Brandon Gore: Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum Recipient

The 2017 Harris-Rose Outstanding Alum award was presented to Brandon Gore. For many years, Disability Services has recognized a Ball State alum with a disability who has been successful in his or her post-Ball State life to receive the Outstanding Alum Award. The Harris-Rose award was named after Director Emeritus Richard Harris, and former student Bruce Rose.

Brandon earned his Bachelor’s degree in architecture in 2007, and in 2010 earned his Master’s degree in architecture with an emphasis on sustainability. The next year, he went on to complete yet another degree in construction management with a minor in business administration. Brandon is now an architect with Curran Architecture in Indianapolis.

While a student at Ball State, Brandon served for two years as a Resident Assistant, as well as the president of the student disability group, now known as the Alliance for Disability Awareness (ADA). He is also a graduate of Ball State’s Citizen Police Academy.

His work did not stop after graduation, as Brandon continues to serve the community in numerous ways. He is a first-contact volunteer with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, where he reaches out to those affected by the disease. He is a leader in his church, and he and his wife are licensed foster care parents. His dedication to serving others led him to be awarded the Character Counts award from former Indianapolis mayor Bart Peterson.

In accepting his award, Brandon reminisced on memories he had of working with both Richard and Larry Markle during his time at Ball State. He went on to thank his wife, children, and parents for all of their support and encouragement throughout the years. “Without them, I don’t know where I’d be.” After giving his thanks, he began to directly address the student award winners. “The main thing that I would say to all of you students is that you’ve all done a great job. Congratulations on what you’ve done so far, and the things that you will do here in the future. When I was diagnosed with leukemia at a young age and then had other issues which landed me in a wheelchair, there are two rules that I came to know. Rule number one is life’s not fair, and rule number two is you can’t change number one so just make the best of it. I think that you students have done the best that you can so far, and will continue to do that. So, congratulations again and thank you very much for this award.”
Each year, Disability Services encourages students to nominate teachers who they believe have gone above and beyond to make their classes accessible. The Accessible Teacher award is presented to a professor who has upheld the university standards and expectations of academic work, and at the same time made sure students with disabilities received every opportunity to learn and participate.

After receiving several strong nominations, this year’s award was presented to Dr. George Gaither from Psychological Sciences. Junior Lizzie Ford nominated Dr. Gaither for the award. Lizzie has worked with Dr. Gaither in class, as well as for her independent study. Lizzie noted that Dr. Gaither was “extremely accommodating,” explaining that at the beginning of the semester he worked to get his classroom moved to another location that had more space, allowing more room for chair users and students who used interpreters.

Dr. Gaither served as Lizzie’s faculty advisor for her independent study research project. This past spring, he accompanied Lizzie to present her work at the Undergraduate Research Conference at Butler University.

In accepting the award, Dr. Gaither expressed his gratitude for being given the opportunity to work with Lizzie, as well as with other students with disabilities. “It’s been an eye-opening experience,” he said, and he has gone above and beyond in ensuring his courses are accessible to all.

For the fifth year, Disability Services has presented the Laura J. Kraska awards. Laura, a former Ball State student, received her Bachelor’s degree in 1990 and her Master’s degree in 1993 in Information & Communication Sciences. Laura had low vision and was strongly supported by the work of the Disability Services office. In Laura’s memory, the Kraska family has endowed yearly scholarships to three students with visual impairments who have done well in the classroom and have been active members in the Ball State community. The staff members of Disability Services, along with Carlos Taylor, the adaptive technology specialist, formed the committee to select the students who received the awards.

Grady Hilge, a junior Audiology major from Covington, IN, has earned a GPA above 3.5. Grady has volunteered at the Muncie Animal Shelter, has raised money for the Foundation for Fighting Blindness Vision Walk, and has participated in Ball State’s Safe Zone program. This summer, Grady will be interning at Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis.

Emily Vise, a junior Apparel Design & Fashion Merchandising major, has a 3.2 GPA. Emily is a member of the Phi Upsilon Omicron Alpha Sigma Chapter Honors Society, where she plans service projects and gives presentations. She is also a member of the Fashion Design Society and the Yorktown Arts Committee.

Sierra Brummett, a senior Special Education major from Marion, IN, has dedicated a significant amount of time volunteering at Beyond I Can in Muncie. She is a hard-working, dedicated student, and has been a classroom panelist and speaks with many students about her visual impairment.
The Adrienne Paige Gilbert Scholarship was established by Kay and Jeff Gilbert in memory of their daughter, Adrienne Paige. Adrienne was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. She only lived for four months, but her life touched all who knew her. It is the Gilberts’ hope that this scholarship will allow others with disabilities to further their college education in honor of their daughter.

This year’s recipient is Lexi Heer, a junior Accounting major from Fishers, IN. Lexi is one of the best power soccer athletes in the country. She has been a member of the U.S. National Power Soccer Team, where she helped the team bring home gold medals at the 2013 Under-18 International Tournament in Paris, and at the first ever COPA Americas National Team competition in Rio in 2014.

The top student award presented each year is the Max Adamson Award. This award is given to a graduating student with a disability who has excelled academically, has been involved on campus, and believes in creating access and opportunity for others. The award is named in honor of Max Adamson, a student who attended Ball State from 1976-1985. Max was a key figure in helping Ball State to achieve the level of accessibility it has today. Although he passed several years ago, Max’s memory thrives in those who knew him.

This year’s award was presented to Tara Abella, a senior majoring in both Elementary and Special Education from Brownsburg, IN. Tara, a former Kraska Award recipient, has maintained a 3.97 GPA. Tara has supported the Ball State community through her involvement in organizations like the BSU Literacy Council, Best Buddies, Alliance for Disability Awareness, and the Student Council for Exceptional Children. She also spent the summer of 2016 interning at Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis.

In receiving the award, Tara said, “I just wanted to say that I’ve had such a positive experience at Ball State, especially in my student teaching and other teaching experiences.” Tara took the time to thank key individuals for their support throughout her time here at Ball State. “I would first like to thank Courtney and Larry for all of their support and their willingness to accommodate me. It’s really difficult going into someone’s classroom midway through the year, and they really made it a smooth transition for me. I’d also like to thank all of my professors in the elementary education.
and the special education department for going above and beyond and connecting me with other blind teachers so that I could learn from them and their strategies, and be as successful as possible and best serve my students. I’d like to thank Renee for her help in perfecting my resume, and getting me ready for the Teachers College job fair that’s coming up soon. Finally, I’d like to thank my mother for all her love and support, and I could not have made it through my program without her assistance.” Tara wrapped up by saying, “I’m just very grateful for all the support I’ve been given, and I’m looking forward to my next steps as being a teacher in the future.”

**Access Awards**

Providing access and opportunity for students with disabilities is a campus wide effort. It is a collaborative partnership between departments and across disciplines. The Access Awards are given to members of the Ball State community who go above and beyond in ensuring access for students with disabilities.

**Charlene Alexander** is the Associate Provost for Diversity and Interim Associate Vice President for Community Engagement. Charlene has collaborated with Disability Services on many projects over the years, and promotes disability as part of diversity in the many programs she directs. Further, she enthusiastically hired Greg Fehribach to be a Distinguished Fellow for Diversity to assist her with disability as part of diversity programming.

**Tim Hess** is the Associate Director for Clinical Services at the Counseling Center. With the significant increase in students with psychological disabilities, Tim has guided the Counseling Center in a time of transition and has always maintained a focus on assisting students. Tim has been a great support for Disability Services in understanding issues pertaining to mental health and accommodations.

**Jim McAtee** is the Director of the Career Center. The Career Center has partnered with Disability Services for many years in providing programming and resources for students with disabilities. Jim collaborated with Larry Markle and Greg Fehribach in developing the grant that was funded by Ball State to enhance the efforts to prepare students with disabilities for employment. Jim and the Career Center’s work on this project was nationally recognized at a conference in Boston in the fall, and will also be recognized at the National Association of Colleges and Employers conference this spring.

**Suzanne Rice** is the Assistant Dean for Public Services at the University Libraries. Suzanne has been the “go-to” person for many years at the library, and promotes accessibility for all users of University Libraries. In recent years, Suzanne has worked with Disability Services to support and meet the needs of students with non-apparent disabilities.

**Kendra Zenisek** is the Coordinator of the PFW Program and is an instructor of Kinesiology. With Ball State requiring all students to take a PFW class, this has proven to be difficult for students with a variety of disabilities. Kendra meets individually with students with disabilities who may struggle with this requirement to ensure they will be placed in a course appropriate for their level of ability. This year, Kendra developed updated departmental policies to assist faculty members in accommodating students with disabilities.
COMMUNIQUE

Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach Awards

Each year, the Office of Disability Services recognizes outstanding students with disabilities by presenting them with the Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach Awards, named in honor of two long-time supporters of Disability Services. Greg, a prominent Indianapolis attorney and national expert on accessibility issues, received his undergraduate degree from Ball State, where he also served as President of the student body. Greg is a former member of Ball State’s Board of Trustees and currently serves the Ball State community as a Distinguished Fellow for the Disability Project. The project was designed to facilitate economic and employment opportunities for college graduates with physical disabilities. Recipients of the award have demonstrated success in the classroom, and by example or direct action have furthered the cause of access and opportunity. This year, the Fehribachs presented the awards to six students:

Ryan Beery, a junior Telecommunications student from Carmel, IN, has earned a 3.4 GPA during his time at Ball State. Ryan has served as a Resident Assistant for two years, volunteers with Dance Marathon, and works with Ball State Athletics on promotions and game-day activities. Ryan was also recently named TCOM Sales and Promotions Student of the Year.

Lizzie Ford, a junior Psychology major from Fishers, IN, has maintained a 3.975 GPA. Lizzie has served as a Resident Assistant, is the President of the Alliance for Disability Awareness, and was most recently elected as Secretary for the Student Government Association. She is also a member of the Sigma Kappa Sorority.

Anna Higgins, a junior Speech Language Pathology major from Claypool, IN, has a 3.6 GPA. Anna is a member of the Kappa Delta sorority, as well as the academic honors sorority Rho Lambda. Anna volunteers with Girl Scout troops in Muncie, leads a Bible study, and teaches at an off-campus program at Sutton Elementary School.

Andrew Johnson, a senior Exercise Science major from Fishers, IN, has a 3.4 GPA. Andrew is an Executive Board Member of the Exercise Science club, works at the JoAnn Gora Recreation Center and volunteers in the athletics strength and conditioning weight room, and also works at the Belzer Cub Scout Day Camp during the summer. Additionally, Andrew has enjoyed entertaining the campus as Charlie Cardinal.

Lucas Smith, a senior Computer Science major from Muncie, has maintained a 3.5 GPA. Lucas is a member of the Ball State Digital Corps, and he also provides IT work for the Ball State School of Kinesiology. Lucas recently presented at Ball State’s Autism Conference in March.

Katelyn Warner, a senior Marketing major from Greenwood, IN, has earned a 3.94 GPA. Katelyn is the founder and president of Ball State’s chapter of the College Diabetes Network, and is a Global Digital Marketing Intern at Roche Diabetes Care. Katelyn has served the Ball State community through her work as an Academic Peer Mentor and a Multicultural Ambassador, and is a Bible study leader with the Ball State Navigators. Katelyn also served on a 10-week missionary internship in Costa Rica.

Sadly Noted

Greg Thomson died this past February in Tennessee. Greg came to Ball State from Minnesota in 1974, where he completed two master’s degrees and a doctorate. Greg was instrumental in the early years of the disability program in providing advice and insight as to how Ball State could become more accessible. He was the recipient of Disability Services’ Outstanding Alum award in 1986. His career included outstanding management of three rehabilitation centers.
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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