **MAP-Works**

To better understand and address the factors associated with retention, persistence, and student success, Ball State uses the [MAP-Works](#) system from Educational Benchmarking (EBI). MAP-Works is an assessment system designed to promote student success and retention by helping students align their behaviors with successful outcomes and by providing administrators (e.g., residence hall staff, advisors) with an early alert and monitoring system so they can identify students at risk of leaving the university. The original survey was developed by Ball State's Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research (now the Office of Institutional Effectiveness), Office of Housing and Residence Life, Academic Advising Center, and Learning Center. In fall 2006, the university partnered with EBI to move the survey and its reporting online.

Ball State currently administers the MAP-Works survey to first- and second-year students early in the fall semester. Students are asked questions about factors known to be related to retention and persistence, such as their desire to stay at the university, the degree of homesickness they experience, and how frequently they attend class. After completing the survey, students receive customized reports that help them better understand their individual strengths and weaknesses in areas essential to their persistence at Ball State.

The MAP-Works system provides the infrastructure to manage important support and intervention efforts students may need. Summary reports and analyses also provide the data

necessary for informing policies and procedures that promote retention and persistence. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) produces summary reports on the MAP-Works surveys for [first-year students](#), [sophomores](#), and [transfer students](#). More in-depth analyses and comparisons are produced for additional subgroups, such as students participating in living-learning communities.

## **Registration Assistance**

Another retention initiative targets freshmen who, for whatever reason, have not successfully registered for their next semester's classes. Timely course registration is a strong indicator of student progression toward graduation. Following registration, a list of freshman nonregistrants is generated, and they are contacted by residence hall staff (for students living on campus) or other student affairs staff (for commuting students). The staff member completes a Non-Enrolled Student Questionnaire based on information provided by the student. Capturing student cell phone numbers during the orientation program has helped to increase the contact made with students living off campus.

For students with university "holds," attempts are made to help them resolve the issues to clear the path for registration. For example, the Ball State Health Center may place a hold on a student's record because he or she has not shown proof of required immunizations or a physical. Another common example is when the bursar's office places a hold because a fine or fee is overdue.

Financial assistance to promote retention to the second year was made available in 2012. Retention funds were made available to help first-year students in recognition of their academic excellence and to help clear any outstanding bursar balances. The [retention fund](#) awarded \$63,925 to 28 students in 2012–13. Additionally, financial assistance was granted to transfer and senior-level students in support of continued progress toward timely graduation.

## **On-Time Degree Completion**

In 2011, Ball State launched [cost-saving initiatives](#) to improve on-time degree completion among undergraduate students, an important priority of the university and the State of Indiana. The new Completion Scholarship awards \$500 to Indiana students who graduate within four calendar years. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of discounted tuition for summer courses and to build hybrid schedules that combine online and on-campus courses. In addition, Ball State reduced the minimum number of credits required for graduation to 120 from 126. Students who maximize all of these opportunities could save nearly \$6,000 over four years.

Other institutional efforts to promote four-year degree completion include:

**Excess Credit Hours Fee**—Implemented in fall 2012, this fee is charged to Indiana resident undergraduate students who have been enrolled at the university for more than four calendar years and have earned more than 144 credit hours during that time. The charge is \$150 per credit hour accumulated in excess of 144 credit hours (not including transfer hours). The purpose of the fee is to encourage students who have earned enough credit hours to attain a baccalaureate to complete and accept their degree.

**Think 15 Initiative**—In fall 2012, Ball State’s associate provost (who is also dean of University College) and the associate vice president for student affairs were asked to cochair the “Think 15” task force on four-year degree completion. The Think 15 concept resulted from research conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness showing that a major predictor of students not graduating in four years is carrying fewer than 15 hours a semester. The purpose of the task force is to identify factors inhibiting progress, including the financial impact of delayed graduation, and to gather information related to current efforts in order to identify gaps or needs.

An initial report with recommendations and a plan for implementation was presented to the provost and vice president for student affairs in early October 2012. Ongoing dialogue and program and policy reviews will continue in order to eliminate barriers to graduation and support student success.

**Unit Completion Tracking**—Ball State’s provost provides academic departments with reports on degree completion within their units. This information has been collected in spreadsheet form for the past decade and can be used to identify persistence, which helps departments in terms of advising and course scheduling. Some areas such as telecommunications, nursing, and the Teachers College have begun to track students after they complete a gateway course or at each stage of progress. Others have undertaken further study as to why their students are not progressing or graduating.

For example, the Department of Physics and Astronomy used external assessment information from a study of similar physics departments to develop strategies for improving student retention, persistence, and completion in the undergraduate physics program. The department implemented several of the best practices from the SPIN-UP Project sponsored by the American Association of Physics Teachers, such as providing an undergraduate study room for students to work on homework, engage with peers and faculty, and develop a sense of community within the department. A 1-hour class, PHYCS 115, was created to familiarize students with the major, create a sense of community, introduce faculty members and their research, review program planning materials online, and otherwise offer assistance. Similar courses are required for majors in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management and the Department of Psychological Science.

The Department of Physics and Astronomy also offers a robust colloquium series that brings to campus professional scientists from academia, business, and industry to provide networking opportunities for majors. Programmatic changes have also been made to enhance the academic experience and better prepare graduates for advanced study and careers. Changes include a problem-solving course, PHYCS 111, for students enrolled in algebra-based physics courses and a formal undergraduate research requirement, including oral and poster presentations to demonstrate communication skills.

These efforts have been effective: Over the past three years, the physics department has been recognized by the American Institute of Physics for placing in the top 15 percent of departments nationwide in the number of students receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees in physics.

## Transfer Initiatives

A new initiative to improve persistence and completion focuses on transfer students. Transfer student data from 2003 to 2010 was summarized in [two reports](#), which presented four findings:

- Transfer students overall were less likely than other Ball State students to persist and graduate.
- Transfer students were more likely to academically disqualify than other Ball State students.
- Upper-division (advanced) transfer students were less likely to disqualify than were freshman transfer students and were therefore more likely to complete a degree.
- Transfer students from Ivy Tech Community College were retained at a slightly higher rate than other transfer students.

In December 2011, Ball State's vice president for student affairs created a task force to examine the issues and challenges related to transfer students. The [Transfer Student Task Force Report](#) was released in March 2012 with recommendations for how Ball State can better assist transfer students in the transition to meet academic expectations and connect socially in order to persist and graduate.

Several of the task force recommendations are being implemented in 2012–13, including:

- Ball State has begun targeted recruitment of high-achieving transfer students. The coordinator of transfer admission is working to build connections with key community colleges, and collaboration with academic advisors at the community colleges will provide transparency and improve confidence and accuracy in transfer advising.
- Prospective and new transfer students are encouraged to connect with Ball State's Career Center early and often, and career assessment and advising are offered during the transfer orientation programs.
- Transfer students living on campus are invited to participate in the university's living-learning communities, and key events during Welcome Week will cater to new transfer students.
- Transfer student ambassadors will assist new transfer students during the critical first semester at Ball State, with a focus on the needs of commuter and advanced transfer students.

## Enterprise Resource Planning

Ball State's implementation of an [Enterprise Resource Planning \(ERP\)](#) software system and database for processing all institution-wide transactions will enhance the university's efforts to help students progress and graduate on time. The ERP system integrates information related to all of the institution's core functions, including course registration, grades, financial aid, finance, and human resources. Students used the system to register for fall 2012 courses.



The Banner system will tie successful registration to students' academic profiles and completion or enrollment in appropriate prerequisite/corequisite courses. A process of checking for majors and prerequisite/corequisite courses will allow for a more accurate count of majors and will indicate whether students are progressing in a timely fashion within their majors. Additional software programs such as Bb Analytics, Bb Learn, and Talisma will likely introduce tools that will assist faculty advisors and students in making decisions that support academic success.

In fall 2012, Ball State also rolled out [DegreeWorks](#), a comprehensive academic advising, transfer articulation, and degree audit software solution that helps students and their advisors negotiate curriculum requirements. DegreeWorks allows academic departments to identify when and where students in their programs appear to lag or fall behind, and students can plot courses to complete their degrees in a timely fashion through eight-semester plans. Students who do not take unnecessary courses are more likely to stay directly on the path to graduation.

**Subcomponent 4.C.4.** The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Historically, Ball State has tracked retention by evaluating first-time freshman fall enrollment cohorts. In each of its recent strategic plans, the university has created stretch goals for increasing the retention of first-time fall freshmen. The institution has been able to identify each matriculating freshman, determine any pre-enrollment orientation or summer programming in which the student participated that might affect retention, follow freshman academic progress with the assistance of midterm deficiency reports from faculty, and observe student engagement through residence hall and other programming developed by the Division of Student Affairs.

Other best-practice retention and completion initiatives include:

**Four-Year Plans**—Each academic department has created four-year (or degree-appropriate) academic plans so that students and advisors—both departmental and university—can benchmark student progress toward graduation and adapt recommendations to students based on their evolving interests. The Think 15 initiative, which originated in empirical work by faculty and staff, linked four-year graduation to the propensity of students to take 15 or more credit hours per semester. Think 15 is discussed further under [Subcomponent 4.C.3.](#)

**DegreeWorks**—What had been tracked by advisors on the Degree Analysis Progress Report (DAPR) system is now available to both students and advisors through [DegreeWorks](#). Added capabilities of the new system include alerts when a student goes off the plan and jeopardizes timely graduation and the ability to track electronically in “notes” the precise recommendations made to students about what courses they should register for in each semester in which advising took place.

**Data Management**—The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) has taken the lead in working with colleagues across the campus to improve the accuracy, timeliness, and

utility of information about persistence and graduation. The university's conversion to the Elucian/Banner Enterprise Resource Planning system, the adoption of data warehousing and business intelligence, the work of the Data Management Committee, use of the National Student Clearinghouse's Student Tracker, and the move from reporting to analysis and prediction of first-year retention and time-to-degree attainment are all examples of extending the university's decision support capability in the areas of persistence and graduation.

Beginning in fall 2013, OIE will facilitate analysis of persistence (at any point in time) and graduation of freshman, transfer, and graduate students by major, demographic characteristics, participation in enrichment experiences, etc. Concurrent with these efforts is an ongoing campus conversation and collaboration to ensure that definitions and procedures are both consistent and relevant to all of Ball State's various stakeholders and also consistent with State of Indiana and U.S. Department of Education guidelines.

Among the stakeholders of greatest interest are the university's faculty. Their observations and records about student attendance, engagement, and academic performance are essential data. As Ball State expands its historic focus on retention to equally intense examinations of persistence and completion, faculty data will be correlated with cocurricular engagement data to develop a fuller portrait of students who are retained, who persist, and who graduate in a timely manner. These and other empirical studies form an important agenda for OIE.

#### **Summary: Core Component 4.C.**

Since 2006, Ball State has collected much information, created a great number of intervention programs, and seen its student retention, persistence, and completion rates improve. Having reached the 80 percent retention target once and lingered near it often, we realize how difficult that stretch goal is to attain and surpass regularly.

Continuing and expanding the university's commitment to educational excellence, retention, persistence, and completion will remain a high priority, as reflected in the 2012–2017 strategic plan. This will involve an even closer examination of the success rates and contributing causes for the retention, persistence, and graduation of specific student subgroups and the overall student population. In addition, increased attention will be given to the opportunities that new technology, new expressions of community, and new pedagogies provide for teaching, advising and engaging students. We have every confidence that the university's stakeholders—faculty, staff, alumni, friends, public officials, citizens, and students—are united behind the goals of retaining students, providing pathways for their persistence, and celebrating their timely graduation into productive citizenship in the 21st century.

## **Criterion Five—Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness**

**The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.**

Ball State University has used strategic planning for more than a decade to focus and guide its operations. The primary purpose of resource development is to accomplish the university's mission and objectives that arise from the strategic planning process and to prepare for the institution's future. *Strategic Plan 2001–2006* set forth basic operating principles that have been followed through the years, including: "University resources will be allocated in a manner that will carry out the mission of the university and the goals of the plan" (*Strategic Plan 2001–2006*, p. 3).

Subsequent strategic plans for 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 have been, and will continue to be, the guiding beacons for all efforts and initiatives of the university. The Ball State way is to develop a collective vision and mission and then create a strategic plan with strategies, goals, and performance objectives that are carefully implemented and assessed. All resources, structures, and processes are used as the institution pursues its mission and plans for the future.

In February 2013, the topic for the university's administrative retreat was how to plan initiatives to accomplish the 107 performance indicators of the 2012–2017 strategic plan. Some potential initiatives were discussed at the meeting, and all participants were asked to replicate the process within their respective units. Ball State is also in the early stages of a comprehensive campus master planning process that will be directed by an outside firm. Campus constituents will be engaged to provide information beginning in summer 2013. The final report and recommendations are due in 2014.

The university's biennial budget request to the Indiana General Assembly illustrates how the university plans for the future. The [2013–2015 budget request document](#), [presentations by the president](#), and [campus master plan](#) are available to the public on Ball State's [Financial Transparency Website](#).

### **Core Component 5.A.**

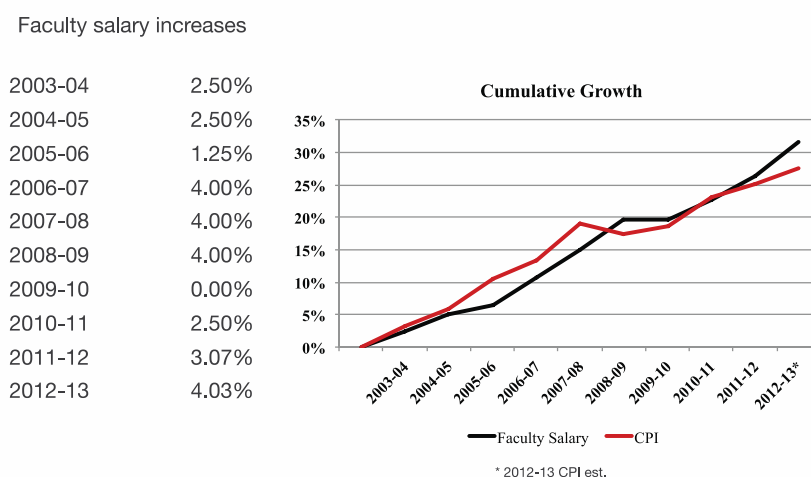
**The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.**

Resources are the lifeblood of a university, and Ball State University procures, develops, and uses its fiscal, human, physical, and technological wherewithal to provide a high-quality educational experience and accomplish its strategic goals. Furthermore, resource planning for the future is a continuous and integrated activity tied intricately to the institution's strategic planning goals.

**Subcomponent 5.A.1.** The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Ball State's financial resources are sufficient. Even with the economic downturn that began near the end of the previous decade, the university has been able to provide salary increases for employees every year except one, when the state government asked for a freeze. Raises averaging 4 percent were arranged the following year (see Figure 5.1 below).

**Figure 5.1: Faculty Salary Increases**



Human resources are very lean and the university [operates very efficiently](#), based on the data and methodology from studies published by the Goldwater Institute and the Center for College Affordability and Productivity. Yet the university continues to maintain the quality of the educational experience as student-to-faculty ratios remain low and most courses are taught by faculty rather than graduate students.

Ball State has a well-developed technological infrastructure, and the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiative will enhance the university's operational systems to meet future needs. In addition, the physical assets of the campus are constantly reviewed and have undergone extensive modernization during the past 10 years in response to the institution's evolving needs.

## Fiscal Resources

Ball State's [annual operating budget](#) is approximately \$322 million, and state appropriations for operations fund about 38 percent of this budget. All categories of state appropriations together represent approximately 31 percent of total institutional revenues. The state's appropriations include line- item funding to support Ball State's "The Entrepreneurial University" initiative to recruit high-quality students, provide an innovative curriculum, and promote economic development. The Indiana legislature increased its appropriation for this initiative by \$4.1 million for fiscal year 2014. The university also continues to rely on a variety of other funding sources, including tuition and fees paid by students, external support for

research and scholarly activities in sponsored programs (grants, contracts, in-kind contributions, etc.), and private gifts.

**Economic Challenges**—Perhaps the greatest threat to resource planning is the volatility of external economic conditions. The 2007–2009 recession created financial challenges for Ball State, just as it did for higher education in general. As a state-assisted institution, the university has faced decreased financial support from the Indiana legislature. Overall, Ball State’s [annual compound growth rate](#) of state operating appropriations was -0.3 percent between 2003–04 and 2013–14, and it has dropped 9.5 percent between 2008–09 and 2013–14.

In December 2009, the state cut its 2009–2011 biennial budget appropriation to higher education by \$150 million, and Ball State’s portion was \$15.2 million. To meet this challenge, the university devised an internal campaign to inform and solicit input from all employees. The process was transparent, widely accepted, and helpful in finding cost savings. This plan to meet the target cuts “reflected Ball State’s commitment to academic excellence and the need to invest in its future, while being mindful that the uncertainty of future appropriations demands careful cost containment” (*Financial Report 2011*, p. 4).

The state’s 2009 appropriation cut was followed by another reduction of 4.7 percent for the [2011–12 fiscal year](#). In response, the university found additional means for generating cost savings and instituted new revenue-generating initiatives. Two of these targeted international students and graduate students.

- **International enrollment**—Ball State’s international student initiative through the 2007–2012 strategic plan focused on increasing enrollment from international origins to 5 percent of the total student enrollment, or approximately 1,000 students (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, PI 5, p. 4). The university has allocated more than \$5 million from university reserves to invest in this initiative. [Fall 2012 tuition and fees revenue](#) from all international students totaled \$6.5 million. The net revenue—which is the gross revenue minus the scholarships distributed—equaled \$4.7 million. The highest number of international students enrolling on campus in one year is 873. This initiative continues with the 2012–2017 strategic plan, which includes a goal of enrolling 1,000 international students (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 43, p. 10).
- **Graduate enrollment**—The second revenue-generating initiative resulted from a complete [restructuring](#) of the university’s tuition and fees. The specific initiative of interest here was increasing revenue from graduate student tuition. Prior to this process, tuition was the same for both graduate and undergraduate students, but graduate students paid a slightly higher per-course fee. The tuition restructuring significantly increased tuition for graduate students. Another part of this effort was the hiring of a graduate student recruiter, who was charged with increasing [graduate student enrollment](#).

The decision-making process used to identify these two revenue-generating initiatives and cost savings in other areas again placed the highest priority on protecting and enhancing the quality of Ball State’s educational experience and moving forward in achieving the goals of the university’s strategic plan. These international enrollment and graduate student recruitment

initiatives also increased the diversity on campus, providing a richer experience for all students. Other diversity initiatives are discussed under Criterion 1, Subcomponent 1.C.2.

An additional challenge facing the university is the performance-based formula for funding established by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and largely adopted by the Indiana legislature when drafting the state's 2013–2015 biennial budget. The funding formula removes 2.2 percent of the base operating appropriation budget from each public institution in fiscal 2014 and 2.2 percent again from the fiscal 2015 budget. In addition to these base reallocations, the legislature is providing an average increase of 3.8 percent of new state funding to the higher education operating appropriation in fiscal year 2014 and no additional increase in fiscal year 2015. The state combines the base reallocation and the new appropriation to distribute 6 percent of the total operating appropriation back to the institutions based upon each school's performance against state-established metrics.

For the 2013–2015 biennium, the significant metrics affecting Ball State are the following (each metric includes only Indiana residents):

- increase the four-year graduation rate
- increase the number of students who graduate
- increase the number of at-risk students who graduate (defined as Pell Grant recipients)
- increase the number of graduates in specific “high-impact” fields (e.g., science, technology, engineering, math) as identified by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- a self-identified “performance” metric

The commission selected three years to use as the baseline (2005–06 to 2007–08) and another three years (2008–09 to 2010–11) to determine whether increases have occurred in each area. The factors above focus on the quantity of degrees awarded, while Ball State's efforts have concentrated on increasing *quality* rather than quantity, even though *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ranked the university sixth for improvement in graduation rates among the nation's public research institutions between 2001 and 2008.

This funding formula resulted in an appropriation reduction of approximately \$750,000, or 0.6 percent in fiscal year 2014, and no change in the fiscal year 2015 appropriation. However, the legislature increased line-item funding for Ball State's “The Entrepreneurial University” initiative by \$4.1 million for fiscal year 2014, producing a net increase in total funding to the university of \$3.3 million. The state had initially anticipated an \$11.4 million reduction in Ball State's appropriations before the budget moved through the various levels of legislative review. The university's budget process is discussed further under [Subcomponent 5.A.5](#).

**Favorable Factors—**On a more positive fiscal note, Indiana has weathered the recession better than many states. The Hoosier State's gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a faster rate than the national average, tax receipts have increased, and a budget surplus allowed the state to give taxpayer refunds for 2012. External validation of Ball State's success in navigating a challenging financial environment came from *Standard & Poor's*, which in November 2010



raised the university's credit rating from [A+ to AA-](#), citing "a strong management team, which utilizes good fiscal planning and policies." In 2011–12, *Standard & Poor's* reaffirmed its rating during a period that saw a general unfavorable outlook for public higher education.

The university has also been successful in obtaining private funding for strategic initiatives:

- **Ball State Bold**—The highly successful Ball State Bold capital campaign concluded after raising a record \$210.8 million in support of university programs. The campaign was "the most ambitious and successful in the university's history" (*Financial Report 2011*, p. 5). The public phase of the campaign was kicked off in September 2008 and officially wrapped up on June 30, 2011.
- **Lilly V Grant**—From 2004 to 2009, Ball State benefited from a [\\$4.9 million grant](#) from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The purpose of the "Lilly V" grant was to fund science-based faculty and initiatives and especially to serve as seed money for new faculty in the sciences. This grant provided funding for start-up packages for new science faculty, which enabled the hiring of nearly all new science faculty during that time period. The university has since found other financial resources to provide needed start-up packages for new faculty.

Given the relative financial stringency of the recent past, Ball State continues to adhere to its goal of "maintaining the quality of the students' educational experience...[as] the highest priority in the decision-making process" (*Financial Report 2011*, p. 5). In a 2011 interview, Randy Howard, vice president for business affairs and treasurer, emphasized the importance of maintaining an excellent academic experience for students. According to Howard, resources to support academic and nonacademic operations are sufficient, but the university is "running in a very lean fiscal environment" in terms of higher education in the U.S. and in Indiana.

## Human Resources

Ball State's human capital is dedicated to carrying out the institution's mission of providing a high-quality educational experience that integrates disciplinary knowledge with application in a way that "fundamentally changes students, researchers, and our external partners." Faculty and staff help the university "transform information into knowledge, knowledge into judgment, and judgment into action that addresses complex problems" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

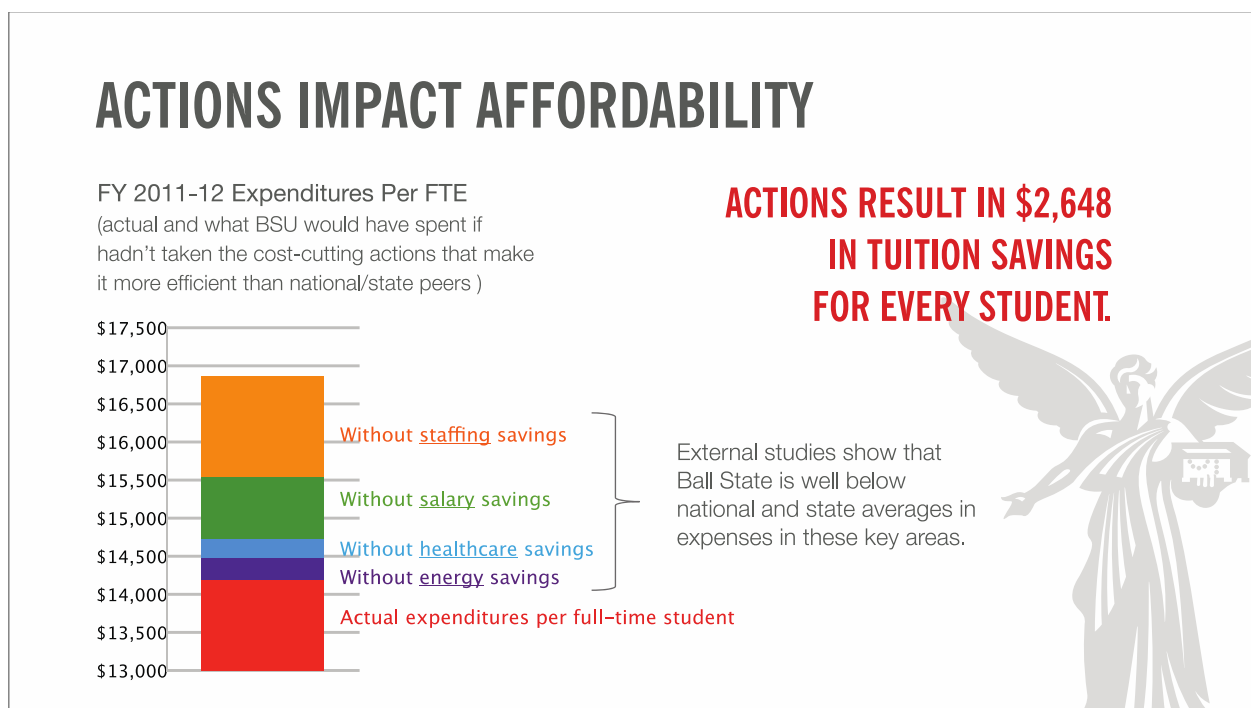
During the 2012–13 fiscal year, Ball State had 2,862 full-time employees, including:

- 949 full-time tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track [faculty members](#). About 70 percent of them are in tenure-line positions, and 30 percent are in non-tenure positions. About 90 percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty hold terminal [degrees in their disciplines](#).
- 1,913 full-time staff and service employees in six categories: administrative staff, professional staff, technical/paraprofessional staff, clerical/secretarial, skilled crafts, and [service/maintenance](#). The staff and service employee population has been consistent over time and plays a significant role in supporting and facilitating Ball State's educational programs.

To deliver on its mission and strategic goals, Ball State maintains a low [student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1](#), and [about 97 percent of student credit hours](#) are taught by faculty, not graduate students. In fact, tenured faculty teach many freshman courses. A number of faculty also serve a crucial role as mentors for interdisciplinary student teams in the university's signature immersive learning experiences. These experiences are discussed more fully under Criterion 1, [Subcomponent 1.A.2.](#) and [Core Component 1.D.](#)

Also in support of the educational mission, the university has been diligent in managing its administrative resources as efficiently as possible (see Figure 5.2 below). These efforts have been [verified by external studies](#). Using the data and methodology from a report by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, Ball State is shown to have a lower level of administrative staffing per student than the average public university. In addition, the data and methodology from a study published by the Goldwater Institute reveals that Ball State's administrative staffing growth rate was one of the lowest in the United States.

**Figure 5.2: Administrative Efficiency**



To weather the economic downturn in 2008–09, Ball State imposed a [partial hiring freeze or](#) delay for nonacademic positions. Vacated positions could be filled, but units were required to provide increased rationale for the need for the position as well as an analysis of alternative means to accomplish the responsibilities. This practice continues today.

At the same time, employee wellness initiatives are creating additional cost efficiencies and improving productivity on campus. [Working Well](#) offers a variety of programs that help faculty and staff get and stay healthy—mentally, physically, and emotionally. Services include wellness incentives, health coaching, campus walking maps, personal trainers, and nutrition consulting. Smoking cessation programs are available through the Office of Health, Alcohol, and Drug Education. Employees who use tobacco have a financial incentive to quit since Ball State

now provides non-tobacco users with a [\\$600 yearly reduction](#) in health insurance premiums. A tobacco user's annual medical costs average \$1,700 more than a nonuser's. The university has also instituted a [tobacco-free campus policy](#).

## Physical Resources

Widely admired for its attractiveness and traditional collegiate feel, Ball State's [731-acre campus](#) includes 106 academic, administrative, auxiliary, and residential buildings. Eleven residence hall complexes and two apartment communities house about 7,550 students on campus. Ball State also has slightly more than 400 additional acres of research property and maintains two outreach centers in the Greater Indianapolis area—one at Meridian and Maryland streets downtown and one in the Saxony development in Fishers. The current replacement value of all campus facilities is [approximately \\$2 billion](#).

These physical resources are an essential component of the institution's strategic goals to "improve the university community's quality of life" (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012, Goal 4, p. 10*) and "invest in an increasingly vibrant and integrated university community" (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017, Goal 3, p. 5*). These goals focus on providing a vital and accommodating campus atmosphere—one that supports and enhances learning, scholarship, institutional effectiveness, and quality of life. To this end, Ball State is committed to the continuous development and expansion of the campus through construction of new facilities and renovation of existing ones.

**Master Planning**—Since the original campus core was laid out in 1922, Ball State has maintained long-term master plans for campus development. The most recent, the [1982 Rundell Ernstberger Plan \(p. 53 of linked document\)](#), was updated in 1991 and 2001, and several projects are ongoing, in development, or in planning. As mentioned in the introduction for this criterion, the university is just beginning another major [campus master planning process](#), which will take place in 2013–14. Aligned with this will be a process to create an academic plan.

Over the years, expansion and growth have been accommodated primarily by acquiring land adjacent to and/or near the campus in a strategic, far-sighted manner. These acquisitions are made without state funding. The university has a reserve for further campus development that can fund the purchase of new land, but it most likely will be used for continuing the development of infrastructure on existing university property.

Since 2004, Ball State has fulfilled its commitment to transparency in master planning by presenting plan updates to various university constituencies as requested. The [most recent presentation](#) was given to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education in August 2012 and is available for the public on Ball State's [Financial Transparency website](#).

The university takes pride in its fiduciary responsibility to construct and maintain campus facilities in the best possible condition for students and faculty. Over a 10-year period ending in 2013–14, Ball State will have invested more than \$520 million in new construction, renovations, and other campus improvements.

**Strategic Support**—Ball State's building and renovation program is designed to support developments in teaching and technology, enhance campus safety and the physical environment, and promote a sense of community. During the past 10 years, the university

has constructed or renovated more than 400,000 square feet of instructional facilities, increasing the total plant value by more than \$150 million. More than \$262 million has been invested in the renovation of existing facilities, with a majority of resources going toward classroom buildings.

One example of a new facility that supports teaching and emerging technology is the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, a \$21 million complex that serves four academic departments and houses Indiana Public Radio. With 75,000 square feet of classrooms, faculty offices, and studio suites—including a \$1 million postproduction complex—this facility advances transformative learning experiences by providing students and faculty with the latest media production and postproduction technology. In 2009, the facility won an Emmy Award for technical achievement. The building was dedicated by *CBS Late Show* host David Letterman, a Ball State alumnus, in September 2007. *(A video about the [Letterman Building](#) is available online.)*

Other academic facilities constructed or renovated since Ball State's 2004 accreditation include:

- Music Instruction Building/Sursa Performance Hall (new)
- Marilyn K. Glick Center for Glass (new)
- A. Umit Taftali Center for Capital Markets and Investing (new)
- David Owsley Museum of Art (renovation/expansion)
- Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Honors House (renovation)
- Applied Technology Building (renovation)
- North Quadrangle Building (renovation)
- Teachers College Building (renovation)

*(Photo galleries of these [academic buildings](#) and a video about the [Glick Center](#) are available online.)*

Other campus facilities constructed or renovated since 2004 include:

- Student Recreation and Wellness Center (new)
- Kinghorn and Park Residence Halls (new)
- Briner Sports Complex (new)
- Scheumann Stadium (renovation)
- L.A. Pittenger Student Center (renovation)
- DeHority, Studebaker East, and Johnson Residence Complexes (renovation)
- Woodworth Commons (renovation)
- Lucina Hall (renovation)
- McKinley, Riverside, Bethel, and Neely Avenues (renovation)

(Photo galleries of these [nonacademic buildings](#), [athletic facilities](#), and the [McKinley Avenue renovation](#) as well as [proposed facilities](#) are available online, along with videos about the [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#) and the new [Unified Media Lab](#).)

Meeting an objective in *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, Student Recreation and Wellness Center, Park Hall, DeHority Complex, Studebaker East residence hall, and the District Energy Station North were designed in accordance with national Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and have been certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. The energy station and Studebaker East received LEED-NC Gold. Certification is pending for Kinghorn Hall. LEED certification verifies that a building was designed and constructed using strategies that address such standards as sustainable site selection, energy and water efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

Among a number of other noteworthy achievements related to Ball State's beautiful and efficient campus, three are deserving of special mention, and a fourth has received international attention:

**Disability Access**—For many years, Ball State has been a leader in accommodating the needs of students with disabilities. These efforts are coordinated and facilitated by the [Office of Disability Services](#) (formerly Disabled Student Development). In 2010, the university was [selected by disabilityfriendlycolleges.com](#) as one of 75 colleges that exceed the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ball State was recognized for its “accessible shuttle service, adaptive physical education program, disability friendly residence halls and housing, academic mentorship and wheelchair repair service.”

**Street Improvements**—Renovation projects along McKinley, Riverside, and Neely avenues brought major safety improvements and beautification to the main travel corridors through the campus. New medians, sidewalks, traffic signals, and bus pullouts were installed to facilitate pedestrian safety and improve traffic flow. In addition, the university's signature pedestrian crossing—the Scramble Light—celebrated a \$14 million facelift in November 2011. (A photo gallery of the [McKinley Avenue renovation](#) is available online.)

**Recreation Center**—To promote the lifelong improvement of the health and fitness of students, faculty, and staff, the \$40 million [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#) opened its doors in August 2010 and recorded nearly 870,000 visits within its first year. The center received a 2012 Outstanding Sports Facilities award from the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association. The 400,000-square-foot facility includes a suspended track, arena football-size indoor turf field, five-court gymnasium, three-level fitness area, multipurpose activity rooms, food service, and gathering areas. The Outdoor Pursuits Center features a 35-foot rock climbing wall and offers clinics, equipment rental, and trips for outdoor activities such as whitewater rafting, forest backpacking, bike tours, climbing, and fishing. (A video about the [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#) is available online along with photos of the facility in a gallery of [nonacademic buildings](#).)

**Geothermal System**—Ball State continues to be revolutionary and responsible by building the nation's largest ground-source, closed-loop district [geothermal energy system](#), benefiting both the economy and the environment. A few years ago, the university recognized that its four aging

coal-fired boilers needed to be replaced but was unable to find new boilers within the budgeted amount. Other options were investigated, and based on the data and information received, the decision was made to install a geothermal system. When fully operational, the system will heat and cool 47 campus buildings and replace the boilers, saving an estimated \$2 million in operating costs annually and cutting the university's carbon footprint almost in half.

Phase 1 went online in spring 2012, and the system was dedicated in conjunction with Ball State's ninth Greening of the Campus international conference. The system has already saved the university more than \$1 million in utility costs. The 2013 Indiana legislature appropriated an additional \$30 million to complete the system. The ambitious project has attracted visitors from as far away as Turkey and Japan and has garnered national attention from *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Christian Science Monitor*, National Public Radio, the White House blog, and the General Services Administration blog.

The geothermal project exemplifies Ball State's long-standing [commitment to sustainability](#), which has been recognized by the National Wildlife Federation, International Sustainable Campus Network, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, Great Lakes Association of College and University Housing Officers, and *Kiwi* and *Sierra* magazines. In 2010, the university received Second Nature's Climate Leadership Award and the Hoosier Environmental Council's Technology Innovator of the Year award. Ball State was the first public institution in Indiana listed in The Princeton Review's guides to green colleges.

In addition, President Jo Ann Gora is one of the 12 founding members of the leadership circle who signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. Ball State has also hosted nine Greening of the Campus Conferences, which bring national experts to campus to discuss sustainability efforts.

## Technological Resources

Ball State's technological infrastructure is aligned well with the university's strategic plan goals, the top one of which is to "provide distinctive, high-quality educational experiences." Our high-speed wireless and wired networks link students, faculty, classrooms, labs, residence halls, and offices campuswide. While nearly 99 percent of students have their own computers, the university has one of Indiana's largest libraries, which houses about 400 public-use computers. In addition, Ball State has its own public television and radio stations. More information about campus technology including infrastructure data, library data, and related websites is available in the [Ball State Fact Book](#).

The [Office of Information Technology \(OIT\)](#) is the primary unit charged with providing and supporting technology, communication, information, and collaborative services to Ball State faculty, students, and staff in the pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning, and research. Through its six subunits, OIT supports the university's mission by developing advanced infrastructure, promoting universal access to technology resources, providing support for the development of quality digital content, and offering programs to enhance the teaching and learning skills of faculty, students, and staff.

In keeping with the 2007–2012 strategic plan, which stated that Ball State will "maintain best-practice use and innovative use of information technology in support of strategic directions"



(*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, pp. 5, 7, 9, 11), OIT prioritizes projects that develop areas of innovation. Such recent projects include:

- **Information Technology Reorganization**—The information technology area has undergone major reorganization the past few years to focus on online learning, immersive learning, and emerging technology initiatives. Prominent examples include creation of the [Emerging Technologies and Media Development](#) subunit and the contribution of staff and resources to the [iLearn](#) initiative to enhance online education. Consolidation and standardization of resources also played a key role in creating the [Unified Technology Support](#) subunit, a one-stop support venue for all students, faculty, and staff. In addition, resources for all data, voice, and video communications have been combined into the [Unified Communications](#) group within the [Information Technology Services](#) subunit.
- **Enterprise Resource Planning**—Ball State initiated an implementation of the Ellucian Banner (formerly SunGard) [ERP system](#) in fall 2010. This effort encompasses all academic and administrative functions of the university, from preadmission to alumni. This effort replaces Ball State's legacy student, financial, and advancement systems, incorporating new business processes for workflow, analytics, document imaging, and several other ancillary systems and processes.
- **Information Security Services**—The [information security subunit](#) works to ensure the university's various systems are protected; will not be violated by tampering, illegal access, or destruction; and will recover from disasters. This subunit responds immediately to any possible security problems.
- **Vendor Partnerships**—Ball State has partnered with Apple Inc. for the past several years to offer discounted hardware and software to students, faculty, and staff. The university is also part of the Microsoft Corporation Enrollment for Education Services agreement (formerly the Microsoft Campus Agreement) for volume licensing of commonly used Microsoft software. Lenovo has also been a Ball State preferred partner for six years, offering discounted hardware to students, faculty, and staff.

Subunits of OIT are Emerging Technologies and Media Development, Hybrid Design Technologies, Information Technology Services, Unified Technology Support, University Libraries, and University Teleplex. Each is described below.

**Emerging Technologies and Media Development**—The [emerging technologies subunit](#) is primarily responsible for maintaining an awareness of emerging technologies that could be applied to education and rapidly implementing those technologies on an experimental basis. The entire unit is structured to operate in a collaborative manner with diverse skill sets all under one administrator. Additionally, Emerging Technologies is supported by Ball State's Digital Corps, an elite group of highly skilled student employees who work closely with the professional staff of this subunit. Together they have contributed to a wide variety of campus initiatives, including pioneering mobile app development and online learning initiatives. (*Photos of the Digital Corps labs are available online in a gallery of [academic buildings](#).*)

Two recent projects have supported efforts by the Board of Trustees and the Indiana legislature to move to a paperless environment. Both groups have been provided with iPads. For the Board of Trustees, all documents needed for meetings are loaded to the iPad. Digital Corps

students are available to assist the users. The initiative with the legislature ([Year One Report](#)), is a pilot project that could save the state millions of dollars in paper and printing expense as well as benefiting the environment. Ball State students created an application that allows lawmakers to view all legislation, follow updates, and watch committee hearings and sessions from an iPad or other mobile tablet. The state estimates the paper costs for a typical year to be at least \$500,000. If successful, this initiative could eliminate the use of more than 130 tons of paper.

**Hybrid Design Technologies—**[HDT](#) supports the design and production of virtual, immersive, and interactive environments and develops innovative immersive solutions for cultural heritage, museums, arts, teaching, and learning. This subunit and Ball State's Institute for Digital Intermedia Arts engage artists, scholars, designers, educators, scientists, and technicians in exploring the intersections between the arts, science, and technology. Scholarly, creative, and pedagogical projects investigate virtual reality, human computer interface, visualization, and 3-D simulation. Projects are developed in partnership with international clients, investigating the forefront of discourse in emergent media design. *(Photos of the IDIA Simulation Lab are available online in a gallery of [academic buildings](#).)*

**Information Technology Services—**[ITS](#) provides vital behind-the-scenes support of applications, computing, development, e-mail, networking, operations, voice, and video conferencing services. This subunit's groups include Business Operations, Enterprise Computing Operations, Information System Services, ITS Special Services, and Unified Communications. ITS takes pride in collaborating with the campus community, using new innovative technologies to meet the university's strategic goals and objectives. This resource provides services to students, faculty, staff, and external businesses.

**Unified Technology Support—**[UTS](#) offers a variety of services that align with its theme "Help, Learn, Fix, and Create." Major components include:

- **Concierge Desk** with knowledgeable and courteous full-time and student staff in the Tech Center inside Bracken Library
- **Desktop support** with local service providers (LSPs) to assist faculty and staff with their university-owned computer equipment and network connections
- **General computer and specialty labs** available for students, faculty, and staff to use for on-campus computing, including [adaptive technology labs](#)
- **Hardware repair services** for faculty, staff, and student computers
- **Instructional classroom support services** for faculty incorporating technology into classrooms. Faculty, staff, and students can check out audiovisual equipment and laptops through Equipment and Projectionist Services
- **Technology HelpDesk**, a single point of contact for students, faculty, and staff with problems or questions about technology-related issues
- **Technology Store**, which provides information and assistance with computers, software, and other technology products

**University Libraries**—Ball State’s [libraries](#) provide students, faculty, staff, and community users with access to resources that satisfy informational needs related to and consistent with the university’s teaching curriculum, research mission, and service programs. The main facility, Alexander M. Bracken Library, has more than five acres of assignable floor space (321,800 gross square feet) and contains 1,088,825 books, microforms, audiovisual materials, software, government publication maps, musical scores, archival records, and other information sources, excluding titles that are part of subscriptions.

With seating for more than 2,264 simultaneous users, the building includes 48 individual scholar study carrels, five study rooms, 10 large and three small conference rooms, and numerous lounges. Videoconferencing capabilities are available in two of the large conference rooms. The library’s story is told more fully in [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.D.4](#). (A photo gallery of [Bracken Library](#) is available online.)

A recent addition to Bracken Library, the [Helen B. and Martin D. Schwartz Special Collections and Digital Complex](#), connects students and faculty to numerous digital media assets and special collections and serves as a digital newsstand, providing access to international media, broadcasts, podcasts, and multimedia. Smaller branch libraries are located in the Architecture Building and Cooper Science Complex. The latter serves the university’s science departments with selected periodicals, dedicated online resources, monographs, and reference materials.

**University Teleplex**—This [multimedia resource](#) for faculty, staff, and students provides technical support services such as video production, immersive learning opportunities, DVD development, web streaming, digital graphics, video-on-demand delivery to on- and off-campus locations via the web, distance learning via the Internet, engineering repair and system design, and audiovisual delivery and distribution. The Teleplex also includes the public broadcasting stations WIPB-TV and Indiana Public Radio, which serve communities throughout east central Indiana. (Photos of the Teleplex virtual studios are available online in a gallery of [academic buildings](#).)

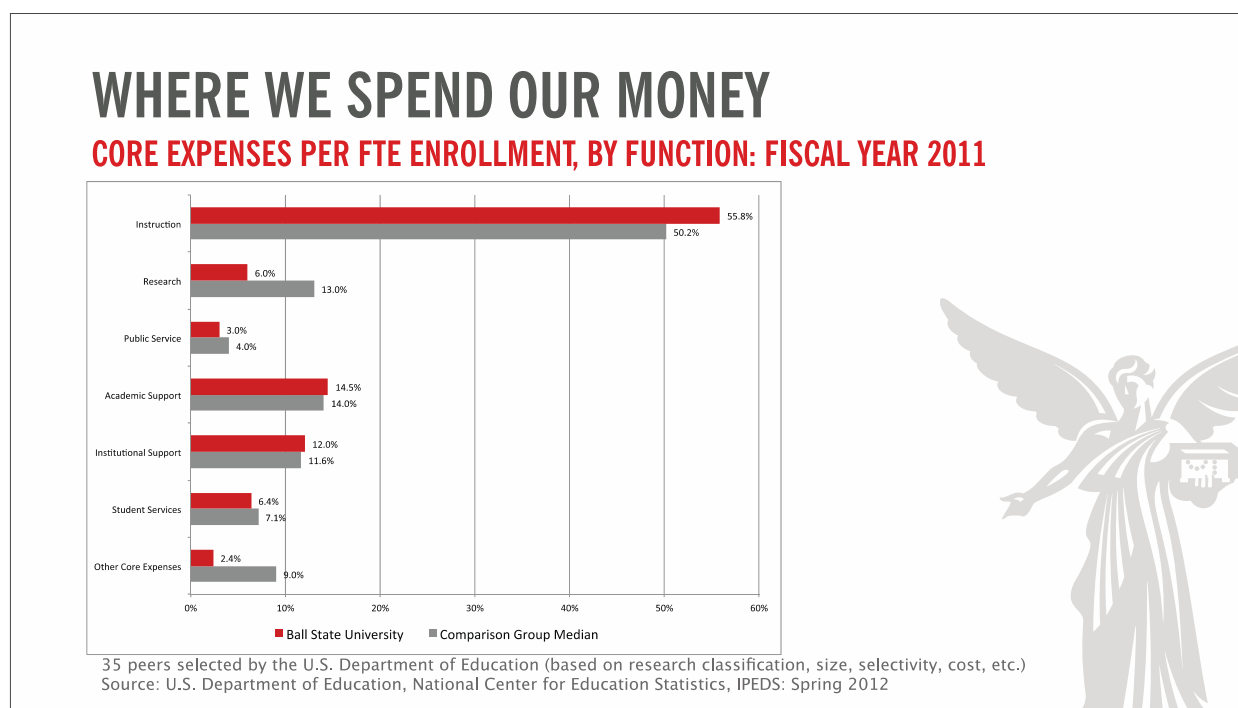
Consistent with Ball State’s strategic goals, Teleplex staff collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to enhance excellence in undergraduate and graduate learning and to ensure Ball State is a best-practice institution in the innovative use of instructional and information technology. Strategies to solicit feedback on the initial self-study report draft included [three webcast forums](#) produced by the Teleplex using its state-of-the-art studios.

**Subcomponent 5.A.2.** The institution’s resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

Ball State’s educational purposes are adequately funded, and the university does not allocate resources to noneducational purposes to the detriment of its academic objectives (see Figure 5.3 on the following page). Ball State budgets its programs in accordance with provisions in the university’s strategic plan, and funds are allocated to existing programs in response to objectives developed by units throughout the institution.

Initiatives supporting the goals, objectives, and performance indicators in the strategic plans receive priority for funding. The [Ball State Bold](#) capital campaign and external grants provide funding to enhance many aspects of the university's academic practice and by definition, Ball State has no noneducational purposes. All of the vice presidential areas—academic affairs; business affairs; student affairs; enrollment, marketing, and communications; information technology; and university advancement—directly or indirectly support the academic purposes of the university. Likewise, the [Ball State University Foundation](#), while a separate entity from the university, nevertheless supports the institution's educational objectives. Similarly, the [Ball State Innovation Corporation's](#) activities in commercializing intellectual property developed by Ball State students, faculty, and staff are closely aligned with the institution's academic purposes.

**Figure 5.3: Core Expenses per FTE Enrollment**



To protect the institution in times of economic difficulty, the university has established a plan to systematically put money into a reserve fund. That practice enabled Ball State to withstand the economic downturn of the past decade without affecting its educational mission. The university also instituted a [partial hiring freeze](#) for nonacademic positions in 2008–09 and continues to analyze the need for and potential alternatives to administrative positions when they become vacant.

**Subcomponent 5.A.3.** The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

The mission statements and goals in the three strategic plans that have guided Ball State since the university's last accreditation review have been realistic in consideration of the institution's

organization, resources, and opportunities. In the 2007–2012 strategic plan, four specific initiatives were outlined:

- offering relevant immersive learning opportunities to each undergraduate student
- attracting, retaining, and enrolling a more selective and diverse student body
- increasing the number of nationally recognized faculty and academic programs
- promoting a vibrant and supportive campus atmosphere

## **Immersive Learning**

While the results of these initiatives are ongoing, the strategic plan has enabled Ball State to pursue clarity of purpose and avoid distraction and disruption to its long-term aims. For example, 1,019 immersive learning projects (interdisciplinary student-led teams with a faculty mentor developing tangible solutions to problems for community partners) were undertaken between [2007 and 2012](#), with the involvement of 16,416 students. In the view of the university's officers, administration, and faculty, these immersive learning opportunities differentiate Ball State from other colleges and universities. The full immersive learning story is told under Criterion 1, [Core Component 1.D](#). (A set of [online videos](#) and the [immersive learning website](#) provide examples of these projects.)

## **Academic Profile**

For the second initiative, the university has raised the academic profile of its undergraduate student body by admitting more students who earned the Indiana Academic Honors Diploma or its out-of-state equivalent in high school ([now about 62 percent](#)). The recruitment of more highly qualified and better prepared students has resulted in [improved retention rates](#) for Ball State students, with the university retaining an average 78 percent of its freshman students over the past seven years.

## **National Recognition**

Ball State also continues to show progress in achieving [national recognition](#) for its faculty and academic programs. Several programs—including landscape architecture, educational leadership, entrepreneurship, and nursing—continue to enjoy national rankings after several years in the spotlight, while other programs—accounting, finance, landscape architecture, music, theatre, journalism, and telecommunications, to name a few—have earned recent national recognitions. Ball State has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and The Princeton Review for the effectiveness of its programs. At the same time, the university's initiative in geothermal energy technology has attracted national and international attention from the scientific community.

## **Vibrant Campus**

Finally, Ball State has made great strides in its objective to promote a vibrant and supportive campus environment. The university has renovated or is in the process of renovating several residence halls, including a [new home for Honors College students](#). New construction has included two more residence halls and the long-needed [Student Recreation and Wellness Center](#). Funds for these projects are managed separately from the academic budget. Ball State has also continued to modernize its athletic facilities through philanthropic gifts,

including renovations to the football stadium—renamed [Scheumann Stadium](#) in honor of Ball State alumnus John Scheumann, a former football player and benefactor of the university—and construction of the [Briner Sports Complex](#) for women’s soccer, field hockey, and track and field. (Photo galleries of [academic buildings](#), [nonacademic buildings](#), [athletic facilities](#), and [proposed athletic complexes](#) are available online.)

## Next Steps

The university is building on the accomplishments of its 2007–2012 strategic plan with the 2012–2017 plan, developed through a lengthy process and with the input of hundreds of individuals from the campus and community. Details of the new plan are provided under [Core Component 5.C](#). Its four overarching goals are:

- provide distinctive, high-quality educational experiences
- become a recognized leader for educational and disciplinary innovation
- invest in an increasingly vibrant and integrated university community
- advance Indiana through student engagement and faculty expertise

### **Subcomponent 5.A.4. The institution’s staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.**

Ball State’s hiring process requires minimum qualifications for all positions, and background and reference checks are performed for all new appointees. National searches are conducted for all faculty and other key positions. About 90 percent of tenure-track faculty hold [terminal degrees](#), and many have years of experience in their disciplines. More details about faculty credentials and the hiring process are provided in [Criterion 3, Subcomponent 3.C.2](#). Once employed, faculty, professional staff, and other personnel have a variety of training options available both on campus and externally.

University Human Resource Services offers a robust training program that provides opportunities for employees to build skills specific to their job responsibilities. Its [Learning and Development](#) educational sessions are geared toward professional and staff employees but are open to all employees and students free of charge. Topics include problem solving, using Excel, grant writing, and training employees. A number of online training modules cover issues ranging from telephone skills and business attire to e-mail etiquette and sexual harassment policy.

## Roll Out the Red

Occasionally, special programs and projects are instituted for training across the scope of the university on fundamental issues. In 2008–09, for example, Ball State implemented an intensive training program, [Roll Out the Red](#), under the overall coordination of University Human Resource Services. The program focused on improving customer service in the university’s various units. Comments from external constituents such as parents and members of the local community had indicated that Ball State’s customer service effort needed improvement. Randy Howard, vice president for business affairs and treasurer, stated in a 2011 interview: “We targeted this area and developed the Roll Out the Red program. This involved training all employees of the university in customer service concepts.” Roll Out the Red training materials



continue to be used in the training sessions for new staff and service employees. This initiative fulfilled performance indicators 73 and 74 of the 2007–2012 strategic plan.

## **Faculty and Professional Personnel Development**

Faculty and professional personnel also have a wealth of training opportunities. Orientation for new faculty and professional personnel includes a training session focused on faculty/student interactions from the Roll Out the Red initiative. In addition, most first-year faculty members are paired with experienced faculty mentors who meet with them throughout their first year on campus and help to orient them to university policies and practices. Other resources and programs are available to help faculty members enhance their teaching:

**Educational Excellence**—Faculty who wish to obtain specialized training to improve their teaching may work closely with Ball State’s [Office of Educational Excellence \(OEE\)](#). This office publishes a faculty development newsletter, hosts webinars where faculty may observe a particular educational innovation in use at other colleges and universities, and sponsors workshops and seminars to help faculty adapt educational technology to the classroom, such as an ongoing series in which faculty learn how to use iClickers in their teaching. OEE also helps to foster dialogue between faculty who are searching for new and innovative ideas and concepts that will help them improve their teaching.

**Interactive Learning Space**—The new [Interactive Learning Space \(ILS\) Initiative](#) trains and supports faculty to change their pedagogy to a more collaborative format facilitated by a learning environment that provides state-of-the-art teaching technologies. Training takes place in two classrooms on campus that are equipped with the new technologies. Additional classrooms will be established with any of the technologies deemed successful in increasing student learning as a result of the research conducted in the training classrooms. Only faculty who have been trained in the use of the technologies will be allowed to teach in any of these classrooms.

**Integrated Learning Institute**—Another new faculty development initiative is [iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute](#), which “serves the instructional design and technology learning needs of faculty members developing and teaching online or blended courses.” This unit assigns an instructional designer to work with a faculty member on either the development of a new online or blended course or the redevelopment of an existing course. Technology specialists are available to provide training, and media specialists can develop digital assets needed for the course. iLearn also completes a quality control check of all online courses prior to them becoming available for student use. Each course is evaluated using a rubric developed from [Quality Matters](#).

### **Subcomponent 5.A.5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.**

Ball State’s budgeting process encompasses all vice presidential areas: academic affairs; business affairs; student affairs; enrollment, marketing, and communications; information technology; and university advancement. Budgets are monitored at the departmental level as well as the vice presidential and university levels. Variances in budgets are investigated,

and appropriate actions are taken. The university's financial records are audited each year by the Indiana State Board of Accounts.

Each of Ball State's vice presidents has a staff member responsible for budgetary matters who works closely with the Office of University Budgets. These individuals monitor the vice presidents' budgets and track their expenditures. Each academic college also has a finance and budget director, who is responsible for monitoring and tracking budgeted expenditures. These college directors report directly to the university's budget office. Monthly financial reports are available online to review transactions and compare year-to-date balances to budgeted amounts.

## **Budget Development**

Each year, the university's budget plan is developed using, among other factors, projected enrollment, projected state appropriations, and projected external funding levels. In 2003, the budget process was made more transparent and inclusive by providing the college deans an opportunity to formally present their annual needs and requirements to the provost and vice president for academic affairs and the director of university budgets to establish a budget plan for their respective colleges for the upcoming year.

Although the college deans no longer make formal presentations, a template has been established that the deans and other administrators in the Division of Academic Affairs use to make budget requests. This process has resulted in the fulfillment of many previously unmet needs. In addition, the provost and the other vice presidents formally present their needs and requirements to the president.

The budget processes for 2010–11 and 2011–12 were modified from prior fiscal years because of significant midyear reductions in state appropriations.

## **Budget Process 2010–11**

On December 22, 2009, President Jo Ann Gora sent an e-mail to all Ball State employees titled "[Budget Update and Planning Process.](#)" which described the reduction in state funding proposed by the governor for the 2010–11 fiscal year and encouraged faculty and staff to participate in the budgeting process by submitting suggestions to an e-mail account established specifically to receive budget-related comments. The president also provided the link to a website created to provide updates on the process. Students were encouraged to submit suggestions through the Student Government Association website. Each vice president was also tasked with brainstorming ideas for systematic reductions in expenses or growth in revenues in their own areas or across the campus. A deadline of January 29, 2010, was set for all suggestions and submissions. Based on the comments submitted, 20 categories were identified by the President's Cabinet for further consideration.

A campuswide forum was held on February 17, 2010, to explain the background issues, define Ball State's strategy, propose a timeline, and present the categories of expense reductions or revenue enhancements being considered. The university's strategy included three primary goals:

- preserve the educational experience of students
- maintain the momentum of the strategic plan
- recognize that people are the key to these goals

After further deliberations by the President's Cabinet and discussions with various governance committees, the collective bargaining unit, and other campus groups, 11 specific areas of reductions in expenses and/or increases in revenue were selected for further consideration. A second campuswide forum was held on March 16, 2010, to discuss these recommendations. Several of the proposals provided savings and/or increased revenues for future years. In addition to these recommendations, decisions were made by the president and the vice president for business affairs and treasurer—in consultation with the responsible areas on campus—as to the proposed changes for salaries and wages, health care costs, utility costs, student financial aid, and funding for strategic plan initiatives. It was decided that student tuition, which had been approved on a two-year basis in the prior year's budgeting process, would not be changed to address the state funding reduction.

The final budget plan was recommended to Ball State's Board of Trustees on March 19, 2010, for action on certain individual items, and the board approved the plan on [May 7, 2010](#).

## **Budget Process 2011–12**

Ball State received a reduction in state funding again in the 2011–2013 biennium. Due to this cut and the fact that the state appropriation amount was not known until the legislature adjourned on April 29, 2011, the university's 2011–12 budget process was slightly altered from a normal year. The vice presidents, including the provost and vice president for academic affairs, were asked to provide specific details of how they would cut their 2011–12 budgets by an additional 2 percent. The vice presidents were also asked to present two programs/projects/needs most important to their area that were unfunded or underfunded.

The vice presidents met with their direct reports to formulate plans for budget reductions and/or reallocations within their areas or departments. Recommendations approved in the previous year that provided savings or increased revenue in 2011–12 were rolled into the budget plan. Each vice president reviewed these items to verify that savings were still achievable and to make any necessary changes. All of the budget proposals were presented to the president, vice president of business affairs and treasurer, associate vice president for business affairs and assistant treasurer, and director of university budgets, who discussed them and developed a budget plan incorporating the proposals that related to the strategic plan and merited funding.

In addition to the vice presidents' proposals, discussions relating to other critical funding issues—including student tuition and fees, salary and wages, health care, utilities, and so on—were held based on data received from throughout the campus, and decisions were made as to the appropriate changes to include in the budget plan. The 2011–12 budget plan was presented to Ball State's Board of Trustees on [June 16, 2011](#), and was approved at that meeting.

## **Budget Process 2013–14**

With the return of state revenues to a more favorable climate in 2013, Ball State returned to a more normalized budget process. All parts of the campus, through the vice presidential areas, submit budget requests including: critical unmet needs, opportunities for budget reductions or reallocations and strategic plan initiatives. Each vice president meets with the president and vice president for business affairs and treasurer. Every budget decision is viewed through the lens of the university's strategic plan.

### **Summary: Core Component 5.A.**

The past 10 years have seen decreases in state support for Ball State. In response, the university has become more efficient and has been recognized nationally for efficiency. Initiatives were undertaken to increase revenue—recruiting more international and graduate students, restructuring tuition and fees, and raising private funds through the Ball State Bold capital campaign. The budget development process has become more transparent, and efforts have been made to put more resources into scholarships to help offset tuition increases for students with the greatest needs. At the same time, the university has been able to reallocate nearly \$14 million to strategic initiatives over the past six years.

Despite financial challenges, the university has maintained the quality of the education it provides. It has kept a steady number of faculty by making personnel cuts in other areas, generally by not filling or delaying the filling of a position when an employee leaves. Most classes are taught by faculty rather than graduate students.

Ball State has a beautiful, well-maintained campus. Numerous new buildings have been constructed, and others have seen major renovations. This is true for academic buildings, residence halls, athletic venues, streets, and other facilities. In keeping with the university's commitment to sustainability, all new buildings and renovations have been completed with the goal of gaining LEED certification when possible. Access to all parts of campus for students with disabilities has been a priority for many years.

Under the leadership of the vice president for information technology, the university is nearing completion of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation for all university systems. For more than two decades, Ball State has been a leader in the use of technology in teaching and the development of a technology infrastructure that includes emerging media and state-of-the-art production facilities.

Ball State has gained increased recognition at both the state and national levels regarding the quality of the institution. The 2012–2017 strategic plan will lead the university to increased effectiveness, especially in providing students with a high-quality education and impacting the state of Indiana.

## Core Component 5.B.

### **The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.**

Ball State University's governance and administrative structures facilitate the leadership and support needed to accomplish the institution's mission and strategic objectives. At the top, the university is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees appointed by the governor of Indiana: two members recommended by the Ball State Alumni Council, one full-time Ball State student, and six members appointed at-large. Appointments are for four-year terms. The biographies and positions of [current board members](#) are available to the public on the university's website.

The Board of Trustees hires the university president, to whom it delegates the day-to-day administration of the institution. The President's Cabinet consists of the senior management team, including:

- vice president for academic affairs (provost)
- vice president for business affairs (treasurer)
- vice president for enrollment, marketing, and communications
- vice president for information technology
- vice president for student affairs
- vice president for university advancement
- vice president and general counsel
- associate vice president for governmental affairs
- director of intercollegiate athletics

Information about these [cabinet members](#) and organizational charts showing Ball State's [administrative](#), [academic affairs](#), and [governance](#) structures are available to the public on the university's website. [The organizational charts](#) and the responsibilities of the president and each vice president are also provided in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*.

As a state-assisted institution, Ball State also maintains substantial and significant relationships with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) and the Indiana General Assembly. Ball State joins Indiana's other public colleges and universities as a member of the State Transfer Articulation Committee (STAC), which was established several years ago by state statute and is coordinated by ICHE. STAC develops policies and procedures for several state initiatives such as the Course Transfer Library, the new statewide general education core, and college credit for Advanced Placement (AP) scores.

**Subcomponent 5.B.1.** The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.

The principal entity responsible for formulating educational policy at Ball State is the [University Senate](#). Its [constitution](#) is published in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*. Following the constitution is a description of the Ball State University Council and Committee System as prepared by the Governance System Task Force, approved by university faculty and the University Senate, and adopted by Ball State’s Board of Trustees on [December 17, 2004](#).

Ball State has two other representative bodies: the [Staff Council](#), elected by nonacademic staff members, and the [Student Senate](#). Both groups select their membership according to procedures set forth in their constitutions, and they may establish committees or boards and delegate certain responsibilities to them. The Staff Council and the Student Senate also make recommendations on matters of concern to the appropriate council or committee or to the Office of the President. Ball State’s [Governance System Policy Formation Flow Chart](#) is available on the university’s website.

At the time of Ball State’s last accreditation self-study for the Higher Learning Commission, the portion of the University Senate Constitution concerning governance was under review. It must be understood that the overall constitution had not been revised to any major extent for 20 years. The main reason for the change was a concern that the structure at the time did not provide for the faculty voice to be heard sufficiently. The governance changes to the constitution involved the following:

**Responsibilities**—It was clarified that the governance system’s responsibilities dealt with academic matters and that financial matters were not included in its purview.

**Term Limits**—Term limits were imposed on all senators. No one can hold the position for more than three consecutive two-year terms. This was the most extensively discussed change and passed after rigorous study and debate. Another change took away voting privileges from ex-officio committee members. The process of change and enactment of the constitution took more than two years. All constituencies were represented in the process. The process outlined in the last self-study was followed.

**New Councils**—Three new councils were created to share the bulk of the governance work: Campus Council, Faculty Council, and University Council. It was felt that this new structure provided a better balance among the constituencies than the previous system.

- [Campus Council](#) consists of two faculty members, two professional personnel, nine students, and various specific administrative personnel on an ex-officio basis. Its responsibilities include student activities, safety, and ethics and standards.
- [Faculty Council](#) consists of 49 regular and two contract faculty members, the chairs of the Campus Council and University Council, and the university’s provost. Its responsibilities include academic freedom, promotion and tenure, and salaries and benefits.



- [University Council](#) consists of 18 general and specific professional personnel, seven faculty members, and five students. Its responsibilities include assessment and academic research, international, and master planning, and intellectual properties.
- New technology committees—one under the Faculty Council Instructional Media Support) and one under the University Council ([Information Technology](#)) were added to provide a broad base of technology understanding and advice.

**Subcomponent 5.B.2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.**

Ball State’s nine-member Board of Trustees provides oversight for the total operation of the university, including all educational, financial, legal, and fiduciary matters. As stated in Ball State’s Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook since October 17, 1968, the Board of Trustees “reaffirms its commitment to the university community and the citizens of Indiana to provide optimum educational opportunity for all students of the university.” Specifically, the Board of Trustees has the [following duties](#):

- manage, control, and operate Ball State
- borrow money, issue bonds, and let contracts
- prescribe conditions for admission
- grant degrees and issue diplomas or certificates
- set fees, charges, fines, and penalties
- define the duties of and provide compensation for faculty and staff of the university
- receive and administer all donations, bequests, grants, funds, and property that are given or provided to the university
- possess all the powers in order to effectively operate the affairs of Ball State (a list of recent board actions is provided under [Criterion 2. Subcomponent 2.C.1.](#)

The Board of Trustees is represented on Ball State’s [Accreditation Steering Committee](#) by Hollis Hughes, board president, and Barbara Phillips, the board’s assistant secretary. In an interview on February 28, 2012, Hughes and Phillips noted that the university’s previous accreditation report mentioned communication issues between the Board of Trustees and the president. They said those issues have been corrected, and communication is now good with the administration, faculty, and staff. Hughes and President Gora confirmed this in a [May 2012 response](#). Face-to-face meetings occur at university commencements, board retreats, and regular board meetings.

According to Hughes and Phillips, the Board of Trustees has been very involved in the university’s strategic planning activities, including the development of the 2007–2012 strategic plan, updates on the plan’s progress, and the organization and development of the 2012–2017 strategic plan. They also noted that the board has been environmentally green, using digital media for all communications—including iPad tablets at meetings—in support of the university’s sustainability efforts.

The board receives information about campus units through presentations made at each board meeting. Details are provided under Criterion 2, [Subcomponent 2.C.1](#). The members of the board have continued to carry out their responsibilities with dedication and loyalty and in a completely professional manner to fulfill their pledge to provide optimum educational opportunity for all students of the university.

**Subcomponent 5.B.3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.**

Frequently, collaboration among university administration, faculty, staff, and students in handling academic issues is a hallmark of higher education. Ball State's internal governance structure facilitates these collaborative efforts. Two recent examples illustrate this point. The two projects began from conversations at Faculty Council and University Senate meetings. The establishment of two project teams originated from informal follow-up conversations between the university's provost and the chair of the University Senate. Creation of the two work groups was iterative, mostly by e-mail exchanges. Details of the projects follow:

### **Education of the Future**

The first project was the development of the [Education of the Future Task Force](#). This group was cochaired by Ball State's vice president for information technology and a faculty member. Other team members included faculty and professional staff experienced in technology in the classroom. Students were also involved. The group's charge was to examine current circumstances in higher education and how Ball State can continue to be a leader. Specifically, the task force was asked to:

- examine and summarize in more detail the recent major changes in the world and what will likely happen in the near future
- explain how will these changes affect undergraduate education
- enumerate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Ball State
- define how an undergraduate education from Ball State should be delivered in 10 years
- suggest a path that will lead the university toward that 2020 vision to serve as input for our next strategic planning process

The provost and the University Senate chair observed and participated in discussions with the task force. After considering more than 25 different references and consulting with campus constituencies, the group produced a final report titled [Education of the Future](#). The task force's recommendations are being implemented and were incorporated into the university's 2012-2017 strategic plan.

Goal 2 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan states that Ball State will “become a recognized leader for educational and disciplinary innovation” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 5). Work in this area is substantially under way with the Interactive Learning Space initiative discussed under [Subcomponent 5.A.4](#). The university administration holds an annual retreat to address specific topics of importance to the institution. For example, the topic for the [2013 Administrative Retreat](#) was the implementation of the strategic plan.

## Academic Rigor

The subject of the second project was initially called “grade inflation.” This was an item of discussion by several University Senate committees for several years. In 2011, after much national and local press on the subject, the provost and the senate chair again established a team of administrators, faculty, staff, and students to examine what is now called “academic rigor.” The generalities of this project revolve around the following questions: Is the education Ball State provides rigorous, and does the university maintain academic quality? How can we improve, and how can we adapt traditional measures to an evolving educational environment?

Team members were jointly selected by the administration and governance representatives. The specific charge to the group was to:

- assemble the appropriate data for Ball State
- assess Ball State’s performance in maintaining and improving academic rigor
- provide recommendations to the university’s faculty and administration

This team was also expected to review the following items:

- **Grade trends:** Is grade inflation real? To what extent is it explained by our better-qualified students or by our liberal course repeat policy?
- **Hours of study outside of class:** We know that today’s students study fewer hours than most of us did. Is that a problem? What can we do about it?
- **Use of “extra credit”:** Some faculty give “extra credit” for cocurricular activities such as attendance at lectures or visits to museums. Is that appropriate? What are alternatives?
- **Writing proficiency:** Writing continues to be very important for graduates in most fields. Are we preparing students well? Is our current assessment tool appropriate/adequate?
- **Other related factors:** How do we ensure rigor on nontraditional learning environments such as study abroad, field study, immersive learning, or online education? What are the Higher Learning Commission’s accreditation requirements?

The team’s deliberations began in spring 2012, and submitted a [final report](#) in January 2013. The university provost has requested the academic deans to develop plans within their colleges for department-level discussions that will result in strategies to improve academic rigor in the undergraduate and graduate learning process.

## Summary: Core Component 5.B.

Ball State is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees that understands its roles of responsibility to provide fiscal oversight and approve university policies. Faculty have responsibility for the curriculum through the University Senate and other shared governance structures. Members of the Board of Trustees expect the administration to handle the daily operations of the institution, but they are informed about campus units through presentations

made at each board meeting, frequent contact and information from the president, encounters with other members of the Ball State community, and other gatherings.

The university has seen dramatic improvements over the past 10 years emanating from the current governance and administrative structure that includes a supportive, collaborative process at all levels. The Board of Trustees will continue to be provided with information about the various groups and administrative units on campus. Organizational structures and processes will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to meet the changing needs of higher education in general and Ball State specifically.

## **Core Component 5.C.**

### **The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.**

Ball State University has used the strategic planning process for more than a decade to guarantee the institution has a clear and well-defined direction with the means to achieve its goals. The conclusion of *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012* illustrates the complete planning cycle, including its systematic and integrated nature. The strategic plan for 2012–2017, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, marks the beginning of a new cycle.

#### ***Strategic Plan 2007–2012***

In January 2005, a [26-member task force](#) composed of faculty members, students, administrators, and professional staff from across the campus began the process of creating a new strategic plan to become effective as *Strategic Plan 2001–2006* concluded. The task force was charged with devising a plan that would enhance Ball State's distinctiveness and guide the university's direction and growth while maintaining a focus on undergraduate learning. The [archive](#) of *Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012* includes the agendas and minutes of the strategic planning process.

The [final iteration](#) of the 2007–2012 strategic plan included refined mission and vision statements, strategies, four goals, and more than 100 performance objectives. With a wide array of objectives, everyone on campus had a role in "Education Redefined." Progress was measured and reported each year in the following documents:

- [Year One Progress Report: A More Distinctive University](#)
- [Year Two Progress Report: Building on Our Momentum](#)
- [Year Three Progress Report: Solidifying Our Position of Strength](#)
- [Year Four Progress Report: Demonstrating Our Value in a Changing World](#)
- [Year Five Progress Report: Moving Toward the Next Level of Distinction](#)

In addition to the annual progress reports, the university posted on its website a [Strategic Plan Progress Metrics chart](#) tracking the level of achievement for each performance objective. The right-hand column of these reports indicates how each performance indicator was aligned with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's strategic plan, [Reaching Higher](#). The 2012–2017 strategic plan is also aligned with the commission's new strategic plan, [Reaching Higher](#).

[Achieving More](#). The university president [illustrated this alignment](#) in various presentations during the state's 2013 legislative session.

### ***Strategic Plan 2012–2017***

Ball State's strategic planning process resumed in early 2011 as a [university-wide task force](#) began to develop a new plan for the next five years. The task force structured the planning process and evaluated the 2007–2012 plan and its outcomes. During summer and early fall 2011, input was gathered from more than 20 groups and approximately 450 individuals, and the task force analyzed and interpreted the data from those stakeholders at the end of 2011. [Meeting minutes](#) posted on the university's website document the process.

The first version of the 2012–2017 strategic plan was presented to the university's senior academic and administrative personnel in February 2012. During the spring, the draft was shared with a variety of other groups on campus, including student leaders. As the draft was edited, the different iterations of the plan were posted on the university's website, and feedback was continuously solicited. Concurrently, appropriate staff members were preparing performance indicators for each outcome measure in the draft plan. As was done with the previous plan, the final performance indicators will be used to track the new strategic plan's progress over its five-year implementation.

A draft of the 2012–2017 strategic plan, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*, was presented to the Board of Trustees on October 17, 2012. The [final plan](#) was approved by the board on [December 14, 2012](#), and the [Year One Report](#) was published in spring 2013.

#### **Subcomponent 5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.**

Ball State's resources are allocated to support and enable faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other stakeholders to accomplish the institution's mission and strategic plan objectives. Based upon budget requests and input from all campus units, the university's administration prepares an annual proposed general fund budget for the institution that is ultimately approved by the Ball State Board of Trustees. This process allows units to propose continued and new activities that are aligned with the university's mission and strategic planning goals.

Another aspect of this planning process took place during the [2013 Administrative Retreat](#), which focused on developing initiatives to meet the performance indicators in the 2012–2017 strategic plan. During the day-and-a-half retreat, university administrators brainstormed and selected potential initiatives and then began the planning process for some of those initiatives. Each individual was charged to replicate the process in his or her own unit. Resources will be allocated to selected initiatives. As a follow-up and to maintain the momentum gained during the retreat, the agenda for the Council of Deans meeting on [April 1, 2013](#) included initiatives proposed by each of the units represented.

The vision included in the 2007–2012 strategic plan stated that Ball State would be “a national model of excellence for challenging, learner-centered academic communities” (*Strategic Plan*

2007–2012, p. 2), and that commitment is continuing with the 2012–2017 strategic plan’s vision to be “focused on learning outcomes” (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 2).

The university takes great pains to align its strategic plan with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s strategic plan in an effort to ensure that the university is meeting its public mission and tying its priorities to those of the state. Ball State can identify how its plan fits within every aspect of the state’s priorities for higher education.

An example of how Ball State allocates resources in line with its vision and mission is President Jo Ann Gora’s decision in 2004 to forgo the usual presidential inauguration event and invest the money that would have been spent into scholarships for outstanding students. She also challenged others to support what were called [Inauguration Scholarships](#), which provided \$25,000 for each student selected. With gifts from private donors, a total of 25 Inauguration Scholarships were awarded. They were announced during a ceremony at the Indiana Statehouse in March 2005.

The Inauguration Scholarships became a model for the [Bold Celebration Scholarships](#), a project of the Ball State Bold capital campaign. Rather than hold a lavish end-of-campaign celebration, donors contributed funds for 55 scholarships awarded to outstanding students. Scholarships, each worth \$40,000 over four years, were presented at the Indiana Statehouse in March 2011.

On an operational level, the university has reallocated nearly \$14 million to support strategic plan initiatives.

## **Fiscal Challenges**

A difficult task is adapting resources to strategic objectives during times of unexpected fiscal stringency. In [2009–10](#), for example, the Indiana legislature and the governor instituted reductions in existing funding for the state’s public universities. Ball State, of necessity, was forced to implement a \$15.2 million reduction in its overall operations. In response, “utilizing an open process that enabled every employee to participate, the university implemented a plan that met the target over the remaining 18 months of the biennium. The final plan reflected Ball State’s commitment to academic excellence and the need to invest in the future, while being mindful that the uncertainty of future appropriations demands careful cost containment (Randy Howard).” This process is discussed further under [Subcomponent 5.A.5](#).

Describing the fluidity of the current fiscal environment, Randy Howard, vice president for business affairs and treasurer, observed in a 2011 interview, “We are challenging each potential objective to make sure that the limited resources being used are being put to the area that will move Ball State forward farther.”

## **Funding Sources**

University resources specifically allocated or reallocated for strategic initiatives are available from various sources. In recent years, expense reduction and reallocation in the general fund budget have provided funds for strategic plan activities. Substantial resources are also available for strategic plan purposes from the recent [Ball State Bold capital campaign](#), which raised more than \$210.8 million in private gifts. For example, 133 new endowed scholarships—



many of them merit based—were created through the campaign to help the university attract high-quality students. The Ball State University Foundation encouraged participation in the establishment of the endowed scholarships by matching the gifts made by faculty members up to \$25,000. Other campaign contributions are available to foster immersive learning and attract nationally recognized faculty.

This was only the third capital campaign in the history of the university, with the previous two having \$40 million and \$90 million goals, respectively. Given this past, a goal of \$200 million was very ambitious and became even more challenging with the downturn in the U.S. economy that occurred just after the public phase of the Bold campaign began. Even under the worst circumstances, widespread support for the university was demonstrated by the institution's ability to not only meet but substantially exceed the goal.

### **Subcomponent 5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.**

For more than 10 years, the unit now known as the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#) has provided summer assessment grants to support faculty in planning assessments of student learning activities. These grants have gone to individual faculty members or groups of faculty within a department. Many grants have been used for a unit's general programmatic assessments or to develop new assessment initiatives for a program. Others are being used for assessments of the University Core Curriculum. Additional specific assessment activities have also been implemented across the campus.

Others grants available to programs came from the Lilly II grant that ended in 2005. This grant from Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. provided funds to departments to increase retention. Departments used the funds to create activities that involved majors early within the department. The [final report](#) indicated the success of the program.

Metrics for all of Ball State's strategic plan objectives are established and monitored periodically by the university's senior administration. Solutions are proposed for objectives that are not being met and/or where improvements could be made. For example, the university has become more sensitive to the issue of persistence toward graduation—a special interest of state legislators—and has instituted [special measures](#), including awarding a Completion Scholarship to students who graduate within four years, [restructuring tuition](#) to allow students to complete more credit hours for less money, and reducing costs for summer courses, among other actions.

More details about Ball State's initiatives to improve retention and degree completion rates are provided under [Criterion 4, Subcomponent 4.C.3.](#)

**Strategic Evaluations**—In addition to the strategic plan metrics discussed under [Core Component 5.C.](#), numerous other evaluations conducted on campus are connected to Ball State's strategic goals and objectives. For example, the [Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education \(COACHE\) survey](#) has been used to evaluate the experience of tenure-track faculty members. In April 2012, the task force charged by the university's provost to review the results of the 2010–11 COACHE survey presented its [observations and recommendations](#) on five issues: expectations for achieving tenure, salaries, work-life issues, scholarship support, and mentoring.

In addition to carefully reviewing the 2010–11 data, the task force also considered recommendations made following the 2007–08 administration of the COACHE survey and a 2009 report on mentoring for junior faculty members. The first major outcome of this effort was the [Workplace Environment Survey](#), which collected information on the quality of work-life issues, some of which were suggested by the respondents to the COACHE surveys, among all full-time university employees.

Ball State's [Office of Institutional Effectiveness \(OIE\)](#) also administers a number of surveys to students and other campus constituencies in an effort to better understand the areas in which the university is succeeding or needs improvement. The following surveys are posted on the OIE website:

- [Alumni Survey](#)
- [COACHE Survey of Tenure-Track Faculty Members](#)
- [Graduate Exit Survey](#)
- [MAP-Works](#) (first-year students, sophomores, and transfers)
- [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#)
- [Orientation Report](#)
- [Retention Study](#)
- [Senior Survey](#)
- [Time to Degree Summary Report](#)
- [Workplace Environment Survey](#)

**Transfer Initiatives**—As a result of the 2012 MAP-Works survey and other data sources, Ball State has implemented a number of new initiatives for retaining transfer students. Examples include the hiring of a transfer coordinator in the Office of Admissions and four Transfer Student Ambassadors who work with new transfer students. Based on the MAP-Works data, half of the ambassadors focus on programming and assistance for first-year transfers, and the others assist advanced transfer students. Also as a result of the data and [task force recommendations](#), the university has developed earlier opportunities for transfer students to connect with Ball State's Career Center during their orientation program.

**Subcomponent 5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspective of internal and external constituent groups.**

Ball State's planning process is comprehensive, involving the entire institution. It begins with the senior administration approving a format to be used by each member of the President's Cabinet to make a presentation of funding, personnel, and other compelling issues in their areas of responsibility. Once the format is determined, the vice presidents ask their direct reports to present issues within their areas to support the request. This process ensures budgets are being developed more from the bottom and rolling up in the organization.

The results of these meetings and presentations form the basis for strategic funding for the next year's budget. Ultimately, the new university budget delineates how each initiative will be addressed and the related funding. This approach allows all areas within the university to have a voice in the process.

The university's planning process also considers the views of external constituencies. In addition to parents and students, three very influential constituencies are the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Indiana General Assembly, and the State Budget Committee.

### **Indiana Commission for Higher Education**

The [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#) is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to:

- define the educational missions of public colleges and universities
- plan and coordinate Indiana's state-supported system of postsecondary education
- review budget requests from public institutions and the State Student Assistance Commission
- approve or disapprove for public institutions the establishment of new programs or expansion of campuses

The commission is a coordinating agency that works closely with Indiana's public and independent colleges. The commission is not a governing board, but it is extremely important and has substantial influence. This body reviews university budget requests and makes a biennial recommendation on higher education funding to the State Budget Committee.

### **Indiana General Assembly**

The state legislature's perspective of higher education is a much-considered element in the university's planning process. Making college more affordable and improving college completion rates are two significant objectives of the legislature. To assist in this effort, Ball State established the [Completion Scholarship](#) for students who finish their degrees in four calendar years or less. This scholarship is a \$500 tuition credit.

In addition, Ball State is developing and implementing initiatives to meet Performance Indicator 10 of the 2012–2017 strategic plan, which strives to increase the four-year graduation rate to 50 percent by 2017 (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, p. 8). As part of this effort, all freshmen who have declared a major will create a graduation plan before the end of their first semester. All other students will follow the same process. These plans will be entered into the new [DegreeWorks](#) system so students can use them each semester when preparing to register. Other initiatives are also being developed.

### **State Budget Committee**

Every other year, Ball State's president presents the university's [biennial request for state operating and capital appropriations](#) to the Indiana legislature's State Budget Committee. This presentation emphasizes how the budget request and the goals and outcomes of the university's strategic plan support Indiana's broad strategic directions for higher education.

**Subcomponent 5.C.4.** The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

**Subcomponent 5.C.5.** Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Ball State plans on a comprehensive basis, reflecting internal and external realities while preserving the flexibility necessary to respond to unforeseen situations. As a matter of routine, Ball State considers a number of assumptions during its budget building process. They include such factors as:

- size of the freshman class
- student retention rates
- tuition rates
- state appropriations
- employee salary increases
- employee health care costs
- utility expenses

Sensitivity analyses are run based on these assumptions to determine their impact on the overall budget. From these analyses, the university examines possible changes in the budget assumptions and what “trade-offs” would result. This process leads to an examination of areas where the evaluation of metrics has shown improvements could be made. For example, Ball State has become more sensitive to the issue of student persistence toward graduation within four years, a special interest of the state legislature. As a result, the university has instituted a [Completion Scholarship](#) for students who graduate within four years and has [reduced tuition](#) for summer courses, among other actions. More details about Ball State's initiatives to improve degree completion rates are provided under [Criterion 4, Subcomponent 4.C.3.](#)

The university's planning process also anticipates other emerging considerations such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization, and these are incorporated into the strategic planning. Examples of the university's responses to these factors follow.

### **International Enrollment**

Education is an increasingly significant contributor to globalization as people of different nations, cultures, and religions come to know more about one another. In response to this reality, the university's two most recent strategic plans have included goals related to nurturing and promoting a collaborative and vibrant campus community that reflects the diversity and connectivity of the world:

- **Strategic Plan 2007–2012**—Goal 1, Objective A called for the university to “attract, enroll, retain, and graduate a more selective and diverse student body,” achieving

5 percent of total enrollment from international origins. (*Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, PI 5, p. 4)

- **Strategic Plan 2012–2017**—Goal 1, Objective 7 continues this focus: “Be a university that attracts a diverse student body, faculty, and staff,” increasing the number of international students to 1,000 (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 43, p. 4).

Expanding the international student population illustrates the university’s response to—and anticipation of—globalization needs. It has been a campuswide effort involving several units and programs. For the first two years of the process, representatives from the registrar, bursar, housing, dining, international programs, health services, business affairs, and other offices met to develop strategies to support the additional students. Parts of this group continue to meet as needs arise. Campus adaptations have included the following:

**English Instruction**—Ball State’s [Intensive English Institute \(IEI\)](#) has grown from 30 students with a staff of one half-time director and graduate assistant instructors to as many as 300 students with three full-time administrators, a staff support person, 25 contract faculty, and graduate student support. IEI was moved from the Department of English to become a stand-alone unit reporting to the associate provost and dean of the University College.

**Student Services**—The staff of the [Rinker Center for International Programs \(RCIP\)](#) has expanded from one person for student services and recruitment to two directors and five additional professional staff as well as several additional support staff. As a result, RCIP needed additional office space and moved its recruitment and admissions team to another building on campus.

**Housing and Dining**—International students need rooms in the residence halls to be available at times when other students may not be on campus. They also arrive without bedding and may not be able to find or cook the food they need. In response, the Office of Housing and Residence Life now provides access to rooms at earlier times and allows students to rent bedding until they can purchase their own. Ball State Dining prepares meals to accommodate special dietary needs requested by international students. In addition, the newly renovated [Studebaker East Complex](#) home to the [International Living-Learning Community](#) includes facilities to meet the religious needs of some international students.

## General Studies Completion

Ball State’s [bachelor of general studies \(BGS\) online completion program](#) is another example of how the university has responded to the needs of particular students and, in this case, former students. This program was designed specifically for individuals who left Ball State before finishing their bachelor’s degrees. Courses that can be used to complete these degrees have been developed for online delivery so the students can finish their studies without coming to campus.

## Teacher Licensing

The university addressed changing needs when the state of Indiana recently revised its teacher licensing rules. Under one new rule, educators would no longer be able to use a master’s degree to advance on the salary pay scale. Individuals were given a couple of years’ notice before the change took effect. To meet the demand for master’s degrees during this time,

Ball State's Teachers College provided more course sections and hired additional contract faculty as needed. These master's programs were already delivered completely online as a result of a change made several years ago in response to market demand.

## **Hybrid Schedules**

Ball State has also anticipated change by adopting hybrid class schedules, which allow on-campus students—most of whom are digital natives—to take online courses as well. This initiative is one of several changes that resulted from the university's [tuition restructuring process](#).

## **Summary: Core Component 5.C.**

In 2012, Ball State closed a successful strategic plan and began another one. In each case, the planning process included representatives from all areas of the campus. The results of this process are goals and objectives with measurable performance indicators that provide strategic direction for the university and the basis for budget allocation priorities. Yearly reports of progress on each performance indicator were part of the 2007–2012 strategic plan, and these will continue with the 2012–2017 strategic plan. The progress results are used in decision making.

All planning processes anticipate changes in technology, demographic shifts and globalization, and the fiscal environment. Ball State's relationships with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Indiana General Assembly, and the State Budget Committee increase its ability to respond to the changing environment. The university has just begun two major planning processes—a new campus master plan and an academic affairs master plan—that will provide direction for the institution for at least the next 10 years. Individuals representing a variety of functions and groups within the university will be serving on the task forces associated with these planning processes. The results of each process will be presented to the appropriate constituents for feedback before completing it. The strategic planning process has demonstrated this is an effective approach that will produce documents that lead and guide the university's decision making.

## **Core Component 5.D.**

### **The institution works systematically to improve its performance.**

Following the strategic planning process, Ball State University monitors and reviews its progress in accomplishing the institutional goals and objectives it has established. This review is done for both internal and external purposes and ultimately assists the university in fulfilling its mission.

#### **Subcomponent 5.D.1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.**

Within the institution, Ball State's vice presidents are responsible for producing [annual reports](#) detailing the accomplishments and statuses of their divisions. For the most part, these reports are based upon the annual reports of the subunits in each vice presidential area. Consequently,



these annual reports are used throughout the university to review and present progress toward meeting institutional goals and objectives.

For example, the provost and vice president for academic affairs asks the deans on campus to provide annual reports for their colleges, and typically the deans ask their departments to do the same. The reports include the status of ongoing initiatives identified by each unit and the development of long-term initiatives. These tangible outcomes are expected to be in line with the strategic plan and mission/vision statements of the university and the respective colleges and departments. Individual faculty members also submit annual reports on their activities. This reporting process facilitates organizational and personnel performance reviews at all levels.

In addition, a number of institution-wide evaluations are conducted through Ball State's [Office of Institutional Effectiveness \(OIE\)](#). Some of these are described under [Subcomponent 5.C.2](#). Externally, accreditation is one means for academic performance review. All academic units also participate in a university-level [periodic department review process](#) that includes external reviewers and covers a wide range of topics. A new policy stipulates that these periodic reviews be conducted [every five years](#). These unit accreditation and review processes are discussed in detail under Criterion 3, [Core Component 3.A](#).

**Subcomponent 5.D.2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.**

Ball State uses a variety of means—internal and external, ongoing and ad hoc—to identify ways to improve the performance and productivity of the institution and its component parts. Examples include planning for new residence halls, the campus geothermal project, the athletics capital campaign, and online education.

**Residence Halls**—As planning began for the renovation of [DeHority Complex](#) and construction of [Park Hall](#) on campus, the Office of Housing and Residence Life asked students what they wanted in a residence hall. Priorities such as suite formats and bathroom facilities for small clusters of rooms were incorporated into the new designs. When [Kingham Hall](#) was being designed, students in Park Hall provided suggestions for improvements, and those were made.

**Geothermal Project**—Ball State's [geothermal project](#) resulted from an original plan to replace the aging coal boilers in the campus physical plant. The university had no interest in making any changes other than updating the worn-out equipment. However, the ordering process revealed that new boilers could not be found to replace the existing ones. As a result, the university researched other options and decided to convert the campus heating and cooling system to geothermal energy and shut down the coal boilers completely.

**Athletics Campaign**—The university's [Cardinal Commitment: Developing Champions](#) athletics capital campaign resulted from a comparative analysis of Ball State's athletic facilities with others in the Mid-American Conference. Many of our facilities for team practices, and in some cases performance venues, do not meet the standards of other institutions. Some have not been updated for several years. The current strategic plan includes several performance indicators related to athletics (*Strategic Plan 2012–2017*, PI 16, 75, 76, pp. 8, 14). Two focus

on the types of student-athletes the university is able to recruit and the success they have not only on the field or court but also in the classroom. Achieving these objectives requires updated facilities and new practice venues. The \$20 million capital campaign is designed to raise the funds needed for these renovations and new facilities. More than \$14 million had been raised as of June 2013.

**Online Education**—Enrollment growth in online education was a priority in Ball State's 2007–2012 strategic plan. After a review by the university's Education of the Future Task Force and Growing Online Education Task Force, the emphasis was shifted to enhancing the quality of online instruction in the 2012–2017 plan. Both task forces indicated a need for academic leadership in the online and blended learning initiative in order to ensure academic rigor, high-quality course design, and fully integrated assessment of student learning outcomes. At the recommendation of the Growing Online Education Task Force, Ball State became a member of the nationally recognized [Quality Matters](#) program and participates in a national consortium of best practices in online course design. Since fall 2012, all of the university's online courses have been assessed through a peer-review process with the Quality Matters rubric, the most widely used benchmark of postsecondary online course design in the U.S.

In addition, [iLearn: Integrated Learning Institute](#) was created to ensure students receive the same innovative, creative, and effective instruction in online courses as they experience in campus classrooms. Through iLearn, skilled instructional designers help translate the content of on-campus courses into rich and active, learner-focused online classes or blended courses (online plus face-to-face instruction). They also provide guidance in developing teaching and learning strategies and specialized applications using instructional technologies. A number of technology specialists provide training with online learning tools and build or support unique web or digital assets for online courses. Through iLearn, [Online Faculty Fellows](#) assist their colleagues in online and blended teaching techniques, share their expertise and/or research, develop and lead faculty training, discuss ways to improve online teaching and course development, provide one-on-one mentoring, and participate in professional development activities.

### **Summary: Core Component 5.D.**

The three strategic planning processes over the past 10 years illustrate Ball State's adjustment and its work to systematically improve the university's performance. The first plan (2001–2006) did not have well-defined, measurable performance indicators. The second plan (2007–2012) included more than 100 measurable performance indicators that have been analyzed yearly and have guided university planning. The third plan (2012–2017) has finished its first year of implementation. Data to determine progress are being gathered, and following the pattern of the previous plan, the data will be analyzed and used to determine any necessary changes in direction. Each unit on campus has been asked to develop its own plans and initiatives. The two planning processes now under way—the campus master plan and the academic affairs master plan—will provide direction for continuing improvement of Ball State's performance.

## Conclusion to the Self-Study Report

In April 2004, Ball State University's **continuing accreditation process** yielded three major recommendations for improvements that have been taken seriously by the institution. These were concerns about making planning more transparent, increasing our assessment efforts, and improving communication between the Board of Trustees and the university president. As this self-study report has outlined, we have made significant progress in each of these areas.

### Transparent Planning

Ball State's last two strategic planning processes have included representatives from all vice presidential areas and a variety of constituencies. Feedback was sought regarding the proposed goals, objectives, and performance indicators, and changes were made as a result of this feedback. Each plan includes measurable performance indicators for which yearly progress reports have been prepared and operational changes have been made as a result of the data gathered.

***Education Redefined: Strategic Plan 2007–2012*** led Ball State through many successful advances. The strategic plan for **2012–2017, *Education Redefined 2.0: Advancing Indiana*** will provide the same guidance in the years ahead. By the end of summer 2014, two complementary master plans—one for campus facilities and infrastructure and the other for academic affairs—will further refine Ball State's operations for the next 10 to 15 years.

### Program Assessment

Assessment of **student learning outcomes** has increased over the past 10 years, with all academic programs having identified student learning outcomes and established assessment processes. This report describes several examples of the outcomes of these processes and improvements made in programs. In addition, the **new University Core Curriculum** has been developed and moved through a phased implementation process that culminates in fall 2013. Course by course assessment practices have been in place since the core was first introduced to students in fall 2010, and a total core assessment process is under development and will be pilot tested in summer 2014.

The **Division of Student Affairs** has also developed an extensive assessment process and consistently uses data gathered to improve policies and procedures. Other vice presidential areas have used data to inform their decision making as well, with strategic plan progress metrics as a prime data source.

### Executive Communication

Communications between the **Board of Trustees** and the university's current president have been frequent and continuous. The board has been kept informed about the university's activities and challenges through specific presentations from colleges and other areas during the day of regular board meetings. The president also provides the board with essential information as it becomes available. The board allows the administration to perform its role of daily management of university operations.

## Education Redefined

The past 10 years have seen many changes at Ball State, from the visible improvements in campus buildings and infrastructure to the university's expanding reputation within the state of Indiana and the nation. More than 50 programs have **received national rankings or recognitions**. The institution's Carnegie classification changed to **research university, high research activity (RU/H)**. In 2011, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Ball State eighth among the nation's "up-and-coming" colleges and universities, joining the ranks of institutions "that recently made the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty, student life, campus, or facilities." During this time, the **university's graduation rate increase** ranked sixth in the nation. **Immersive learning** is now a hallmark of a Ball State education. The **geothermal project** not only demonstrates the university's commitment to sustainability but will also save the university \$2 million per year in utility costs.

Support for the university and its programs has never been greater as more than \$210.8 million was raised in the **Ball State Bold capital campaign** during an economic downturn not only in Indiana but also across the nation. A new capital campaign is now under way for improvements in **athletic facilities**, with more than \$14 million raised of the \$20 million goal. The university is nearing the end of a total renovation in **all computer systems**, which has changed all operations on campus.

Ball State is boldly positioned to continue its evolution to **provide high-quality, application-based educational experiences that fundamentally change students** and others who participate in the process. The university is moving forward, led by the 2012–2017 strategic plan to achieve **Education Redefined 2.0**.

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