

### Criterion III

*The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.*

## Chapter 8: *Student Enrollment, Development, and Support*

### Introduction

Ball State University's history as a teachers college has molded its identity as a student-centered institution with a learning environment rich in programs and services that support student development in and out of the classroom. Student support begins with the recruitment/admission process and continues throughout the total student experience. Although the undergraduate experience is characterized by primarily centralized sources of support, most support for graduate students is discipline specific and housed within academic departments. Since 1993 the university has made significant improvements in its admissions criteria, processes, and recruitment as well as academic support programs and student life initiatives.

### Student Body Appropriate for the University: Recruitment and Admissions

Basic Institutional Data Forms A1–4 (Appendix BID) present enrollment information for all student populations at Ball State. However, these data do not reflect the shift in enrollment planning and management that took place in the mid-1990s. In order to obtain the desired quality and number of students, the university has implemented significant enrollment strategies since 1997. New enrollment and marketing goals consistent with the institution's mission and educational programs were established, research on market position and competitor analysis was conducted, a university-wide marketing and enrollment management team was established, and admissions criteria were strengthened. Ball State's marketing plan is described in Chapter 10 of this report.

In recent years Ball State has developed a more personalized approach to student recruitment. A differentiated direct-mail program was prepared so high school students identified as more likely to enroll at Ball State were periodically contacted. Major feeder schools were identified and given special attention. The telecounseling effort was reorganized, and early outreach programs were conducted for middle school students and minority populations. New programs and targeted communications for admitted students were developed so students and parents could be better informed before making enrollment decisions. Using Connexia software, a Web site was developed for use by prospective undergraduates that is more responsive to the questions and needs of individual students. For a number of years, Ball State has offered "instant decisions" during visits to high schools; in 1999 the university also began offering instant decisions during campus visits by high school seniors.

Although the Graduate School has a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan, this effort is primarily intended to link prospective students with the academic departments to which they may seek admission. Faculty members and other graduate students serve as the primary recruitment agents for graduate programs, and recruitment by department personnel is highly personalized. However, several initiatives are under way to assist departments with their recruitment of prospective students. First, the Graduate School has acquired funds to support recruiting trips on an annual basis and to support an annual contract with gradschools.com and Student Prospector. The school also has worked with the Office of University Communications and University Computing Services to implement new software—First View—that re-creates in Web-based format a virtual "viewbook" for each program and facilitates easier navigation through the university's Web site. In collaboration with University Computing Services, the Graduate School is developing a comprehensive database that will allow more efficient communication about a student's status beginning with his or her initial contact with the university and continuing through graduation. Finally, the School of Extended Education (SEE) has developed a comprehensive direct-marketing campaign to recruit older students to graduate programs. Focusing primarily on recruitment for graduate teacher education offerings, SEE efforts have resulted in a 41 percent increase in distance education enrollments in the past four years. SEE staff members have successfully collaborated with the Graduate School and with academic department personnel to target high-yield populations in areas of market need.

Ball State's personalized approach, coupled with its decision to increase admission standards, appears to have been successful. For example, the academic credentials of the 2002 freshman class were the best in the institution's history. The average SAT score, which had been below national and state levels, rose to 19 points above the national average and 38 points above the Indiana average. Thirty-one percent more new freshman applications and 46 percent more transfer applications were received in 2002 than in 1997. Freshman-to-sophomore retention rates increased from 69 percent in 1997 to 80 percent in 2003. For more information on these trends, see Chapter 6 of this report.

### Admissions Criteria: Undergraduate Applicants

Ball State practices "rolling admissions." Applications are reviewed upon receipt, and admission decisions are made once all credentials are received. To be admitted to Ball State, an undergraduate applicant must have graduated from an accredited secondary

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**GIR 17:** It has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution's mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

school or earned a general educational development (GED) certificate. Admission requirements for home-schooled applicants have been recently articulated. Specific criteria for all categories of undergraduate admission, including those for Honors College and international students, are outlined online at [www.bsu.edu/web/admissions/freshcriteria](http://www.bsu.edu/web/admissions/freshcriteria).

Admission decisions for applicants with previous college experience are based on each applicant's academic work at all educational institutions attended. Remedial and vocational courses and credits from institutions that are not regionally accredited are not transferable. Generally, all other courses in which a student earns a 2.0 grade or better are accepted for credit by Ball State. Specific criteria are outlined at [www.bsu.edu/web/admissions/transcriteria](http://www.bsu.edu/web/admissions/transcriteria). Transfer admission criteria are the same for international and adult applicants.

Information concerning the number of applicants, students admitted, and students enrolled in Ball State's undergraduate programs for the past three years is available in Basic Institutional Data Form B1 (Appendix BID). In addition, ability measures for these students are provided in Basic Institutional Data Form B3 (Appendix BID).

### **Admissions Criteria: Graduate Applicants**

Students applying for admission to Ball State's graduate programs must meet the criteria outlined at [www.bsu.edu/provost/graduate/admissions.htm](http://www.bsu.edu/provost/graduate/admissions.htm). The Graduate School practices selective admissions for all of its programs. Individual departments also set admissions criteria that may exceed the minimum set by the Graduate School. Master's degree applicants whose undergraduate grade point average does not meet the admission standards may petition for probationary admission and must meet departmental requirements for gaining this status. Probationary admission is not available for students seeking the specialist or doctoral degrees. A three-year history of applicants, admitted students, and enrolled graduate students is available in Basic Institutional Data Form B1 (Appendix BID), and the profile of standardized test scores for graduate students is provided in Basic Institutional Data Form B3 (Appendix BID).

### **Recruitment and Placement of International Students**

Ball State actively recruits international students to its undergraduate and graduate programs, and the university is committed to a successful transition for these students. The university has consistently followed the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Principles of Good Practice in its international recruitment efforts. Extensive use of Web-based promotion of the university has resulted in moderate success, with new international student fall semester enrollment increasing 29.8 percent between 1998 and 2002, although the international climate in the past year has offset some of

these gains. Approximately a third of the international applications arrive via Ball State's international Web site.

The university is committed to facilitating academic success among international students. Realizing that English language skills are essential to this success, Ball State requires all international applicants to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or an equivalent test prior to registering for classes. The TOEFL is used to determine fluency with the English language, and placement in remedial English courses is based upon the score a student achieves on this measure. Students who score between 500 and 549 are permitted to enroll in a reduced academic load concurrent with remedial language courses. Students who score below 500 are placed in full-time English language instruction offered by the American Language Academy, which operates a site on the Ball State campus.

### **Scholarships and Financial Aid**

Ball State is committed to providing a wide range of services to students and their families who apply for financial assistance. The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid offers a variety of programs designed to help students find ways to meet the costs of education. The office hosts a comprehensive Web site that provides up-to-date information about financial aid at Ball State and connections to other sources of financial aid information nationwide. Data concerning the 2002-03 financial aid awarded to undergraduate and graduate students is provided in Basic Institutional Data Form B (Appendix BID).

### **Learning Resources That Enhance Student Success**

Ball State offers a range of programs and resources to enhance student academic success. Some of these resources, such as the University Libraries and University Computing Services, were described in Chapter 5 of this report. In addition to these resources and as part of the institution's strategic plan, Ball State is committed to developing and maintaining strong, comprehensive retention programs as a means of ensuring optimal enrollment. The programs and services described below support that goal and reveal the university's commitment to student success.

### **University College**

University College (UC) was established in 1985 with its primary mission to provide academic support services to at-risk populations: academically underprepared students and students who had not selected a major. At that time, UC consisted of the Learning Center and a small advising unit. Eighteen years later, it is a multifaceted support

**GIR 18:** It provides its students access to those learning resources and support services for its degree programs.



college with a range of administrative and programmatic responsibilities, including the Freshman Connections program, that affect all Ball State students. Other services support faculty teaching and professional development.

**Learning Center:** The Learning Center's staff of 150 student employees provides free peer tutoring and supplemental instruction. During the 2002–03 academic year, 3,692 students attended 25,751 individual and small-group tutoring sessions. In addition, 2,142 students attended 8,874 supplemental instruction sessions. More than 43 percent of all fall 2002 matriculates used Learning Center services. The center's effectiveness is documented by grade results: freshmen and sophomores using Learning Center services earn higher grade point averages than those who do not. In addition, more than 90 percent of all 2002–03 Learning Center clients earned passing grades in the courses for which they sought assistance, and 70 percent of the grades in courses for which students received tutoring were C or above.

The center's reputation extends beyond the campus. It has earned national and regional honors, awards, and recognition for its programs and services from such groups as the National Association for Developmental Education.

**Academic Advising:** Like the Learning Center, University College's Office of Academic Advising assists students in making progress toward their academic goals. Recognizing that the needs of freshmen are substantially different from those of upperclassmen, the UC offers comprehensive and individualized advising for first-year students. A key resource for freshmen is the *Advising Handbook* produced by freshman advisors (Exhibit 4 in the resource room). Special advising services are offered to undecided students, student–athletes, and students with disabilities. The advising program has received national recognition from the National Academic Advising Association for its range of services based on the principles of accessibility, accurate information, and personal attention for freshmen.

Academic advisors also help facilitate the faculty advising of upperclassmen. Professional academic advisors serve as coordinators of six resource centers located throughout the campus in areas convenient to students and faculty. Advising coordinators work directly with departments to assist in the delivery of effective faculty advising services.

During fall 2002, advisors in the freshman unit worked with 5,106 students in 12,262 contact visits. That same semester, the advising center coordinators recorded 9,274 contacts with 5,534 students. In spring 2003, freshman center advisors and advising center coordinators worked with a total of 9,134 students in 18,847 contacts.

**University Core Curriculum:** University College's impact on academic life at the university includes more than comprehensive student support services. The college is the administrative home for the University Core Curriculum program required of all undergraduate students regardless of the academic majors they choose. This program was described in detail in Chapter 7 of this report.

**Academic Systems:** An additional academic support unit within University College is the Office of Academic Systems. This office maintains the Automated Course Transfer System (ACTS), which includes "institution profiles" for primary and secondary transfer schools and the articulation tables for all general studies courses from each of those institutions. IBM Corporation's Best Practices Partners Group recently recognized ACTS as one of the innovative practices in higher education student services.

Academic Systems also administers the Degree Analysis Progress Report (DAPR) service. The DAPR is a record that reflects a student's academic progress toward degree completion. Students and their advisors may print a copy of the student's current DAPR to use as a guide for course registration planning. The DAPR provides information about credit hour and GPA requirements for a major and/or minor, the courses taken in prior semesters and the grades received, transfer credits, and options for requirements not yet completed. Students who are considering changing their major may print a "shopping DAPR" that shows how completed course work would apply to another major. The DAPR is a powerful, convenient, and up-to-date tool that assists students with their curricular planning.

**Related Programs:** University College also administers the freshman seminar program targeted to undecided students; academic monitoring and resource coordination for student–athletes; and the Early Start Program, which provides new students with a short-term academic orientation to the university through a series of credit-bearing summer workshops.

## Honors College

The mission of the Honors College is to provide distinctive educational opportunities for students of high academic promise and achievement. Ball State students not originally admitted to the Honors College may petition for admission after one semester in residence by contacting the dean of the college. Transfer students also may petition for admission in the same manner. The freshman class in the Honors College has grown from 267 new students in 1996 to more than 400 students each year since 1999. The overall size of the Honors College has increased from 979 in 1996 to just under 1500

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in 2003. Honors College students represent all majors and minors plus 12–13 percent of all varsity athletes, compared with just under 10 percent of all undergraduates on campus.

Recruitment of high-achieving students to the Honors College is facilitated by a number of specific scholarship opportunities described online at [www.bsu.edu/honors/scholarships.html](http://www.bsu.edu/honors/scholarships.html). Most incoming freshmen in the Honors College live in Johnson Complex, which consists of four residence halls—two for men and two for women. Social and academic activities within the college are coordinated with the activities of the residence halls, fostering a true collegiate experience.

In order to graduate from the Honors College, students take a specific honors curriculum in addition to their major and minor concentrations. This curriculum consists of 10 classes, including a freshman peer mentoring experience; core symposia in American contemporary civilization, global studies, and science; and a three-course sequence in the humanities. These classes take the place of similar courses required of non-honors students in the University Core Curriculum. Other work includes at least two colloquia developed by honors faculty. As seniors, Honors College students must complete a capstone thesis or creative project. Honors sections of many other courses are offered, many of which fulfill other University Core Curriculum or departmental major requirements.

Upper-division students in the Honors College may compete for one of 40 to 50 undergraduate fellowships. There are various opportunities for foreign study specific to the Honors College itself, and students have special opportunities for support for research and conversations with distinguished visitors to Ball State. Honors students also may serve on the Student Honors Council, a group that reports its ideas and concerns directly to the dean.

### Center for International Programs

In cooperation with faculty, students, and the local community, the Center for International Programs (CIP) offers administrative services that support Ball State's commitment to international education, a commitment emphasized in the university's strategic plan.

**International Student Services:** Prior to the beginning of each academic term, the newly arrived students are expected to attend an international student orientation program that helps them understand the rules and regulations that apply to them, explores the differences between the academic systems from which they come and here, and assists with meeting basic needs such as housing, banking, and locating campus and community services.

CIP staff members provide advising services on such issues as compliance with Immigration and Naturalization Service, Internal Revenue Service, and Social Security Administration regulations. International students may choose to be matched with a local family through the Friendship Family Program, which offers a personal contact in the community. International students are encouraged to share their academic expertise and their personal and cultural perspectives through such programs as a speaker's bureau, weekly culture exchange, monthly coffee hours hosted by various community groups, and an annual International Festival that includes a talent and fashion show, national exhibits, and food tasting.

**Study-Abroad Programs:** Ball State offers study-abroad opportunities ranging from intensive three-week field studies to semester-long or yearlong programs. Such programs are a mixture of exchange partnerships (13 programs), Ball State-managed campuses abroad (London and Australia), Ball State faculty-led experiences (15 programs), and consortia agreements (four programs). Approximately 3 percent of the university's undergraduate students participate in a study-abroad experience. A growing number choose to engage in multiple programs in several different countries. The number of graduate students seeking international experiences also is steadily increasing, especially in the College of Architecture and Planning. Between 1997 and 2002 the *Chronicle of Higher Education* consistently ranked Ball State among the top 10 in the nation among doctoral-granting institutions for the number of students studying abroad.

### Graduate Student Development Conference

Most graduate student support at Ball State is offered at the department level. However, graduate students have access to all student services that are available to undergraduate students. In addition to these opportunities, events such as the Graduate Student Development Conference (GSDC) and the university's participation in the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students are tailored to the needs of the graduate student population. The GSDC provides professional socialization opportunities to help graduate students develop the diverse skills needed for success in graduate studies and a wide variety of career settings. The Graduate Student Development Conference is designed to:

- ☞ familiarize students with the responsibilities and implications of various professional roles
- ☞ introduce students to institutional resources available to them

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- ☞ orient students to federal and state regulations that govern workplace behavior and safety
- ☞ help students develop an appreciation of a multicultural work environment
- ☞ introduce students to a wide range of peer and faculty mentors, and assist students in developing personal and professional support networks
- ☞ acquaint teaching assistants with pedagogical theories and techniques
- ☞ inform students about policies and resources relevant to laboratory and field experiences

Approximately 400 students participate in this conference, which is held each August before the beginning of the fall semester. The program for the 2003–04 conference is available online at [www.bsu.edu/provost/graduate/home.html](http://www.bsu.edu/provost/graduate/home.html).

## Student Services That Effectively Support the Institution's Purposes

### Student Life

The Student Life area has been reorganized several times during the past six years in an effort to better serve students and consolidate or join programs. This area currently includes Student Organizations and Activities, Orientation, Leadership and Service Learning, the Multicultural Center, Disabled Student Development, and the Student Center. The Student Life area regularly evaluates student satisfaction with its programming and uses these data to update and revise programming options.

**Student Organizations and Activities:** This office provides resources and services to more than 300 recognized student organizations on the campus. Of these groups, 76 are affiliated with an academic department, and 35 are academic honoraries. The staff coordinates educational and training programs for students as well as advisors. The department provided 130 programs for 17,798 participants during the 2002–03 year.

While 11 groups receive funding from the university's dedicated student fee, the Campus Activity Fund Board (CAFB) offers monetary support to other student organizations. Over the past five years, this board has allocated \$185,000 for 93 events, including lectures, fine arts programs, social and recreational programs, and student exhibits.

The Cardinal Leadership and Service Seminar (CLASS) program is sponsored by Student Organizations and Activities and the Office of Leadership and Service Learning. This three-day institute is offered to 100 degree-seeking students the week before the beginning of the fall semester. The institute focuses on leadership concepts and community service needs, and it is designed to provide students with leadership and service experiences early in their collegiate careers. A teambuilding course, seminars on

leadership, a community service day, and small mentor groups help students build awareness and become comfortable with their new environment.

**Orientation:** University orientation programs for transfer students and new freshmen are held throughout the year. Ball State conducts 23 two-day programs for incoming students during the months of June and July; attendance at one of the two-day programs is required of all new students who are pursuing a degree. A total of 53 different orientation sessions were offered during 2002–03. Family members are strongly encouraged to participate in the program. Topics include academic requirements, advising, money matters, the importance of involvement, and residential or commuter life. Students also meet with an academic advisor and register for courses.

Fall Welcome Week is designed to help new degree-seeking students become further acquainted with the university's services and programs. Approximately 80 upper-division students serve as guides to the freshmen during this week. Activities include a president's picnic, activities fair, freshman convocation, small discussion groups to examine the common freshman reader, sessions on goal setting and establishing academic expectations, and social events. The average attendance for Welcome Week is 3,000 students, reflecting a high level of participation. The program for the week is provided as Exhibit 96 in the resource room.

**Leadership and Service Learning:** This office's staff coordinates the Excellence in Leadership Program, Student Voluntary Services, Student Leadership Development Board, Omicron Delta Kappa, and service learning initiatives. Staff members work with student participants and faculty in delivering a number of programs. The office has coordinated nearly 2,000 placements a year for community service work over the past five years. During the 2002–03 academic year, the office sponsored 134 programs for 14,385 participants.

**Multicultural Center:** The mission of the Multicultural Center is to support and advance Ball State's commitment to cultural diversity. The center strives to be a resource for the recruitment, retention, and enrichment of students of color and to be a reference center to develop citizens who are more culturally aware, tolerant, and accepting of others who may be different from themselves. The Multicultural Center offers programs such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, One World Lecture Series, and Annual Awards Ceremony, all of which are open to the university and Muncie communities. In addition, the EXCEL program for American-born minority students new to the campus is held every July. Students attend workshops focusing on college preparation, academic success, and issues specific to students of color on a campus with enrollment of predominately Caucasian students.

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**Disabled Student Development:** This office assists students in obtaining accommodations and auxiliary services to make the university accessible physically, academically, and technologically to students with disabilities. The staff serves as a liaison with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services and with Ball State faculty and staff. Disabled Student Development offers auxiliary services such as a lift-equipped shuttle and adapted recreation programs; academic accommodations ranging from readers/scanners to taped and electronic books and note takers; and technical accommodations such as voice recognition, Braille, and tactile graphics. A complete guide to the services and programs offered is available online at [www.bsu.edu/dsd](http://www.bsu.edu/dsd). During the 2001–02 academic year, more than 500 students used services either on a temporary or ongoing basis. Students receiving continual services included 184 with physical disabilities and 279, or 61 percent, with nonapparent disabilities.

**Student Center:** The L. A. Pittenger Student Center is supported through the student dedicated fee and self-generated revenue. The Student Center hosts approximately 7,000 events each year. A complete listing of the services and offices housed in the Student Center is available online at [www.bsu.edu/studentcenter](http://www.bsu.edu/studentcenter).

The programming arm of the Student Center is Campus Programs and the University Program Board (UPB). Campus Programs coordinates the yearly Family Weekend program and other special events. UPB is a student-led organization that provides cultural and social entertainment for the campus. Two years ago the Late-Nite Program was implemented to offer students alcohol-free events during the late hours on Saturday evenings. During the 2002–03 year, 10 Late-Nite programs were offered with 4,674 students attending. Additionally, 30 other programs were implemented with 11,803 in attendance.

## Student Services

Ball State’s Student Services area includes the following units: Counseling and Health Services, Housing and Residence Life, Career Center, and Dean of Students. Public Safety, which also provides student services, was described in Chapter 5 of this report.

**Counseling and Health Services:** This division is comprised of three units: the Counseling Center, Health Education, and the Amelia T. Wood Health Center. The Counseling Center offers students individual and group counseling in a variety of areas. Emergency services, psychiatric consultation, career exploration and counseling, educational workshops and programs, and testing services are available. During the 2002–03 academic year, 1,255 students were seen in individual and group counseling. The staff provided 184 crisis/emergency consultations and 310 psychiatric consultations.

During this same period, 28,825 students participated in 803 outreach programs. A copy of the center’s 1999 accreditation report for the International Association of Counseling Services Inc. for University and College Counseling Centers is available as Exhibit 24 in the resource room.

Ball State’s Health Center provides ambulatory health care for sick or injured students enrolled at the university. The center houses a walk-in clinic and pharmacy, physical therapy unit, and Women’s Center. The health care providers at the center are employed by Primary Care Physician Network, a subsidiary of Cardinal Health Partners. During the 2002–03 academic year, the Health Center provided 21,542 patient visits, and the Women’s Center provided 3630 patient contacts.

**Housing and Residence Life:** This office provides students with a living environment that fosters learning. The area has played an important role in the development and continuation of the Freshman Connections program. The staff works closely with faculty, academic advisors, and student mentors in providing meaningful learning opportunities within the students’ living environment. In 2003 the Housing and Residence Life program was identified as one of the nation’s top 27 residence programs for freshmen.

As Table 8.1 below indicates, the grade point averages for freshmen living on campus are significantly higher than those of freshmen living off campus. This difference can be attributed to many factors ranging from the resources of staff and peer leaders to educational and social programming to the link with the Freshman Connections program.

**Table 8.1: Comparison of GPAs for On-Campus and Off-Campus Freshmen**

Academic Year	On-Campus Freshmen	Off-Campus Freshmen
1999–00	2.61	2.08
2000–01	2.66	2.15
2001–02	2.70	2.14
2002–03	2.71	2.22

Ball State students who use Housing and Residence Life services generally are quite pleased with them. For example, more than 80 percent of the respondents to the 2002 Senior Survey of May Graduates who had lived in the residence halls said they were satisfied with their experiences and the services provided.

**Career Center:** The mission of the Career Center is to provide opportunities for each student and graduate to develop a clear career objective, obtain relevant experience, and learn the skills necessary to conduct a successful professional job search. This



mission is accomplished through a variety of services and programs offered each year. While students may seek individual advisement for their job search needs, special programs are routinely offered to assist students in preparing for and seeking employment. Programs include the Cardinal Job Fair, Job Search Series, Career Information Day, Teacher Fair, and Coffee and Careers. A more complete description of the Career Center's services can be found in Chapter 10 of this report. Nearly 7,300 students attended more than 300 presentations during 2002–03, and approximately 5,400 clients used the resources in the Career Resource Lab.

In 2002 the Career Center was awarded the John Shingleton Award for Applied Research from the Midwest Association for Colleges and Employers for leadership in assessment activities and the Outstanding Program award from the American Association of Employment in Education for the center's annual Teacher Fair.

**Dean of Students Office:** This office provides a number of services for students, including facilitating student withdrawals from the university, responding to student grade appeals, notifying faculty of students' absences in emergency situations, administering emergency funds for students in a financial crisis, and assisting students who have problems related to medical, employment, personal, military, financial, and academic situations. The staff coordinates and provides oversight for some judicial processes involving students and adjudicates violations of a more serious nature.

The student ombudsperson helps students resolve concerns, problems, or conflicts with regard to university policies, procedures, and decisions. The ombudsperson provides a safe, confidential, and neutral place for students to express their concerns. Students work with the ombudsperson to identify steps that may be taken to achieve a timely and fair resolution to a problem. The ombudsperson also administers the Jack Beyerl Student Emergency Aid Fund, which provides emergency grant assistance to students. Individual grants range from \$50 to \$1,000. Between 1995 and 2001, 228 grants were awarded for a total of \$74,060.

### Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

In 2001 a reconfiguration of the central office staff within the division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management created the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. The focus of this unit was to help the departments within the division assess intended outcomes of learning, development, and service. This office contributes to research on programs, activities, and services to help students succeed.

## Programs That Stimulate Understanding of Personal, Social, and Civic Values

Ball State's commitment to stimulating understanding of personal, social, and civic values is deeply embedded in the institution's strategic plan and advanced through the university's undergraduate curriculum and its student life, wellness, and housing and residence life programs.

The strategic plan, which outlines Ball State's mission, describes the institution as a "learning community engaged in the discovery of knowledge, the integration of learning experiences, and their application through civic and professional leadership." Further, one of the six goals of the strategic plan directly addresses personal, social, and civic values. The university seeks to accomplish this goal by creating a "civil and just climate" and by advancing these values through the curricula; scholarship, practice, and outreach; campus and community activities; and study abroad and international exchange opportunities.

One of the primary ways Ball State promotes these values is through its University Core Curriculum (UCC), which seeks to provide students with a foundation from which they can lead fulfilling lives and contribute to their communities and the larger society. Toward this end, the UCC promotes values through a sub-goal that states, "Students will be able to . . . clarify their personal values and be sensitive to those held by others."

The most recent assessment data available indicates that Ball State is making progress in achieving this goal. Although the *1992–1995 Final Report on Assessment of the General Studies Program* (Exhibit 8 in the resource room) revealed that none of the five core classes rated well in addressing this goal, the 2002 Senior Survey of May Graduates (Exhibit 74 in the resource room) indicates that more than 90 percent of the respondents believed they were prepared very well or satisfactorily to clarify their personal values. The same report indicates that almost 90 percent of those responding believed their Ball State experiences helped them understand moral and ethical issues.

The university's commitment to service learning also demonstrates its desire to foster students' personal, social, and civic values. The Office of Leadership and Service Learning reports that a variety of courses from across the university provided 1,057 students with service learning opportunities in 2001–02 and suggests that this number is increasing dramatically—an additional 970 students participated in such courses in fall 2001 alone. Student Voluntary Services also reports that 66 SVS programs are currently active on campus. The 336 Ball State volunteers in these programs contributed

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more than 6,891 hours of service to the community. In the 2000 Senior Survey of May Graduates, 43.9 percent of respondents said they participated in community service activities. In addition, 97.6 percent of the respondents indicated that making a meaningful contribution to society was either very important or somewhat important to them.

The Excellence in Leadership Program provides another forum through which personal, social, and civic values are advanced. This four-year development program prepares students to assume leadership and service roles within the university and society. The program offers nearly 52 workshops each year, community service projects, and mentor groups for participants. Students may choose to earn one academic credit hour for each semester of participation. The credit is offered through the Department of Educational Studies in the Teachers College. The program has enjoyed continual growth in participation since its implementation in 1992, when 32 students participated in it. Over the past five years, approximately 250 students have participated in the program annually. According to a 1996 assessment conducted by the Social Science Research Center, the program has demonstrated success at meeting its intended goals. Among the student participants, 94 percent rated the overall quality of the workshops' content as either very positive or positive. Additionally, 87 percent thought the program enhanced their confidence in their leadership abilities. Finally, 85 percent indicated the program made them more cognizant of society's leadership needs.

A variety of other university offices and centers also offer programs that help Ball State students develop and understand personal, social, and civic values, including the Multicultural Center, Women's Studies Program Resource Center, Office of Disabled Student Development, and Diversity Policy Institute.

Unique opportunities include UniverCity, a biennial weeklong festival in which world-class scholars, innovators, creators, and leaders visit Ball State. Also hosted on a biennial basis, the Greening of the Campus interdisciplinary conference focuses on the integration of sustainable practices and teaching into the university environment.

## Evaluation with Respect to Criterion III

### Institutional Strengths

Ball State successfully made the transition to a more selective admissions policy in the past five years. Following an initial drop in enrollment, the university has recorded increased applications, stronger academic credentials of applications of incoming freshmen, and an increasing rate of retention from the freshman to sophomore years.

Changes in the admissions requirements coincided with a comprehensive and more personalized approach to marketing and recruitment. Although it would be impossible to sort out the individual effects of these two initiatives on recent enrollment trends, it appears that either singly, or more likely in combination, these initiatives have successfully helped to boost undergraduate enrollment to an optimal level.

Graduate student enrollment also has experienced significant growth, particularly in the graduate teacher education programs offered through the School of Extended Education. Strategic marketing efforts again appeared to have played a key role in this growth.

Ball State has a well-documented history of innovative student support programs. The institution has received national recognition for its academic support initiatives in the University College, its study-abroad opportunities, and its out-of-class and cocurricular activities. Most recently, Ball State was named an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, a national research center based in Brevard, North Carolina. This award recognizes the university's integrated range of student support opportunities through the first year and beyond. It also speaks to the deep level of institutional commitment—apparent in the university's strategic plan, publications, and assessment data—to empowering students to achieve their academic and personal goals.

### Concerns and Future Challenges

Several challenges related to student development and support face Ball State. The first is maintaining optimal enrollment levels and continuing to attract more academically talented students in the face of uncertain internal financial support for marketing and recruitment. To address this challenge, the Coordinating Committee on University Marketing and Enrollment Management is preparing a proposal for stable line-item funding for recruitment initiatives to support undergraduate and graduate enrollment.

Second, although there is clear alignment—via the presence of the University Core Curriculum—between undergraduate curricula and the values stated in the institution's strategic plan, the alignment of these values with graduate program offerings is less well articulated. Graduate program faculty will need to address this issue through departmental strategic planning efforts.

In addition, variability exists in the degree to which individual courses in the University Core Curriculum achieve the goals of the program, despite the fact that overall, student reports suggest the objectives are being met. Departments will continue

Ball State was named an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, a national research center based in Brevard, North Carolina. This award recognizes the university's integrated range of student support opportunities through the first year and beyond.





to monitor assessment results to identify ways these courses can be strengthened to better achieve curricular objectives.

Finally, a continual challenge for the Student Center is overcoming its location on the far south side of the campus. With the relocation of the university bookstore, the On the Ball apparel shop, and a new food court in the Art and Journalism Building, the center will need to reevaluate its programs and services to ensure student needs are served.