



# DESTINATION 2040 OUR FLIGHT PATH

The 2019–24 Strategic Plan for Ball State University



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

# DESTINATION 2040

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Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Our Centennial has been an important time for us to reflect on the transformative impact our University has had on the lives of thousands and thousands of women and men.

As we continue to celebrate our University's proud past, we have developed a strategic plan for our bright future.

This plan, *Destination 2040: Our Flight Path*, establishes our University's ambitious goals for our second century.

The development of the plan was informed by an inclusive strategic planning process. Over the past 12 months, we engaged faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners, and many of our generous benefactors. We distributed surveys, we convened working groups, and we held forums on our campus and in our community. We asked participants to share their ideas and dreams for our mission and strategic priorities. I am grateful for your input.

The result of this important work is outlined in these pages—a plan that provides a strategic framework with five long-term goals for 2040 and a small set of strategic imperatives to be executed by 2024.

This plan will enable us to prepare our students for fulfilling careers and inspire them to lead meaningful lives, while strengthening our community, providing economic and social benefits to our region and state, and offering leadership by example across our country and around the world.

To help us achieve this mission, we will be guided by the enduring values represented by our iconic *Beneficence*: excellence, innovation, courage, integrity, inclusiveness, social responsibility, and gratitude.

The work necessary to achieve the goals of this new plan is well underway. Planning and University-wide implementation processes continue, and each division and college soon will develop its own strategic implementation plan. This ongoing process will enable and empower all of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni to find their

individual opportunities to contribute to our collective success.

These five ambitious goals and our continuing planning process constitute a comprehensive, coordinated commitment to our students, to our alumni, and to the communities that we serve.

We pledge to provide a premier educational experience for every student.

We pledge to partner with the community to improve the lives of our neighbors.

And when we complement these promises with our commitment to our enduring values, we define that which makes our University distinctive.

We proudly proclaim ourselves to be Ball State University.

This plan represents our flight path to a bright future. Please join us on this worthy adventure.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey S. Mearns  
President

# OUR MISSION

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We engage students in educational, research, and creative endeavors that empower our graduates to have fulfilling careers and meaningful lives enriched by lifelong learning and service, while we enhance the economic, environmental, and social vitality of our community, our state, and our world.

# OUR ENDURING VALUES

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To fulfill our mission, to achieve our goals, and to implement our strategic imperatives, we are guided by the enduring values represented by *Beneficence*:

## **Excellence**

We commit to excel in all that we do.

## **Innovation**

We commit to be creative, responsive, and progressive.

## **Courage**

We commit to set ambitious goals and to take the risks necessary to achieve those goals.

## **Integrity**

We commit to be honest, ethical, authentic, and accessible.

## **Inclusiveness**

We commit to respect and embrace equity, inclusion, and diversity in people, ideas, and opinions.

## **Social responsibility**

We commit to act for the benefit of society at large.

## **Gratitude**

We commit to express appreciation to others and to demonstrate our gratitude through our actions.

# OUR 2040 GOALS

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## GOAL 1

### **UNDERGRADUATE EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

Our University provides a premier on-campus undergraduate experience.

## GOAL 2

### **GRADUATE EDUCATION AND LIFETIME LEARNING**

Our University expands its reach and impact along the continuum of human development and is nationally recognized for serving graduate students and other adults throughout their lifetime educational journey and for our agility in anticipating and responding to workforce needs.

## GOAL 3

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT**

As a community-engaged institution, our University is internationally recognized for mobilizing and leading partnerships that revitalize and sustain our city and our region.

## GOAL 4

### **SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIETAL IMPACT**

As a public research institution, our University recruits and retains outstanding faculty and staff who engage in scholarship—of discovery, integration, application, and teaching—that garners national and international recognition, attracts external resources, and improves lives.

## GOAL 5

### **INSTITUTIONAL AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

Our University is distinguished for institutional effectiveness and inclusive excellence across all dimensions of our work and for having a positive and vibrant culture of wellbeing that helps our faculty and staff lead engaged and meaningful lives.



# OUR 2024 STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

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## GOAL 1

### **UNDERGRADUATE EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

Our University provides a premier on-campus undergraduate experience.

*To make measurable progress towards this 2040 goal, we will execute the following strategic imperatives by 2024:*

- A.** Our comprehensive enrollment management strategy engages colleges, academic departments, and the entire campus in the recruitment, retention, and success of all of our students.
- B.** Our academic advisors, along with faculty and other staff, guide first-year students to discover their strengths, interests, passions, and purpose.
- C.** The first-year experience engages all students in the learning and discovery process and includes an opportunity to participate in an intentionally structured living-learning community.
- D.** Our core curriculum incorporates innovative pedagogy, transdisciplinary approaches to learning and problem-solving, and the development of cultural competencies, global awareness, and transferable skills.
- E.** Every student completes at least one course that includes one of the following high-impact practices: undergraduate research; immersive learning; study abroad or study away; or a course that focuses on a societal issue or global challenge and that engages students with people across diverse disciplines, cultures, and thought.
- F.** Every student creates a record that translates their courses, degree programs, co-curricular experiences, and intercollegiate athletic experiences into a clear description of learning outcomes, competencies, and transferable skills.
- G.** Our alumni and partners engage with and provide opportunities for students in a variety of ways and settings that enrich the undergraduate experience.
- H.** A more diverse University community—students, faculty, staff, and alumni—enriches the campus experience and improves educational outcomes for all of our students.



Commencement Ceremony

## GOAL 2

### **GRADUATE EDUCATION AND LIFETIME LEARNING**

Our University expands its reach and impact along the continuum of human development and is nationally recognized for serving graduate students and other adults throughout their lifetime educational journey and for our agility in anticipating and responding to workforce needs.

*To make measurable progress towards this 2040 goal, we will execute the following strategic imperatives by 2024:*

- A.** Our University identifies and offers high-demand degrees and credentials in fields that align with our current and potential expertise.
- B.** We offer a strategic portfolio of superior on-campus and online graduate programs.
- C.** Our innovative and robust educational offerings and delivery methods—including baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate micro-credentials, short-term learning modules, professional licensure workshops, and enrichment opportunities—accelerate career fulfillment and enhance personal development and wellbeing.
- D.** We meet the diverse needs of individuals, employers, and organizations by allowing them to customize their education to specific learning objectives and interests.
- E.** Every graduate has access to a coach or mentor who helps that graduate develop, implement, and execute a lifetime learning plan.



### GOAL 3

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

As a community-engaged institution, our University is internationally recognized for mobilizing and leading partnerships that revitalize and sustain our city and our region.

*To make measurable progress towards this 2040 goal, we will execute the following strategic imperatives by 2024:*

- A.** Our faculty, staff, and students partner with the Muncie Community Schools to improve academic outcomes and the operational performance of MCS, while enhancing the learning experiences of our students.
- B.** We actively engage with community leaders to develop and implement a coordinated plan that promotes talent retention and attraction in order to foster economic growth.
- C.** The amenities and vibrancy of The Village and surrounding neighborhoods are attractive to students, faculty, staff, and community members as a result of the implementation of a long-term, phased plan to enhance quality of place.
- D.** We collaborate with external partners to implement a regional plan to improve population health and wellbeing.
- E.** Our community members attend and enjoy athletic, theatre, dance, music, and other arts and entertainment events at venues on campus and throughout our region.



Maring-Hunt Library pavilion and community garden

## GOAL 4

### **SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIETAL IMPACT**

As a public research institution, our University recruits and retains outstanding faculty and staff who engage in scholarship—of discovery, integration, application, and teaching—that garners national and international recognition, attracts external resources, and improves lives.

*To make measurable progress towards this 2040 goal, we will execute the following strategic imperatives by 2024:*

- A.** We recognize and reward faculty and staff who engage in scholarship that is funded through federal, state, private, and other external entities.
- B.** We recognize and reward faculty and staff who connect their scholarship with the vibrancy of the city of Muncie and East Central Indiana in ways that can be replicated in communities around the world.
- C.** We recognize and reward teacher-scholars who integrate their scholarship with their teaching.



Studying fish in the White River

## GOAL 5

### **INSTITUTIONAL AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

Our University is distinguished for institutional effectiveness and inclusive excellence across all dimensions of our work and for our positive and vibrant culture of wellbeing that helps our faculty and staff lead engaged and meaningful lives.

*To make measurable progress towards this 2040 goal, we will execute the following strategic imperatives by 2024:*

#### **Our People & Culture**

- A.** Our inclusive excellence strategies and initiatives embed cultural competencies across curricular and co-curricular experiences, provide extensive training programs for faculty and staff, and result in greater diversity in people and ideas throughout the campus.
- B.** Faculty and staff are empowered through ongoing professional development, leadership programs, career advancement opportunities, and other resources that enhance employee and personal wellbeing.
- C.** Our human resource policies, procedures, and business processes enable us to recruit and retain outstanding people.
- D.** We recognize and reward our employees for using their expertise, creativity, and collaborative spirit to improve accountability, productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- E.** Our flexible and accountable governance structures improve our responsiveness and ability to make timely decisions.
- F.** Faculty, staff, and students advance our legacy of environmental stewardship.

#### **Our Programs & Processes**

- G.** We regularly assess and modify our academic program portfolio for quality and relevance, invest in distinctive programs, and create agile and responsive curricular approval processes that support academic innovation.
- H.** Our people, processes, technology, policies, and infrastructure are strategically aligned to support academic excellence and enable operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- I.** Campus administrators use data analytics and robust management information to provide actionable insight that enhances student success and administrative effectiveness.
- J.** Our marketing, communications, and brand management strategies increase public awareness of our strengths, distinctive attributes, and contributions to our community, our state, and our world.



Celebrating Ball State University's Centennial

### **Our Financial Resources**

- K.** Our incentive-based budget model aligns our financial resources with our strategic priorities and encourages innovation and effective resource management.
- L.** We create a campus culture of philanthropy and generate more philanthropic support for our University as a result of a comprehensive capital campaign.

### **Our Facilities**

- M.** We design, renovate, and build flexible learning spaces that are conducive to innovative pedagogical models.
- N.** Our updated campus master plan aligns with our mission, goals, strategic imperatives, and enduring commitments to environmental stewardship and inclusive excellence.

### **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

At Ball State University, we recognize inclusive excellence as an integral endeavor to fulfill our University's mission and our strategic plan. We recruit, support, and retain a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff. We encourage and reward diversity of thought. We promote a work environment that encourages and rewards innovation and creativity. We pledge to keep inclusive excellence at the highest level of institutional importance and as a foundation in all that we strive to do.

# OUR PROCESS: SPREADING OUR WINGS

In January 2018, President Mearns appointed a small but representative committee of faculty, staff, and a student to engage in a consultative process called “Spreading Our Wings” to develop an ambitious, comprehensive, and inclusive strategic plan.

When the University embarked on the process in Spring 2018, working groups of faculty and staff from different colleges, departments, and divisions gathered and analyzed vital information about the external environment, as well as institutional trends, characteristics, and distinctive attributes about the University. The Strategic Planning Committee considered their reports during the visioning and priority-setting process.

The Strategic Planning Committee also distributed a survey to faculty, staff, and students. We received more than 1,480 responses. We also had eight open forums for faculty and staff and two open forums with students. Approximately 300 faculty, staff, and students joined us for one or more of these forums, each of which focused on a different strategic theme.

We had a special forum for the Ball State University Foundation and our Alumni Council. The members of our Alumni Council are passionate supporters of our University. As the governing body of our Alumni Association, they represent more than 190,000 graduates of Ball State. Likewise, our Foundation board serve as passionate volunteers that provide philanthropic support for our mission.

The final Spring forum took place in June. We invited community partners to join us at the Horizon Convention Center, and more than 100 people from the community shared their opinions about what we are doing well and what we can do better. They also offered big, bold ideas for our future.

The committee evaluated all of this input and drafted a strategic plan, which was released to the campus community in September. The Strategic Planning Committee asked faculty and staff, students, alumni, and other constituents to review the proposed plan and share their thoughts. We conducted a survey and held three interactive forums with faculty and staff and two with students. Nearly 400 people completed the survey, and many in the University community attended one of the forums.

The Strategic Planning Committee considered the responses and incorporated insights from the campus community. In December, the Ball State University Board of Trustees endorsed the strategic plan. Now, we begin our implementation phase. Each college, division, and academic department will be empowered and entrusted with developing a plan that aligns with the University’s strategic plan.

We are also grateful for the contributions of so many staff, faculty, and students who served on working groups, supported the open forums, coordinated our communication efforts, and otherwise attended to the many details associated with this initiative.



Jo Ann Gora Student Recreation and Wellness Center

## Strategic Planning Committee

**Geoffrey S. Mearns, Committee Chair**  
President

**Jennifer Blackmer**  
Executive Director for Immersive Learning and  
the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry

**Delaina Boyd**  
Associate Vice President for Community Engagement

**Jean Crosby**  
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer,  
Ball State University Foundation

**Linh Nguyen Littleford**  
Professor of Psychological Science

**James Lowe**  
Associate Vice President for Facilities  
Planning and Management

**Susan McDowell**  
Vice Provost for Research  
Professor of Biology

**Jennifer Palilonis**  
Director, Center for Emerging Media  
Design & Development  
George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor

**Jacqueline Pozadas**  
Student

**Ro-Ann Royer Engle**  
Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

**Sue Hodges Moore, Ex Officio**  
Chief Strategy Officer

**Kerri Misiewicz & Breanne Holloway**  
Staff Support

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in memoriam: R. Wayne Estopinal

# OUR PROMISE

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## **We make these promises to our students:**

- We will help you discover your purpose and translate that purpose in to a fulfilling career and a meaningful life.
- We will allow you to work side-by-side with teacher-scholars to expand immersive learning and research experiences.
- We will actively seek your ideas, perspectives, and voices.
- We will provide support for your physical, mental, and emotional health.
- We will provide opportunities for you to meaningfully engage with partners beyond campus.
- We will ensure a vibrant University community for all students, faculty, and staff.





*Beneficence*



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UNIVERSITY**

EST. 1918

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