

## Criterion I

*The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.*

# Chapter 3: *Mission and Vision*

## Introduction

Ball State University's identity as a Carnegie research-intensive institution of higher learning offering the full range of degree options (associate through doctoral) is well established. Descriptions of the university, its history, and its mission are available in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs (Exhibits 86 and 40, respectively, pp. 1–2, in the resource room). Although Ball State emphasizes providing a residential undergraduate education primarily to citizens of Indiana, the institution also is strongly committed to graduate education and research. In addition, the university supports programs that reach students beyond the boundaries of the campus and promotes its programs to a broader audience nationally and internationally. As described in Chapter 1 of this report, Ball State has embraced a teacher-scholar model that prioritizes delivery of high-quality education within an environment that provides personal attention and opportunities for scholarship and creative activity.

This chapter details the vision, mission, and goals of Ball State; provides examples of decision-making processes appropriate to the institution's stated purposes; and outlines the processes by which the university communicates its vision, mission, and goals to institutional constituencies.

## The Vision for the University

In 2001 Ball State adopted a formal vision statement that was disseminated widely to internal and external constituencies. Developed as an integral component of the *Ball State University Strategic Plan 2001–2006* ([www.bsu.edu/strategicplan](http://www.bsu.edu/strategicplan)), the vision for the university was approved by Ball State's Board of Trustees in July 2001. It states:

Ball State University will be a national model for all who seek intellectual vitality in a learner-centered and socially responsible academic community.

## The Mission of the University

Ball State's mission statement was revised in 1989 and again in 2001. The evolution of the mission statement over the years reflects the university's institutional growth as well as the changing economic and workforce needs of the region and state. The mission statement also reflects the university's application of a teacher-scholar model based upon the conceptualization of scholarship offered by Ernest Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered*. The university's recent strategic planning process culminated in the development of a refocused mission statement that is consistent with the institution's vision and that emphasizes its core values. The new mission statement captures Ball State's distinctive emphases and reflects the values of higher education. It reads:

Ball State University is a learning community engaged in the discovery of knowledge, the integration of learning experiences, and their application through civic and professional leadership.

We value the following attributes as they relate to the mission:

In our learning community, we value—

- ☞ Challenge and achievement
- ☞ Teamwork and problem solving
- ☞ Personalized learning

In our discovery of knowledge, we value—

- ☞ Intellectual freedom
- ☞ Inquiry and investigation
- ☞ Creative activity

In our integration of learning experiences, we value—

- ☞ Connection
- ☞ Coherence
- ☞ Collaboration

In our civic and professional leadership, we value—

- ☞ Integrity
- ☞ Social justice
- ☞ Social responsibility

## Processes for Evaluating the Institution's Purposes

Responsibility for carrying out Ball State's mission and purposes rests with the Board of Trustees acting through the university's senior administrative officers and its governance system. The administrative and governance structures and decision-making processes are described in detail in Chapter 4 of this report. Although the university has always engaged in regular evaluation of its mission and purposes, formalization of this process has become a priority of the institution.

## Strategic Planning

In fall 2000 President Brownell charged a group of 25 administrators, professional personnel, faculty, students, and staff with creating a new strategic plan for the university. The group solicited input from stakeholders around the community and across the campus and then established goals, objectives, and measurement strategies. In early 2001 a draft of the new plan was posted on the Web and presented at several public venues in order to generate feedback. The strategic planning group reviewed comments and, where appropriate, revised the plan. Since the plan's release as a final document in mid-2001, each administrative unit has developed an individual plan articulating the ways in which it will contribute to the achievement of the university's goals and objectives. The Strategic Plan Assessment and Implementation Team

GIR 1: It has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.

GIR 2: It is a degree-granting institution.



comprising administrators, faculty, and professional personnel monitors the institution's progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the plan.

The six goals outlined in the strategic plan concretize the values described in Ball State's mission statement. They are:

- ≡ **Goal I:** Ball State University will enhance excellence in undergraduate and graduate learning.
- ≡ **Goal II:** Ball State University will promote a learning climate that values civility, diversity, multicultural awareness, appreciation of the arts, healthy and productive living, and environmental sustainability.
- ≡ **Goal III:** Ball State University will attract and retain high-quality faculty, professional personnel, and staff.
- ≡ **Goal IV:** Ball State University will attain optimal enrollment based on selective admissions policies and successful retention programs.
- ≡ **Goal V:** Ball State University will continue to be a best-practice institution in the innovative use of instructional and information technology.
- ≡ **Goal VI:** Ball State University will broaden, diversify, and enrich its relationships beyond the campus.

## Decision Making Appropriate to the Stated Mission and Purposes

The university's mission and vision statements strike a balance that acknowledges Ball State's historical identity and values yet captures current institutional aspirations. Throughout its history, Ball State has nurtured its learning community, discovered knowledge, integrated learning experiences, and promoted civic and professional leadership, and these emphases have informed the institution's decision making.

At Ball State decision making occurs through university governance structures, ad hoc committees, and interdisciplinary, collaborative teams. Many decisions involve crossing the boundaries of the formal structure of college and vice presidential areas. Collaboration across disciplines and collegiate lines is common, and members of decision-making groups often are identified based upon the expertise needed to consider a particular issue and upon an understanding of the stakeholders that will be affected by any resulting outcomes. For example, efforts such as the establishment of university-wide task forces to reexamine the University Core Curriculum and to reevaluate the university governance structure are of great importance as Ball State moves forward. These processes demonstrate the university's commitment to collaborative decision making within the framework of the institution's stated purposes.

The university's concern for academic freedom and its focus on excellence are embedded in its institutional decisions, and decision making at all levels reflects a strong commitment to the university's vision, mission, and goals. The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of just a few of the ways in which Ball State translates its mission into specific decisions, initiatives, and programs. A more detailed description of these practices will be provided in subsequent chapters of this self-study report.

## Student Challenge and Achievement

Ball State is a learning community that values challenge and achievement, teamwork and problem solving, and personalized learning. Evidence of the institution's commitment to student challenge and achievement can be seen in programs such as Freshman Connections, developed to enhance student success, and Making Achievement Possible (MAP) (Exhibit 54 in the resource room), an assessment-based project designed to improve academic performance. MAP provides students with feedback about their work and study habits in comparison to their peers. Another example of the university's commitment to achievement is the 1997 decision to increase admission standards, which allowed Ball State to move forward in several ways. The average SAT score for incoming freshmen has improved in four of the past five years, and the institution has been able to attract a significantly greater number of National Merit Scholars. Ball State's student-athletes perform well academically, and the university admits only those who demonstrate academic credentials consistent with their nonathlete peers.

## Faculty Achievement

Ball State also values and supports faculty achievement in teaching, research, and creative endeavor. The university provides resources to improve teaching performance through the Center for Teaching and Learning Advancement, and all faculty members are expected to engage in yearly assessment of their teaching effectiveness. While retaining a strong focus on excellence in teaching, faculty have steadily become more successful in obtaining external funds. In 2002–03 external funds garnered through the Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs were the highest in Ball State history, exceeding \$25 million to enhance student safety.

## Teamwork and Partnerships

Ball State accomplishes many of its goals through effective teamwork and partnerships. For example, when the Indiana Professional Standards Board instituted teacher



education reform in the state, faculty from the six academic colleges across which responsibility for teacher education is distributed came together to develop a plan for incorporating the new standards into their curricula. The university also has demonstrated successful teamwork through its Professional Development Schools program, which brings together Ball State teacher education faculty, students preparing to be teachers, and K–12 teachers and administrators in on-site collaborative learning designed to enhance the quality of instruction in public schools throughout the region. Another example of the effective use of partnerships to achieve institutional goals is the integration of service learning opportunities into most majors. These opportunities involve partnerships with a wide variety of organizations and businesses in the local community and the greater region.

### Personalized Learning

Personalized learning has always been a priority at Ball State. The student-to-faculty ratio is 17:1, the average class size is 30.6 students, 97.8 percent of classes are taught by faculty members, and nationally recognized faculty—including the university’s distinguished professors and endowed chairs—teach many undergraduate courses. The majority of faculty report that they engage in research projects with undergraduate and graduate students and that this collaboration results in coauthored publications and presentations. Academic guidance also is personalized. As students begin their academic work, professional advisors counsel them. Then as soon as they select a major, students receive advising from faculty in the department in which they are majoring.

### Intellectual Freedom

In the discovery of knowledge, Ball State values intellectual freedom, inquiry and investigation, and creative activity. The rights and responsibilities associated with intellectual freedom are affirmed by the institution’s mission statement and are specified in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* (Exhibit 34 in the resource room). Individuals are further empowered by the decision-making processes of the university. Decisions about curriculum changes, program alterations, and degree/course offerings flow from individuals and departments through the governance system. Students also have the right to participate, self-govern, communicate ideas, and express their thoughts as outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Exhibit 19 in the resource room).

### Creative Inquiry

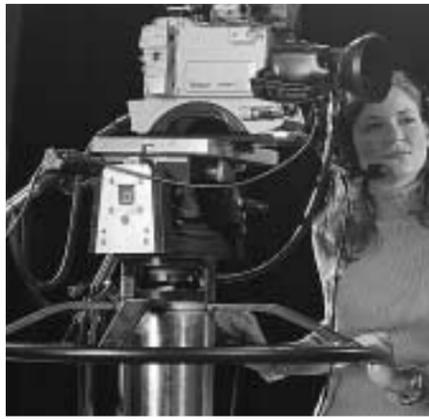
Ball State promotes freedom of inquiry through a wide range of faculty and student development opportunities. Plentiful support for research and creative works is made

available by departments, colleges, Ball State University Foundation endowments, and the Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs. This support enables the university to provide the educational breadth and depth of inquiry associated with institutions of higher education. This is exemplified in the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. Launched in 2000, this center pursues a simple premise: that inquiry and creation are reciprocal processes and that acquiring knowledge and applying it should happen simultaneously. While spending a semester together at the center, faculty and students establish connections between diverse fields of knowledge, such as the arts, the humanities, the sciences, and technology. This semester culminates in a group capstone project. Past projects have ranged from the production of the *Indiana Outdoors* public television series to the re-creation of an early 20th-century Paris salon.

### Connection and Collaboration

The university seeks to integrate learning experiences by fostering connection, coherence, and collaboration. The University Core Curriculum, a shared 41 credit hour experience for all majors, is designed to help students “to live rich, satisfying lives and to undertake the broad responsibilities of citizenship in a free society,” and while it “seeks to discover and nurture individual talents, its primary emphasis is the preparation of our students for roles they will share as human beings and as members of family and community groups” (*Ball State University Undergraduate Catalog 2002–2004*, pp. 28–29; Exhibit 86 in the resource room). Assessment of the University Core Curriculum during the past decade has resulted in the creation of a task force charged with revising the program’s goals and structure by late 2004.

Launched in fall 1997, Freshman Connections is a bold and innovative integration of the university’s curricular and cocurricular programs, structured around the University Core Curriculum and the residential life program. Groups of freshman students assigned to the same residence hall take two University Core Curriculum courses together, thereby creating small learning communities. Teams comprising their instructors for the shared courses, residence hall directors, and academic advisors work to offer coordinated out-of-class learning experiences that complement in-class activities. The program helps freshmen connect to the university through the relationships that emerge with members of the coordinating teams and among the students as a result of their shared learning experiences. Although several institutions have developed learning communities, Ball State is aware of no other large public institution that has initiated this kind of program for virtually every new freshman. The program has been the subject of several presentations at national conferences and was instrumental in



Ball State being identified by the Center for the Study of the Freshman Year as one of the 13 best institutions in the country for the quality of its freshman programs.

### Civic and Professional Leadership

Ball State also values integrity, social justice, and social responsibility as members of its community study, model, and practice civic and professional leadership. For example, Ball State's Council on the Environment (COTE) promotes local environmental protection and education. This group includes faculty, students, and staff members from diverse disciplines as well as a dozen local community participants. Recommendations by COTE and its forerunner, the Green Committee, have resulted in curricular changes such as the creation of environmental studies minors, a university recycling program, and the reduced use of natural resources, including the purchase of hybrid fuel vehicles for the university fleet.

The campus community includes many citizen-scholars who are aware of their responsibility for the welfare and well-being of others. A two-year training initiative called Building Employment Skills Together (BEST) prepared 2,700 local residents for new job opportunities before it concluded in 2001. Funded by a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this Ball State program assisted welfare recipients, displaced workers seeking new jobs, and clerical employees seeking new skills or careers, among others. BEST nearly tripled its original goal of 1,000 participants.

### Experiential Education

Ball State emphasizes experiential education outside the confines of the university and the classroom. These experiences enhance career preparation, but they also reflect the university's commitment to the personal and civic growth that heightens awareness of issues of social responsibility and justice. While there are many examples of this practice across the campus, only a few can be highlighted here.

Graduate students pursuing a major in digital storytelling are required to enroll in a four-week immersion course in another domestic or international setting that causes them to experience a culture and learn of a storytelling tradition different from their own. Students enrolled in the international nursing field experience in Jamaica earn credit for clinical hours in a variety of courses as they work in health centers located in western Jamaica or as public health nurses, midwives, and physician and community aides. CapAsia, a unique 11-week field study program conducted every other year by the College of Architecture and Planning, exposes students to the social, cultural, and historical aspects of south Asia through cultural immersion and collaborative projects undertaken

with the help of a network of design and planning scholars, professionals, and educators in the region. Since the program's inception in 1999, students and faculty have studied in Hong Kong, China; Delhi and Mumbai, India; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Kathmandu, Nepal; Singapore; Colombo, Sri Lanka; and Bangkok, Thailand.

## Understanding of the Stated Mission and Purposes by Constituencies

### Communicating Ball State's Distinctive Attributes

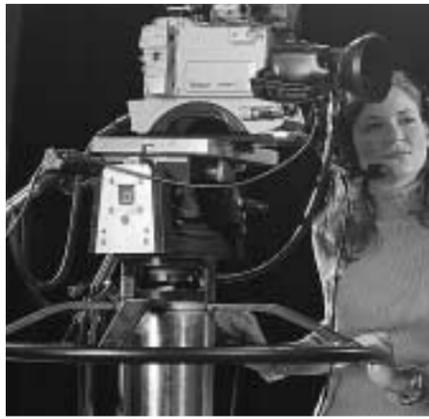
Over the past decade, a variety of phrases have been used to describe Ball State's distinctive commitment to individual learning and personal attention within a comprehensive university environment. University officials have called Ball State a "Premier Teaching University" where the teacher-scholar model ensures that faculty research and professional activity outside the classroom are translated back into curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular opportunities for students. In recent years, the university's leadership has recognized and promoted the unique position of Ball State in Indiana as an institution combining the powerful resources of a comprehensive university with the personal learning environment of a smaller college. As a result, Ball State's mission and purpose are clearly understood across the campus. Furthermore, to capture the concept of an institution that combines powerful resources and personal learning succinctly, the university adopted the marketing slogan "Everything You Need," which created a memorable "brand" for Ball State and provided a vehicle for promoting its distinctive qualities.

### Communications within the University

Ball State remains in touch with and accessible to its internal constituencies of students, faculty, and staff in a variety of ways:

- ⇒ The top-level pages of the university's Web site ([www.bsu.edu](http://www.bsu.edu)) are organized to easily provide relevant information to current students, faculty, and staff as well as to prospective students, alumni, friends, and visitors.
- ⇒ The president and the provost each publish regular "e-letters" addressed to faculty and staff.
- ⇒ Faculty and staff can use the university's "ALLBSU" e-mail address to quickly reach all faculty and staff who have addresses within the Ball State network.
- ⇒ The University Senate's Web site provides information about issues under review in the governance process, governance bylaws, scheduled meetings, and agenda items.

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- ☞ *Update* ([www.bsu.edu/update](http://www.bsu.edu/update)), the university's faculty/staff news publication, is distributed electronically each week during the academic year and every other week in the summer. Current and back issues also are available on the Web.
- ☞ Ball State's award-winning student newspaper, *The Daily News* ([www.bsudailynews.com](http://www.bsudailynews.com)), is free, distributed widely across campus, and available online. In addition to news stories, this publication contains many announcements of interest to the campus community.
- ☞ Through the Alpha Program, new faculty participate in orientation activities throughout their first year of employment. Each new faculty member also is assigned a peer mentor to provide guidance during the first year.
- ☞ New administrators participate in a semester-long series of orientation workshops.
- ☞ Incoming freshmen and graduate students undergo two days of orientation prior to their first semester of classes.
- ☞ The Freshman Connections program helps new undergraduate students understand the university's mission and purposes.

## Keeping the Public Informed of the Institutional and Educational Goals

The university's institutional and educational purposes are shared continually and consistently with a variety of constituents, including legislators, citizens of Indiana, and alumni. The Office of University Communications provides a full range of media relations services designed to help keep the public informed about the activities and successes of the institution through television, radio, and print media. In addition, Ball State employs a part-time lobbyist to federal legislators and a full-time liaison to the state legislature; this dialogue at the state and national levels keeps our publicly elected officials aware of the university's goals and enables them to work effectively on behalf of Ball State.

The *President's Report* ([www.bsu.edu/ur/annualreport](http://www.bsu.edu/ur/annualreport)), mailed annually to approximately 3,500 business and opinion leaders, alumni, and supporters, provides information about institutional and educational activities and accomplishments. A *President's Letter* featuring recent news is mailed to 1,800 university friends and contributors about every four months.

*Ball State Alumnus* ([www.bsu.edu/alumni/alumnus](http://www.bsu.edu/alumni/alumnus)) magazine is published six times each year and is mailed to more than 115,000 households. This 40-page publication provides information on events, outreach, class notes, faculty news, and a wide variety of other topics. *BeneFacta* ([www.bsu.edu/benefacta](http://www.bsu.edu/benefacta); Exhibit 15 in the resource room), an annual publication of the Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs, showcases outstanding faculty who carry out research or creative initiatives. *BeneFacta* reaches 3,000 sponsors, supporters, and other friends of Ball State.

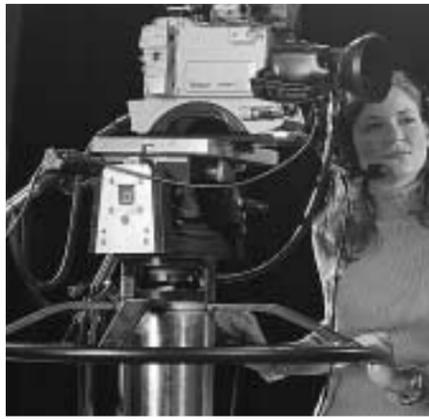
Each year the activities of about 10,500 Ball State students are promoted to newspapers and other publications in their hometowns through press releases issued by the Hometown News Bureau. These news releases include information about students making the dean's list, winning scholarships and receiving awards, working in on-campus jobs such as residence hall assistants, cowriting papers with faculty, and participating in various events.

Since 1998 Ball State has mounted four comprehensive marketing campaigns to attract more and better students and to enhance the university's reputation. The advertising portions of these campaigns have included television, radio, and billboards in major Indiana markets and print advertising statewide in high school student publications, community programs, and carefully selected periodicals. The campaigns have been effective in communicating the university's distinctive attributes and sense of itself to the general public and specific target audiences.

## Evaluation with Respect to Criterion I

Ten years ago the reaccreditation evaluation team expressed the following concern: "The lack of evidence for the implementation of the goals articulated in *Ball State University 2000: A Vision for the Future* (Exhibit 14 in the resource room) raises questions about the long run and strategic planning efforts of the university."

Ball State's prior strategic planning efforts were hampered by the fact that the university's previous plan did not express the voice of the full range of university constituent groups and that university process did not specify the ways in which individual units might address institutional goals. Ball State has effectively responded to the need for a different approach to strategic planning and implementation since the last reaccreditation visit. The *Ball State University Strategic Plan 2001–2006* (Exhibit 13 in the resource room) and the vision and mission statements that are part of that document are easily accessible to any employee or visitor. The six goals of the strategic plan are written concisely and clearly to reflect the university's learner-centered mission and its focus on excellence. These goals are articulated in many venues using a variety of communication strategies that reach various constituent groups, including participants in the governance system, members of the administrative leadership team, faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Decision-making processes are collaborative and consistent with Ball State's learner-centered mission. Furthermore, the process for evaluating progress made in achieving the goals of the strategic plan is explicit and involves descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative indexes that will enable effective outcome measurement. Internal support for the planning process has been considerable



as evidenced by the cohesion between unit strategic plans and the university's overall plan. Finally, Ball State has increased the effectiveness of its mechanisms for communicating its distinct identity, purposes, and achievements to a full range of internal and external audiences.

### **Institutional Strengths**

The university accomplished its recent strategic planning process in only one academic year. Many stakeholder groups participated in developing the document and take pride in its existence. Ball State's strategic plan builds on current strengths yet challenges the institution to become a national model, to stay learner-centered, and to be socially responsible. The shared view of the strategic plan as a dynamic document is a strength that will enable the university to refine goals and objectives in response to internal and external demands. The plan is directly linked to institutional budget processes and formal assessment mechanisms, links that enable the university to move forward with structure and direction. The institution has made an explicit decision to increase tuition and fees so that the goals in the strategic plan can be realized.

### **Concerns and Future Challenges**

Ball State's strategic plan is comprehensive and includes many objectives, not all of which can or should be realistically accomplished within the same time frame. Although there is consensus within the university community with respect to the goals and objectives articulated in the plan, there is still the challenge of achieving consensus in determining which objectives should be prioritized. There are many "hands around the table" in need of budgetary support to achieve their individual unit objectives. It will be important to continue the tradition of involvement of the full range of institutional constituencies that was used to develop our strategic plan as year-to-year priorities are established.

The strategic plan was developed with an underlying assumption that the university's state-funding base would be stable. However, state revenues have come in grossly below expectations for the past few years, resulting in an uncertain financial future for state-assisted institutions of higher education, including Ball State. Furthermore, the widespread and necessary decision among institutions of higher education in Indiana to raise tuition and fees to cover needs not met by state support has not received uniform support from members of the state government. Therefore, future challenges include working to protect our state resource base while simultaneously decreasing our reliance on it so that insufficient resources do not cripple the implementation of strategic initiatives.

Most challenging—and presenting the greatest opportunity—will be the university's ability to make the vision statement, mission statement, and strategic plan relevant in meaningful ways and adaptable to changing conditions. These important documents, and the shared efforts that brought them forward in 2001, must remain "alive" if the Ball State learning community is to reach its full potential.