

LILLY INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL 04 BALL STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Lilly Endowment funds Ball State plan to build intellectual capital

MUNCIE, Ind.—Ball State University will use a four-year \$4.9 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to attract and retain high-quality faculty and students and sponsor research that will lead to economic development.

The university announced today it had received the funding after developing a four-pronged strategy to achieve the goals outlined by the Endowment in its Building Intellectual Capital program. The university will:

- retain and attract faculty through early career awards—given in the first four years of an assistant professorship—that can be used to equip new research laboratories, hire graduate research assistants and provide additional research time.
- enhance its iCommunicaton initiative—initially funded in 2001 with a \$20 million grant from the Endowment—allowing the initiative to create a distinguished professorship, attract research fellows and fund administrative leadership.
- institute an undergraduate research fellows program, which will support a year-long laboratory experience with a faculty mentor during a student's sophomore year and allow recipients to continue research for two consecutive summers after their sophomore and junior years.
- fund one-year visiting professorships, supporting up to four post-doctoral research positions in the physical, life, health, environmental, information or communication sciences.

Ball State will focus the resources on existing and emerging areas of research excellence, while also boosting research that shows promise in helping the state of Indiana grow its economy, said Ball State University President Jo Ann M. Gora.

"The Lilly Endowment is once again displaying its remarkable commitment to the state by making these resources available," she said. "This award is a substantial investment in the future of this university, and the program as a whole will allow Indiana's higher education institutions to play a significant role in strengthening the economic future of the state."

The university's plan calls for the funding of research projects or programs that are technology intensive and require an initial capital investment, and it aims to push Ball State into a more prominent role in the state's life sciences initiative, said Beverley J. Pitts, provost and vice president for academic affairs, who oversaw the drafting of the university's proposal. The university also plans to target high-achieving students at all levels: undergraduate, graduate and doctoral.

"We believe this program will attract high-quality researchers and students, provide the university leverage in seeking external grants, corporate partnerships and industry

contacts, and build a human and intellectual infrastructure to support economic development initiatives," she said.

The Endowment announced the \$100 million Building Intellectual Capital initiative in February with private and public universities in Indiana receiving grants based upon their enrollment. Universities and colleges were encouraged to submit plans that used a wide range of approaches to recruit and retain faculty, staff, students, administrators, visiting fellows and researchers, including renovating or re-equipping teaching, learning or research space.

"Ball State assessed its strengths and challenges and then proposed what it thinks are the most strategic ways to enrich the stock of intellectual capital on its campus," said Sara B. Cobb, Endowment vice president for education.

"We are pleased to note that Ball State, like other colleges and universities participating in this initiative, has enthusiastically embraced the conviction that enhancing the intellectual capital of Indiana's higher education institutions will benefit students and faculty members and contribute greatly to the future prospects of the state," she said.

The university developed its plan with an eye toward encouraging the growth of interdisciplinary relationships and research projects that are springing up across campus. Those relationships often result in researchers pooling their efforts to attract research grants, rather than working independently and unknowingly competing for the same funding.

Each part of the strategy is designed to directly or indirectly affect the others, Pitts said.

"Putting outstanding faculty, staff and students together leads to advanced knowledge, refined skills and external funding, which in turn allows the university to reinvest in its best and brightest faculty and enhance the resources they have available to them," she said. "It truly is a cycle that increases academic excellence and productivity, and the Lilly Endowment grant provides added momentum to the university's efforts."

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(Note to Editors: For more information on this story, contact Pitts at (765) 285-1333 or bpitts@bsu.edu. For more Ball State stories, log on to the News Center Web site at www.bsu.edu/news.)

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