Happy Holidays from Disability Services

I am very pleased to update you on some exciting developments in our efforts to ensure that our graduates with disabilities find meaningful and sustainable employment after graduation. For several years, Disability Services has partnered with Greg Fehribach, a Distinguished Fellow in Ball State’s Office for Institutional Diversity, the Career Center, led by Director Jim McAtee, and our terrific partners at Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis to facilitate internships for our students with physical disabilities. You have hopefully read about these efforts in past editions of this newsletter.

This partnership has garnered the support of friends beyond Ball State and Eskenazi. In addition to the Ball State Academic Excellence Grant we received last year, funding has been provided from the Eli Lilly Endowment and the Lilly Foundation, the Hoover Family Foundation, the Central Indiana Community Foundation, and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. In this edition of the Communiqué, you’ll read about the results of this support: additional internships at Eskenazi Health and a new staff member at Ball State. I am very pleased to introduce Renee Haack, the Disability Career Specialist at Ball State’s Career Center. Renee’s position, funded through the Ball State Academic Excellence Grant, allows her to work with all Ball State students with disabilities on career development, with a special focus on preparing students with physical disabilities for internships at Eskenazi Health.

I am so pleased with the progress of these career initiatives in recent years. The partnership between Disability Services and the Career Center was recognized nationally this fall at the Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities 17th Annual Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Jim McAtee and I were able to share at the conference the collaborative work of our offices and the impact it has had on our students.

Thank you for your continued interest in students with disabilities at Ball State, and best wishes for a happy 2017.

Larry Markle

BSU Students Featured at Eskenazi Health Conference

On Monday, October 31st, Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis hosted the Empowering Through Employment conference, where experts discussed the Eskenazi Health Initiative for Employment and Economic Independence (IEEI). The program was designed to create opportunities for students with disabilities that could potentially help them to secure a job post-graduation.

The IEEI program was founded in 2013 and is a collaboration between Eskenazi Health and Ball State’s Disability Services office. Students from Ball State work as interns in various departments such as information services, palliative care, wellness, physical therapy, and public relations. Interns have hands-on experiences through various projects, and have the opportunity to gain real-world, professional experience. The interns also get paid for their work, and some are even able to earn college credit.

The conference featured many notable speakers, including Dr. Lisa Harris, CEO, Eskenazi Health; Greg Fehribach, vice president of the Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County Board of Trustees and a Distinguished Fellow with the Ball State University Disability Project; and Bart Upah, the new program manager of IEEI.

However, it was the panel of former IEEI interns who were the highlight of the event. The idea that these internships
gave them a sense of confidence going in to the workforce was a sentiment shared by all of the panelists. “To think that I did as well as I did in something that I didn’t really know about, I can go into new jobs knowing I have the ability to do the work,” said Luke Labas, who worked as an intern in the grants department. Dustin Gilmer, an intern who worked in the public affairs department, said, “The program definitely has built more confidence in me and being able to work in the real world and be a part of society.”

The panelists spoke highly of their experiences, detailing the most memorable moments from their placements. Whether it was bonding with co-workers or being given responsibilities after earning the trust of their bosses, the panelists left their internships pleased with nearly every facet of their experiences. It was Brad Millspaugh, an intern who worked in the IT department, who summed up the most valued part of the internship experience. “People looked at me as Brad, the intern, and not Brad the person in the wheelchair. Everyone treated me as a regular person.”

With the help of Ball State’s office of Disability Services and the Career Center, along with funding from the Lilly Endowment, the Hoover Family Foundation, and a Quality of Life grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, IEEI is working to expand. Bart Upah, IEEI program manager, said they are hoping to increase the number of summer interns from 5 to 16, and are going to begin year round internships. Representatives from Ivy Tech, Butler, University of Indianapolis, IUPUI, and Marian University were invited to the conference in hopes of expanding the program to those schools. IEEI is also actively working to establish relationships with businesses in the area to create awareness for the program and educating on hiring people with disabilities.

New Student Profile: Ben Callaway

Ben Callaway enrolled at Purdue University not quite sure what he wanted to do post college. With some family influence, Ben entered with the intent to study Computer Science. He soon realized, however, that he simply was not passionate about the field. A visit to a career counselor helped Ben decide to give education a shot. A friend of Ben’s was studying Special Education at Ball State and had nothing but positive things to say about the program.

This past fall Ben finally transferred to Ball State and is pursuing a degree in Special Education. Ben loves the atmosphere at Ball State, explaining, “The campus here feels so much better to me.” He quickly found his place in the campus community by getting involved with a few different campus organizations like the Comic Book Club.

Ben is also working to start a Goalball team on campus. He’s no stranger to the sport, having played for over 5 years. During his junior year of high school, a teacher suggested that Ben and a friend start a team together. Ben was later invited to join a grassroots program that was starting around the country and was able to practice with professional Goalball players.

That same friend who started the team with Ben in high school also went to Purdue, and while there he and Ben started a Goalball team. They even held a tournament that attracted teams from all over the state, as well as teams from Michigan and Ohio, and members from the national team came and joined different teams in the tournaments. Ben is hoping to form a team to represent Ball State at the next tournament.
Associate Director Wins ATHENA Award

On November 16th, Courtney Jarrett, Associate Director of Disability Services, attended the 2016 ATHENA Awards Luncheon. When she first received an invitation to the event and found out she had been nominated for the ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award, she looked at the other women who had been nominated and really didn’t think she stood a chance. However, she apparently was the only person to share that sentiment, as she would soon find herself walking up to the stage to accept the award.

Founded in 1982, ATHENA International is a non-profit organization that seeks to support, develop, and honor women leaders. The program inspires women to reach their full potential and strives to create balance in leadership worldwide. Founder Martha Mayhood Mertz was convinced that if women’s strength and contributions as leaders were more publicly acknowledged, they could no longer be dismissed. She developed the ATHENA Leadership Award, and since then more than 7,000 awards have been presented in more than 500 communities in 8 countries.

The ATHENA Young Professional Award was launched in 2007, and it honors emerging community leaders whose professional and personal achievements make them ideal role models for young women. Criteria for the award include an individual who demonstrates excellence, creativity, and initiative in their profession, and also who dedicates time and energy to improving the lives of others in the community.

Seven women, including Courtney, were nominated for the award. Each nominee stood up and was recognized for their achievements. Then, the presenter began to read the letter from the person who nominated the winner. When the presenter started reading, Courtney thought that it could be a few different people, still believing she was not going to win the award. It wasn’t until the presenter said, “This person works with over 800 students with disabilities, as well as in the Women & Gender studies program,” that Courtney finally realized what was happening.

The presenter went on to read two additional letters submitted by colleagues that outlined why they felt Courtney was so deserving of the award. Courtney was so surprised not only because she won the award, but also because of the touching words of admiration from her colleagues. “People don’t always understand everything we do in the Disability office,” said Courtney, “so for people who work outside of this department to recognize and appreciate the work I do meant so much.”

Sadly Noted

It is with great sadness that Disability Services reports that two highly regarded Ball State alums passed away this past summer. Brad Clark graduated in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in Telecommunications. Brad, a recipient of the B.I.C. Industries award in 2008, was very active on campus including being a producer at Cardinal Sports Live. Brad was employed at Navient as a student loan specialist.

Richard Bach received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Ball State, completing his master’s degree in Information and Communication Science in 2009. He was a graduate assistant in the Adaptive Technology lab, and a recipient of the Fehribach award in 2009. Richard was employed at ITT Technical Institute in Carmel.
When Renee Haack completed her undergraduate degree at Ball State in 2006, she bid her goodbye to Larry Markle, saying, “I’ll see you in 10 years.” As luck, or maybe even fate, would have it, Renee returned to Ball State this past fall as an Assistant Director in the Career Center as a Disability Career Specialist.

In the fall of 2015, the Ball State Initiative for Disability Employment, a collaboration between Disability Services, the Career Center, and Ball State’s Disability Project, received an Academic Excellence Grant from the university. The initiative is a conglomerate of the efforts and expertise of Larry Markle, Director of Disability Services, Jim McAtee, Director of the Career Center, and Greg Fehribach, Distinguished Fellow and head of the Disability Project. It is designed 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 also included funds to establish a specialist position, for which Renee was selected. In her position, Renee serves as a specialist specifically for students with disabilities. She meets individually with students to connect them with on-campus jobs, internships, and other Ball State resources. Renee also facilitates both one-on-one and group sessions for students to improve on skills like resume writing and interview prep that are imperative to gaining employment. Additionally, Renee helps to identify employers who would be good candidates to hire students with disabilities for internships, as well as jobs after graduation.

From an early age, Renee knew she wanted to work with students. Throughout middle and high school she was involved with the Special Olympics and peer facilitating. Renee graduated from Ball State with a degree in Special Education for students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Hearing Impairments, and minored in Early Childhood Special Education.

Renee went on to become a fifth grade teacher at the Missouri School for the Deaf in Fulton, Missouri. It was only after about six weeks in that position when Renee was asked to move to the vocational building in the school to work with high school students as a Career Transitions teacher. After about four years, Renee moved back to Indiana to work at the Indiana School for the Deaf. She again started out as a middle school teacher, but made her way to Transition Coordinator, where she worked to create a new transition program for students there. So when the new position at Ball State opened up, Renee knew she had to apply.

Renee has been in the position since July, and she believes that every day she is learning something new about herself, as well as her students. Renee doesn’t do her job for the recognition or because she thinks it will make her look better. “I love working with students who have a passion for what they’re studying, and I want to help fulfill that passion by being the person on the sidelines cheering them on,” Renee explained, “If I can help one person develop and embrace the identity of who they are, I’ve done my job.”
Disability Services would like to acknowledge and congratulate the 2016-2017 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:** Senior, Elementary Education/Special Education  
**Joshua Arter:** Graduate Student, Public Administration  
**Lizzie Ford:** Junior, Psychology  
**Alex Gilland:** Senior, Telecommunications  
**Grady Hilge:** Junior, Speech Language Pathology  
**Keri Hymer:** Junior, Fine Arts  
**Meme Jones:** Senior, Criminal Justice and Criminology  
**Sarah Meyer:** Graduate Student, Social Psychology/Clinical Mental Health  
**Preston Radtke:** Graduate Student, Information and Communication Sciences  
**Emily Vise:** Junior, Family and Consumer Sciences

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.

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**Disability Services Awards Program: April 11, 2017**

The 2017 Disability Services awards program is scheduled for 3pm on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, 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.

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**Alliance for Disability Awareness Update**

The Alliance for Disability Awareness (ADA) is a Ball State student group dedicated to disability education and awareness. This fall semester has been very productive for ADA and they have been meeting twice a month. The Executive Board of ADA for 2016-2017 is as follows:

- President - Lizzie Ford  
- Vice President - Luke Labas  
- Secretary - Katelyn Bastian  
- Social Media Manager - Jacob Mattingly

The Executive Board of ADA has been planning topics and activities for each meeting. They have also been working with other student organizations to co-sponsor a variety of events. They had awareness tables at the Activity Fair and Well-o-ween. They’ve also worked with Feminists for Action and Active Minds to co-sponsor events and host talks about important issues at their meetings.

They are also lining up other activities for the Spring semester. ADA will once again have a booth at the Tunnel of Oppression in January. They will also co-sponsor an exhibit at the David Owsley Museum of Art, featuring an artist with a disability. Please check the Disability Services website (www.bsu.edu/disabilityservices) in January for the list of scheduled events. For more information about ADA, find them on Benny Link or check out their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ADABSU/.
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.

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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.

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