Initiative for Disability Employment Receives an Academic Excellence Grant

The Ball State Initiative for Disability Employment, a collaboration between Disability Services, the Career Center, and Ball State’s Disability Project, was recently announced as a recipient of an Academic Excellence Grant by President Paul Ferguson, Provost Terry King, and members of the Strategic Planning Leadership Team. The Academic Excellence Grants, funded for three years, are an integral component of the Centennial Commitment in honor of Ball State’s 100th anniversary in 2018. Seventy-six proposals were submitted by faculty and staff members at Ball State, with only 16 chosen for funding.

Larry Markle, Director of Disability Services, Jim McAtee, Director of the Career Center, and Greg Fehribach, Distinguished Fellow and head of the Disability Project, are the co-authors of the proposal that received the grant funding. The Initiative for Disability Employment combines the efforts and expertise of their three areas to facilitate internships and employment for Ball State students with physical disabilities and to train employers in best practices in hiring college graduates with disabilities. The grant enhances its reach to more students, more employers, and will increase Career Center services and programs targeting students with disabilities.

“It is an honor to be selected by President Ferguson, Provost King and the Leadership Team,” Markle said. “It is satisfying to receive recognition for our efforts, but more importantly, to know that the grant will allow Ball State graduates with disabilities access to gainful and sustainable employment.”

This work builds on the success of the Disability Project, a program started by Fehribach to increase employment opportunities for college graduates with physical disabilities. Fehribach and Markle have led Ball State’s partnership with Indianapolis employers such as Eskenazi Heath, the City of Indianapolis, and Emmis Communications to provide full-time, paid internships for Ball State students with physical disabilities. 2015 marked the third consecutive year that Eskenazi employed Ball State students during the summer. Five students worked jobs at Eskenazi
**Kevin Briggs, Guardian of the Golden Gate, Speaks at Ball State**

Kevin Briggs, known as the “Guardian of the Golden Gate,” spoke to around 350 Ball State students, faculty, and community members about his life and role as a police officer on the Golden Gate Bridge. Active Minds, a national student mental health awareness organization, hosted Briggs on September 14, 2015, as part of a series of events for Suicide Prevention Week.

Kristina Stewart, a BSU Active Minds member, said: “It was important to have a speaker that was relatable.” Active Minds as a group watched his TED talk and that’s how they knew he could impact an audience. During his talk, Briggs disclosed his depression diagnosis and times where he felt suicidal. Briggs was able to connect to people in the crowd who had either been in that position or knew someone who had. One of the highlights of Briggs’ presentation was his emphasis on the importance of being there to listen. He told the audience to pay attention to what people are saying and not saying.

Stewart also said: “The goal of this event was to get people to start talking about suicide and prevention.” Active Minds feels that suicide prevention will not become more important to our society unless people know what signs to look for and how to approach someone who may be having suicidal thoughts.

Staff from the Counseling Center also attended the event as an available outlet for students who may have found the subject matter difficult. If there was ever a moment where something said triggered suicidal ideations, an immediate support system was available to the audience.

---

**Disability Services Awards Program: April 5, 2016**

The 2016 Disability Services awards program is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5, 2016, in Cardinal Hall of the L.A. Pittenger Student Center. Please join us as we recognize outstanding students and an alumnus with a disability, and express thanks to faculty and staff for promoting access at Ball State.
Alliance for Disability Awareness Update

The Alliance for Disability Awareness (ADA) is a Ball State student group dedicated to disability education and awareness. This semester ADA has met twice a month and also sponsored Disability Conversation Hours each week.

As it did last year, ADA participated in several events for Homecoming. The 2015 BSU Homecoming theme was “The Greatest Show on Turf.” The group attended some of the events during the week, such as Air Jam. They also decorated and rode on a float during the annual Homecoming parade. ADA members decorated their float with several balloons and ribbons to go along with the circus theme. It was very windy the day of the parade so setting up all of the float decorations was difficult. The ADA float was also covered with red circus stripes and balloons of circus animals. Several members handed out candy and ADA novelty items while riding on the float.

One ADA member had a particularly special Homecoming experience. Lizzie Ford, ADA’s social media representative, was nominated for Homecoming Court. She participated in several of the weekly events, including an interview portion as part of the decision making process to see if Lizzie was a finalist for Homecoming Court.

After Air Jam, Lizzie was on stage with several other students who were nominated for Homecoming Court. Lizzie said that she was feeling nervous, especially since she did not think she was even going to make it that far. The announcer called the first name, then the second and third of the female court. Lizzie said: “I felt discouraged at this point because there was only one name left for court.” Then Lizzie’s name was the last female name called. She said she was in shock and it didn’t seem real until the sash was put on her. Many ADA members were in the audience to celebrate Lizzie’s amazing moment. Lizzie is the third female wheelchair user to make homecoming court in the past 10 years.

ADA held a Halloween bowling party in October and attended the Amazing Taste as a group in November. They also hosted a holiday party to celebrate the end of the semester at The Cup in the Village. For more information about the group, check out their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ADABSU/.

in fields comparable to their academic majors. Additionally, Emmis Communications and the City of Indianapolis each hosted a student this past year.

By making connections and gaining exposure to their field with these internships, students will be able to, as Preston Radtke, summer 2015 intern, put it: “look to the future with optimism and confidence.” They will also have contacts in their field who will know them from their work, not at face value as a person with a disability. Another summer 2015 intern, Matt Marshall, echoed this sentiment: “It can be difficult for an interviewer to ascertain what exactly a person can do, doubly so when one has a disability. By gaining this exposure, it becomes much easier to later get a job.” Dustin Gilmer, an intern at Eskenazi the last two years, wrote that his internship allowed him to “grow from a student into a working class citizen without fear of being unsuccessful because of limitations from my disability.”

An important component of the Academic Excellence Grant is a new position housed in the Career Center that will provide career resources and support to all students with disabilities. “I am especially excited about the full-time staff member that will work directly with Disability Services and the Career Center,” Markle said. “This person will not only work with students with physical disabilities seeking internships as part of the Disability Project, he/she will also meet with students with non-physical disabilities to assist them in all aspects of career development and preparation.”
New Student Profile: Lexi Heer

Disability Services is pleased to introduce a new member of the Ball State community, Lexi Heer. Lexi is a freshman from Fishers, Indiana, majoring in Math Education. According to Lexi, “the decision to become a Cardinal was easy because of Ball State’s accessibility for wheelchair users.”

Luke Labas is another reason that Lexi chose to come to Ball State. He is one of her Power Soccer teammates. Lexi wanted to be able to continue to play and practice Power Soccer while she furthered her education. She switched teams to join the Turnstone Flyers this past summer because of her ability to keep playing once a week and compete nationally. Ball State is only an hour away from their practice space in Fort Wayne.

Before her arrival at Ball State, Lexi was part of two different national Power Soccer teams. She has traveled to France and Brazil to compete against other teams. Each team requires tryouts for four different positions: goalie, center, winger, and designated hitter. Lexi has played all four positions at different times in her career.

Lexi’s older brothers played sports while she was little. Watching them play made Lexi interested in becoming an athlete. Her mother introduced her to Power Soccer when she was only five years old and she has been playing ever since.

Lexi plans on becoming a teacher in Indiana, hopefully near her home in Fishers. She can see herself furthering her education to become a college professor. She currently loves her math classes. She said: “Holly Dickin is my favorite teacher. She teachers my MATH 111 class.”

Bush Scholarship Recipients

Disability Services would like to acknowledge and congratulate the 2015-2016 recipients of the Myrna Bush Scholarship.

As a 1928 graduate of Ball State, Myrna Bush endowed funds to the university to support students with visual impairments. Recipients of the award were selected based on a combination of their academic achievement and their involvement on campus. This year nine students received the Myrna Bush Scholarship.

Award Recipients:
Tara Abella: Junior, Elementary Education/Special Education
Joshua Arter: Graduate Student, Public Administration
Alex Gilland: Junior, Telecommunications
Grady Hilge: Sophomore, Speech Language Pathology
Keri Hymer: Sophomore, Fine Arts
Meme Jones: Junior, Criminal Justice & Pre-Law
Preston Radtke: Senior, Public Relations
Devin Summan: Junior, Communication Studies
Jimmy Trimble: Senior, Social Work

Congratulations to each of this year’s recipients. For more information on how to apply for this scholarship, please visit the Disability Services website or stop by the office in room 116 of the L. A. Pittenger Student Center.
President Barack Obama hosted a celebration at the White House in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 20th, 2015. As a part of the celebration, President Obama discussed the importance of the legislation in furthering equal opportunity for all Americans. He also said that this 25 year anniversary should be a rededication to the cause. Additionally, President Obama recognized that there are still steps needed to take to move forward for full equality.

Two Ball State alumni, Greg Fehribach and Sara Mahoney, attended this event at the White House. Mahoney said: “It was pretty amazing to see the array of people who were invited to this event that represented the whole disability community from all over the United States.”

On July 26th, 1990, the ADA was signed by President George H. W. Bush. The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA was the first comprehensive piece of civil rights legislation for individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities and their allies have been fighting for equal rights as long as other rights movements have been. The passing of the ADA meant that people with disabilities could enjoy aspects of life that were not previously accessible to them, such as government buildings, restaurants, transportation, entertainment venues, etc.

Fehribach, who was also present at the White House for the signing of the ADA by President Bush in 1990, said that it is very humbling to know he has been a part of something that has changed the landscape for the United States and now the world. He chatted with Senator Tom Harkin, author of the ADA legislation, at the anniversary ceremony. Fehribach indicated that they both were very grateful and energized to be in the White House alongside President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

Twenty-five years after the passage of the ADA there still is not complete equality for individuals with disabilities. “Yes, we are 25 years with the ADA,” Mahoney said. “A lot of people who are in college today have more accessibility, but people with disabilities are still treated unequally in the workplace.”

Fehribach added: “Change is only going to happen when the collective community of people with disabilities and their allies move it forward.”
Don’t forget BSU’s Disability Services in your giving plans.

Funds donated are used for resources and equipment to enhance campus accessibility.

All Indiana taxpayers’ donations to BSU Foundation - 8603 are a 50 percent tax credit (a $100 gift costs only $50)!

The DS Communique is published once a semester by the Office of Disability Services for the students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends of Ball State University.

Larry Markle  
Director  
lmarkle@bsu.edu

Courtney Jarrett  
Associate Director  
cjarrett@bsu.edu

Sharon Harper  
Administrative Coordinator

Candice Schoenborn  
Graduate Assistant

Richard Harris  
Director Emeritus  
rharris@bsu.edu

Scott Parkison  
Designer

If you are a BSU/DS alumni and have news you would like to share with the readers of this newsletter, please drop us a line or two about anything you’d like us to know, such as accomplishments, events, or milestones. Please notify us about a change in address as well.

Disability Services  
Ball State University  
Student Center Rm. 116  
Muncie, IN 47306  
dsd@bsu.edu

THIS PUBLICATION IS AVAILABLE IN ACCESSIBLE FORMAT ON OUR WEBSITE.  
www.bsu.edu/disabilityservices