

Indiana State University
President Deborah Curtis Fall Address 2019
Transcript

Dr. Deborah J. Curtis, President:

Well welcome! My name is Deborah Curtis. It's my honor and privilege to serve as president here at Indiana State University and bring you this 2019 fall address. To lead us off though, it's my honor to introduce the chairman of the board of trustees to bring greetings, Jeff Taylor.

Mr. Jeff Taylor, Chair, ISU Board of Trustees:

Thank You, Deborah. We live in interesting times. It's the fall address but it certainly feels like summer to me, and I'm a warm weather person so that's okay, but it's still a bit odd. As I take stock of things, we're doing a lot of things well. We're getting a lot of things accomplished and it's working. We're not without our challenges, and one of those challenges is enrollment. And you're going to hear more about that. And of course when we have enrollment challenges. We have top-line challenges. And when you have top-line challenges, you have challenges with every line of the budget, but we're dealing with that. And I think you'll hear more about that, too.

But we are certainly not alone in that respect. Most of what are deemed regional public universities are caught in the same situation. Recent publication from *Inside Higher Ed* deemed that we are squeezed from all sides and that starts with demographics. Just not as many kids are graduating from high school these days, particularly in our geography. The economics of those regions are not necessarily good. Terre Haute's is probably not the worst, but certainly, it's not the best either. And when you get into these situations, the flagship universities start to behave a bit differently, and they have a lot of tools that we don't have in terms of size of alumni background, the endowment that they have, their ability to draw from greater regions and reach down into what used to be our students, and their ability to go after grants and partnerships and things like that, so we say they just have tools that we don't have. And when they start to flex that, it gets a little harder on us.

But we're not without our, our remedies. Our Strategic Enrollment Council is working on this very diligently and not only is new enrollment a key, but retention is key. And in fact, if you do the math, and I'm sure a lot of you have, if we can get increases in retention of people who stay two, three, four years more rather than just new enrollees, it puts a bend in the elbow that's a little steeper and that's what we need to do.

So solving those two issues is key to getting at the three big things that as a trustee I think we need to do. First, we need to keep the cost of university as economical as possible for all our students. Yes, that means tuition. Keep it down. Hard to do with declining enrollment. We need to generate funds so that we can have scholarship money available for those most in need and those most deserving. And further, we need to invest in academic programs, particularly those that will increase student learning and student retention, and therefore graduation rates. If we get those three things done, I will be one happy trustee. So with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Christine MacDonald, chair of the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Christine MacDonald, Chair of the Faculty Senate:

Good afternoon. I'm afraid I'm going to have to use the readers after all. I hope you're all having

a terrific and productive Fall semester. Those of us who work in academia are incredibly lucky. We get two fresh starts every year. My favorite one is the beginning of the Fall semester. It's so energizing being around all the new students. And this new start brings the feeling that everything is yet possible with the future unwinding before us.

And I would argue this is the place that we're in as an institution. The president will speak more today about her vision for ISU, the revitalization of our strategic plan, and the strategic enrollment management we're doing, I think. All the strategic stuff that we're doing is just another way of saying let's look at what we're doing with fresh eyes. Let's apply that energy of the new academic year to all of the work of the campus. We have the opportunity to reshape the vision of what this unique institution is, what it can be, and what it will be.

Winston Churchill once said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." These days of enrollment declines do bring certain difficulties with them and I won't ask you to ignore these difficulties because they are real. However, I'm going to ask you to be an optimist.

For many of you, like myself, this may not come naturally, but this itself may be effortful. I understand that but if we can focus on the opportunities we have in this moment, we can move forward to achieving our vision of a strong ISU with a unique and distinctive mission. To paraphrase Toni Morrison, "You want to fly, you've got to give up the stuff that weighs you down." What weighs us down too often in academia is resistance to change, our comfort, and doing things the same way we've always done them.

And I'm a psychologist, I understand why we do this. It's a human thing. It saves us cognitive energy, and we've been reinforced for doing this, but entropy is boring. It's enervating. It's exhausting in its own way. Trying new things may be effortful, but it is also exhilarating. When I first learned to down-hill ski in middle age, it was terrifying and exhausting and I was a pessimist. I thought, "What am I, as an unathletic, southern, middle-aged person, doing trying to learn a winter sport?" I fell and fell and fell, but I learned a little bit each time, and now I am an optimist and skiing feels exhilarating, as close to flying as I can get.

F. M. Cornford said, "The first rule of faculty governance is nothing should ever be done for the first time." Those of you who know me and know my position as the head of the faculty governance here know I've always looked to break rules like that. Where would you be if you never tried anything for the first time? I would never have skied; I would never have flown. But I had to give up the fear, the pessimism that was weighing me down, so this is what we must give up: what weighs us down, that pessimism that things won't change and that any new venture is too much work or doomed to fail, all those standard boring academic tropes.

I won't ask you to be an optimist about everything in your life, but I will ask you to be an optimist about ISU and our opportunities. After all, don't you want to fly? And now I'm going to hand you over to Todd LaComba, the chair of the Staff Council.

Mr. Todd LaComba, Chair, Staff Council:

Good afternoon, I am the chair of the Staff Council, and I want to start off by thanking everybody for being here. It's very important for all of us to make sure that we are heavily invested in what we do as a university and by the attendance here it's good to see that. I'd like to thank anyone

who is in attendance that is serving on our staff council, as well as all of the staff members that serve on the various university committees. It takes a lot of time and it's very important to what we do that everyone's voice is heard, so thank you.

The staff council is working on several initiatives that I'd like to highlight. One, in particular, is the staff council scholarship. The staff council scholarship is something that's been in existence for a very long time but as we've started to explore in the council and in subcommittees, it's not being used necessarily the way that it should be. We have a large number of staff that are taking advantage of our benefits to take classes and work towards degrees on campus and we're not getting many people that are applying for this scholarship. So, I wanted to make sure that everyone is aware that this is out there and available to the staff, and that it's something that we can all build towards.

Likewise, on that, as you saw out in the lobby, we had our Blue Gives Back and I think this is something that is important. As a staff council, we have been for years raising funds to help the staff council and various areas on campus, and this is one of those. You know, as we go through the year making sure that we have a good turnout and that means participation so everyone can give at whatever level they're most comfortable giving, but it's important to do. I urge those that are interested to support the staff council scholarship because it goes back to help the staff.

One other thing I want to make sure I highlight is making sure you use your community service leave. You know, ISU has been for a very long time highlighting the importance of community service for the students, the faculty, and the staff. It's something that's rare in higher education and industry as a whole to be given leave time to go help the community that we live in, so please make sure that you're using that. That is an important thing for us as a university.

In closing, I want to thank everybody for the work that they do for ISU to make it as good as it is, and I encourage you to join us at our staff council meetings. Our next one is this coming Thursday, in Dede II, oh sorry, Dede III. And have your voice heard because that's what it's all about. Thank you. I'll now turn it over to Madison Longyear, who is the president of the SGA.

Ms. Madison Longyear, President, Student Government Association:

Well, good afternoon. I was going to make a comment about the weather, but Chairman Taylor decided to go ahead and steal that. So thank you all for being here. I'm so grateful to be serving as the Student Government Association president and to be serving a university that has given me so much. I consider myself lucky to work alongside a team of amazing students. Each and every day I'm blown away by the energy, passion, and drive that they bring to their positions. We all have been hard at work since the summer began to ensure that this year is a successful one.

For those of you unfamiliar with our to-do list for the year, we are working hard to better our Sycamores through efforts including student involvement, Sycamore pride and traditions, sustainability, and health and wellness. The 57th administration is so excited about the passing of the student health and wellness fee in the way it will benefit this university and the lives of our students. SGA is so thankful for the relationship we have formed with the Student Counseling Center and the way they are able to educate us on the needs of our students and that we are able to push that to our community. Our director of health and wellness is working hard to

ensure that the fee will best serve our students come next Fall.

Our Student Advisory Board applications have opened for the year, providing our students the opportunity to share feedback with our academic colleges. Our Director of Academic Affairs has met with deans across campus to discuss the student advisory boards and prepare them for success.

Each week, we celebrate Blue Fridays across campus. SGA has revamped Blue Fridays this year and are already blown away by the student engagement and Sycamore pride we have seen this year. We provided organizations the unique opportunity to host a Blue Friday, allowing them to share their organization with campus while promoting their Sycamore pride. Our Fridays for the Fall semester filled up very quickly, and we're looking forward to bringing that energy into the Spring semester as well. If you see an organization hosting a Blue Friday, be sure to stop by and thank them for their school support.

The 57th administration additionally recognizes the importance of furthering sustainability efforts across campus. We're thankful for the guidance and the support that the office of sustainability continues to provide us. Nick and Garrett, we'd be lost without you both. We're knee-deep in research regarding sustainability campaigns, meatless options, and composting in dining locations in becoming a zero-waste campus. We're excited about furthering the conversation about sustainability and improving our efforts. While we recognize this may be a lengthy process, now seems like a great time to start.

Every year, I become more grateful for the fact that I get to learn, grow, and lead on such a great campus. I look at this picture that happens to be from my senior year of high school and I can't, I need a new headshot, I need to go to the Career Center. But I can't help but reflect on what a better person I've become because of this university in the way that this university has impacted me.

In my few years at state, I've learned a lot and one thing I've learned is the most powerful way to end a speech is with a good call to action, so here you go. Continue to invest in the students, continue to invest in each other, continue to invest in the University and continue to be the best that you can be. I encourage you all to wake up every morning and be a better Sycamore than you were the day before. Be a difference-maker and don't forget to wear your blue every Friday. Thank you for everything. Roll trees.

Video Segment:

I grew up in New Albany, Indiana. Football was my life, my ticket to a full-ride scholarship. People would always ask me, "What's your plan B?" I would always tell them there was no need for a Plan B. My senior year, that was supposed to be my breakout season. Down, set, hike. I run my route. I collided with the defender. My foot was stuck in the ground. That snapped my bone. It took four months of physical therapy for me to get around without a walker.

I went down to the field one afternoon, replaying the moment in my head. I got off the bleachers. I take one step forward, and then I take another step, and then I started running as hard as I could. That day helped give me the motivation I needed to start applying to colleges. When I got the acceptance letter from Indiana State, I couldn't believe it. I kind of had to like close it and

reopen it, so I was like, "Whoa like I'm going to college." I remember my orientation leaders talking about all the opportunities. I knew right away that this place was where I was supposed to be. I've changed my major four different times. Some people might see that as a bad thing, but I don't. I've been figuring out my own path and learning so much along the way.

I signed up to be part of the New Student Orientation welcome team, trained to become an RA, and was recently voted the new director of pride and traditions. I've taken my game off the field. I tell everyone about Indiana State when I go back home. I'm always telling my little brother about how he should never feel like college is out of reach. My worst nightmare ended up becoming my best dream. I was able to be here at Indiana State, get involved, and get that support system I needed to keep going. Being able to make an impact in other people's lives has been amazing for me. It gave me a reason to wake up every day and go out there and do something impactful.

Dr. Deborah J. Curtis:

Colleagues that's Derek Griffin. Derek Griffin is a current student here on campus and I'm going to have several spots here where we're going to feature different students on campus because I like for us to remind ourselves why we're here every day, what we're doing, and that's the best way I could imagine to start.

By the way, I think that's the 17th president of Indiana State University. Derek has that as his goal. Derek's dream is the perfect expression of why we're all here at Indiana State. He represents who we serve and why it's so important to be the best Indiana State University we can be. What makes Indiana State University the special place that it is, well, it's all about institutional distinctiveness and impact. If you take a look at this graphic, I think this is a piece that we keep reminding ourselves of because it's what I talk about all the time when I'm on the trail, either in the Statehouse or joining Greg around the state, talking to leaders, policymakers in different parts of Indiana. This is really the impact of Indiana State: the opportunity students have to come here and engage in a high-quality educational experience, the affordability, as you heard trustee Taylor talk about, is forefront in our minds to keep this as affordable as possible, and then, of course, the outcomes. And we're going to say a little bit more about that later.

You've seen the material. 95% placement rate for our graduates. Well, you combine those three concepts and that's a huge impact that ISU has. That's our value proposition and that's what we're talking about when we say how we deliver value to the state of Indiana. We also have a tremendous worldwide impact. We see our distinctiveness and who we are as our alumni go out into the world and make a big difference. This past year we lost two world-changing alumni, each of them soared beyond our current mission statement, language that states that we aspire to prepare productive citizens of the world, but both of them, theirs was so much more than productive work. Each one was a bold force for change as they impacted internationally the way we think about our world. And today, we have students that represent all 50 states in Indiana State, 70 plus countries from around the world, and this is our ability to make an impact that wouldn't be made unless we were here.

Another example of our impact is the work College Net does. They put out a study every year in October and we'll be watching this month as their material comes out, but in '18 they studied thirteen hundred and eighty colleges and universities across the country. We ranked one ninety-four out of thirteen eighty, which in their poll, put us the very first in the state of Indiana in

impacting the social mobility of our graduates. I think we knew that all along, but it's really, really important to hear others affirm that fact, and we'll be sharing that good news when their next survey comes out. Here's that information.

First destination survey, six months after students complete their work at Indiana State, they're out there at 95% either employed in the field they studied, in the military, or in graduate school. That's up from 94% the year before. Seven out of ten of those graduates stay in the state. That is where we began as a matter of fact, you all know pretty much seven out of ten come from Indiana. The average salary is going up each year as we take a look at the results, and we'll be watching for their next survey when we start taking that data after the first of '20 and take a look at the graduates. But, we're very confident that this impact will continue and we can communicate that throughout the state.

So who's in our class of '23? Yes it's '23 if you can believe that. It's very hard for me to believe, but look at that, yet for another year the average GPA is up; it's a 3.2, 50% Pell eligible, 21st Century Scholars, which, by the way, is the largest number on any campus in Indiana. And this class is 37% students from minority backgrounds, yet one more reminder that Indiana State University is the state of Indiana's university, serving the needs of the state, as well as students sometimes who come from very far, not only beyond our state but our national borders.

Video segment:

I have always been driven by the idea of making a positive impact in people's lives. I am Cynthia Ramazani, and I'm currently on a pre-medicine track pursuing a biology major at Indiana State University. I moved from my home country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2016 to further my education, which was all very exciting even though the culture shock was a little overwhelming at first. But it didn't take long for me to make friends and feel a little bit more at home. I spent most of my time on campus in my lab and my spare time volunteering at a local hospital.

I am passionate about pediatric medicine and helping individual patients, but also about helping fight diseases on a larger scale. The idea of big data and how we can use it to fight diseases like cancer inspires me. I am dedicating my life to using my knowledge to cure people's ailments, to bring back smiles to kids' faces, and to see families relieved in my home country. I grew up seeing a major problem of children not having access to proper education and health care. My goal is to use my education and experience to improve the lives of people around the world. For now, I'm focused on learning all that I can at Indiana State so that I'm prepared to make a difference.

President Deborah J. Curtis:

Much like Derek's story earlier, Cynthia's story and her journey is truly inspirational to all of us. She wants to make a difference, and we all know that she truly will be able to do that. This is what makes our work here so important, and it also makes it incredibly meaningful for those of us who get to be a part of students' journeys.

We get to be part of a transformational journey and talk about transformational, our students at WZIS brought great recognition to Indiana State University this year. Their journey turned into quite an amazing turn. You know this past Spring, WZIS was named the number one college radio station in the nation, student-run. In the photo, yes please, in the photo here, one of our

student leaders with WZIS, Garrett Short, actually has gone on to become a sports anchor in Rochester, Minnesota. The experiential learning that is infused throughout our programs is a real game-changer, and it surely was for Garrett. It's yet one more example of what makes an ISU education distinctive and value-added.

Similar to that experience, the world of owning and operating a virtual insurance agency became an opportunity to excel as these college of business students earn top honors at the college agency management competition. Huge congratulations to these Sycamores and particularly to the outside faculty who help prepare them for this competition.

Winning these types of awards is affirmation of the hard work and dedication that goes into all of our programs. Many thanks to the teaching and guidance from our faculty and staff in preparing our students for this competition. Their lives are forever changed, as well as their careers.

Miss Indiana State University is now Miss Indiana. We're so very proud of Tiarra Taylor as she takes her crown from Indiana State and parlays that into Miss Indiana. We are all wishing her all the best in December as she competes for the Miss America title. We're all behind you, Tiarra. We're so Sycamore proud, well done.

Yes, it's clear that great things are happening at Indiana State. Our students are striving, learning, and evolving into the type of professionals and citizens we want them to be. This doesn't happen without a great deal of planning, encouragement, and expectations for ongoing community engagement. Washington Monthly named ISU one of America's Best Colleges for student voting. That needs applause. Thank you. There was a great deal of effort that went into establishing a voting center on campus. Our students were the ones who drove that initiative and saw through to its fruition. It's so important to point out that our students' voting more than doubled from 2014 to 2016, '18, pardon me. That's a tremendous accomplishment, certainly guided by our colleagues, but really a dedication of our students to say, "This matters. I'm a citizen of this country, I'm a citizen of the state, and I want to be able to exercise my right to vote."

From the beginning of freshman year throughout our students' time with us, community service and engagement are front and center. Just a few examples are lifted up here: Donaghy Day and the million meals effort that took place at the start of the semester, the tiny home project for homeless, Indiana State's Habitat for Humanity third build, and State Dance Marathon for Riley Hospital, where our exceptional students top that number yet again this year. Well done to everyone who was involved. This community service cuts across our entire campus, the Terre Haute communities, the beneficiary of these acts. Two more excellent examples are the African-American Cultural Center students volunteering at Sugar Grove Elementary Fall Festival, and our staff council members participating in a bowl-a-thon to benefit our Habitat for Humanity build. This is a campus that connects with the community in many ways, all year long. Please, take a look.

Video segment:

This Habitat for Humanity build is significant to Indiana State University. It's core to our mission and helping our students prepare to not only be excellent in their careers but contributors to their community. It's never been more important than it is today for higher ed institutions to take seriously their commitment to preparing students to be engaged in our society and one of those

important characteristics of a future citizen is to be a part of something beyond yourself, bigger than yourself, making the place where you live and you contribute to society better than you found it. That's what's so important about community engagement at Indiana State. There are hundreds of thousands of hours of community service that our faculty, staff and particularly students are engaging in this community that matter a great deal to Indiana State University. When the Wabash Valley does well, Indiana State University does well and we believe we contribute by engaging in that community work.

Dr. Deborah J. Curtis:

Healthy, thriving universities have established a culture of philanthropy that carries forward throughout generations. Alumni know how important it is to help others the way that they were helped as they pursued a college degree. In FY 2019, Indiana State University has made great strides in launching that cultural, culture of philanthropy because let's be clear, this is what we intend to do, create a culture of philanthropy at Indiana State.

In FY '19, \$8.86 million was raised, that's 2.5 million or 40% more than in FY '18. Donors total 7582, which was up by 16%. And I'm here to say, this is just the beginning. We saw this evidenced in the way we launched our very first Give to Blue Day, which was a huge success. \$436,000 raised when our goal was around \$400,000. 1700 donors from Terre Haute to Australia. 252 student donors. There's the start of that culture shift. Over \$100,000 was raised for Bridge the Gap scholarships. Please note that pictured at the bottom of the slide are the members of our new student philanthropy group. We're looking forward to great things from them. This inaugural Give to Blue Day was the largest single fundraising day in the history of ISU.

In FY 2019, faculty, staff, and emeriti gave nearly \$444,000. There were 925 donors in this group. Isn't that outstanding? Participation was up by 25% and with 38% participation by current faculty and staff, this group's giving was up by 25%. Thank you all so very much for stepping up and making this investment in the future of Indiana State University, its students, both now and into the future. This is a very special place and you make it that way.

Athletics' campaign for All in for Elevate had an aspirational goal to raise \$600,000 for a variety of projects that you see on this slide. Well, they blew right past that number and ended FY '19 with a total of \$850,000. The wide array of projects that will benefit from this campaign is indicative of how much work we have to do, but this success really tells us that Sycamore fans want to see good things happen in athletics at Indiana State. Stay tuned because there's more to come.

I've said it before, and I really need to say it again, Indiana State University's employees are some of the most generous people I've ever met. This United Way committee has energized our campus with a spirit of life, uplifting our community through giving to the United Way. Many thanks to each and every one of you who has contributed to this United Way effort here in the Wabash Valley and grateful kudos to the ISU committee.

The wonderful people working here at ISU bring so much to our efforts focused on student success. It's gratifying to take a few minutes to talk about how Indiana State is undertaking projects to make our facilities the type of place where students learn, employees contribute, and the ISU community takes pride in our beautiful campus. We're delighted to say that we've

completed the \$15 million Fine Arts and Commerce building project. It is now truly a 21st-century learning environment. Please be sure to join us for the rededication of that building in November.

Phase 2 of the Health and Human Services Building is finally completed in that \$64 million project. Installation of artwork from donors has enhanced this magnificent building and we're so grateful for this beautiful, dynamic facility for our students, faculty, staff in which to teach and learn. Sycamore Dining is undergoing a \$16.8 million renovation. They've opened up about two-thirds of it a couple weeks ago. By the start of the 2020 calendar year in January, well, we should be fully operational there. If you haven't been in the space and you remember and thought the last space was okay but if you haven't been in the space, you need to go over and see. It is so bright, so fresh, so beautiful, so welcoming, and there's an amazing pizza oven in there that I sure didn't see anything like that in a dining hall in college. Many thanks to the collaboration from our Sodexo partners. What a great dining facility this now is.

Of course, we're in a \$50 million renovation, two-year project of the Hulman Center. We're about half-way through, the exterior finishes are beginning to be revealed. That bottom, right-hand picture is what it's coming around to look like on the northwest side. If you haven't been around that side lately, this is truly a once in 50 years renovation that's going on. I want to thank everyone for their patience throughout this two-year project. It's a challenge but as I've learned at Indiana State, we make the best of every opportunity we have. And I'm grateful for facilities folks who have shepherded this project along and really looking forward to having a big celebration next Fall about the start of basketball season. Everybody do this for a minute, please.

We're really looking forward to in the next fiscal year the \$18.4 million project to renovate Dreiser Hall. Communication classes take place in there, student media, the award-winning, student-operated, radio station, a beautiful old theater, and most importantly, our distance education programs and classrooms, which are some of the potential we have that I'll talk about in a few minutes for reaching Hoosiers in the state of Indiana.

Our economic impact that's just related to construction work in the last 10 years equals about \$400 million and 4,600 plus jobs, just construction-related. We're really proud of that work and here's just a partial list of some of the local contractors that have been involved in these projects. Indiana State makes such a huge impact in the Wabash Valley. Jobs are created, services are contracted. It's a very important relationship that's fostered between ISU and many local building and trade vendors in our community. We are grateful to all of them for the wonderful work they do to make our campus such a beautiful place.

Great spaces matter, but the true heart of the university is found in the people who learn and work here. The people deliver the energy that keeps this place moving. I'm delighted to share some examples of people of Indiana State who have distinguished themselves and in turn, distinguished the University. If you'll take a look at this slide, these are faculty and staff colleagues, friends that we of course cherish, but also who have caught the attention of others outside of the university. We are so very proud of their achievements. They make us better because they are here at this time, in this place, and we're grateful for their significant contributions. May I please ask any of them who are present to stand and, even though it's dark, we want to give them our congratulations. So, would you, please?

Today I'm delighted to announce two winners of this year's Inclusive Excellence Award. They are Venita Stallings, one of our outstanding advisors in University College, and CHILL, Colleagues Helping Implement Lifelong Learning. We'll be celebrating this recognition a bit more with these honorees in the next few weeks, but at this time I would ask that these honorees stand and be recognized by their colleagues.

This next section is going to take me into a couple of highlights. We have a student highlight, a staff highlight, and a faculty highlight, and I'd like you to really focus on what these folks bring to Indiana State, and, to me, the thrill we all have to be a part of their journey. The first is Ricardo Gil. As an undergrad, flute major, I hang on to the end of this too long because I don't want to cut off his flute playing, so here's Ricardo.

Video Segment:

When I started applying to universities, first I applied to two conservatories in England, and I was accepted, but I didn't get any scholarships. And then I had a friend from my country, the Dominican Republic, that told me, "Well you need to apply to universities in the United States." And we apply to several schools and one of them was Indiana State. The flute professor at that moment was Dr. Joyce Wilson.

"He has an energy that just won't quit. He has an innate musical ability like it was second nature to him."

I got a lot of attention from professors. The School of Music is small, so professors know every student. They know how they are doing. They know what they are doing and since it's small you get a lot of opportunities too. Dr. Wilson encouraged me to do a lot of, as many competitions as I could because that's the way you can see how the rest of the world is doing, you know. And you can measure yourself with the rest of the world.

"I remember a time in recital hall when there was a concept I wanted him to understand that he caught it in one hour, and I knew then that he had to get, he had to get out of my national platform."

I ended up being selected to perform in Carnegie Hall as a first prize winner. Well, that was actually for a competition that I did that Dr. Wilson encouraged me to do. It was a great experience. I mean, this is considered one of the best halls in the world. It's very famous. It's very known. Having that in your, in your resume, amazing, it truly means ISU. I know that if I had gone to another school, I wouldn't be able to do all the things that I did and all of the experience that I got. I wouldn't have gotten all the attention that I got at ISU.

"I think Ricardo's an extraordinary human being and he's, he's going to be a very successful flutist. Takes his kind of passion and energy and, and he really does have it and that's why I know he's going to make it."

President Curtis:

Nick McCreary's a professional who exemplifies all the best that our great staff provide to this institution. He's creative, he's enthusiastic, and he uses his talents every day to make ISU better than it was yesterday. Take a look.

Video Segment:

We have really three main goals, and the first thing to educate our students so that when they leave campus, they can be like beacons of sustainability in whatever field they go, choose to work in. Second goal would be to do kind of the same for our community, kind of act as a leader of sustainable development and sustainable literacy. Third is to encourage sustainable development on campus.

We just completed our Sycamore Second-hand Used store. All the items that we sold in the shop were collected through student donations during the move-out. That was one of the first initiatives that was completely born from me and the students I have worked with.

Another one of our more prominent projects is Earth Day. Hopefully, everyone has been out there and experienced that. That's kind of like our celebration. If not really what we do, but more of like sustainability in general and how wonderful Earth is.

And I want to mention a new project that I'm working on with a couple other people in the university engagement division; it's called sustainable cities. It's going to give us a good way to take all of this great work that we've done in Terre Haute and in here locally right around the campus, and extend it to other communities that are in the Wabash Valley that certainly have deep connections to Indiana State, but maybe that we're not serving in quite the same way as we are the neighborhoods and in our partners here in Terre Haute.

"Each year, students are more and more in tune with the idea of sustainability and involving it in every single major and every single choice of a career. The future generations care about their lives and sustainability is about making that their lives the best as possible. So I think sustainability is one of the pressing issues of our time and we know that this generation of students is particularly interested in it, but there are so many environmental challenges that we face really globally. It's really important that our students leave here having an understanding of what sustainability means and what their role is in creating a sustainable world."

The community garden, which far predated me, I think we're 11 years old at this point, has been easily our biggest community engagement-like feature. Literally brings the community here to do sustainable gardening.

Bike shares are great in so many different ways. One for greenhouse gas emissions, it reduces it right if you're biking rather than driving a car. That's less emissions that are going into the air. Biking is so much healthier, both physically and mentally than driving a car, so the only downside that I can see of riding a bike is it, no I can't think of any. Bikes are awesome.

President Curtis:

This highlight focuses on a faculty member here at ISU who is one of the reasons why students thrive at ISU in a criminology major. I often say that faculty are the greatest asset a vibrant University has in its toolkit for student success. I think you'll agree that Brian's work here at ISU illustrates what it means to be a valuable asset to this university. Take a look.

Video Segment:

When I began my graduate degree, it was at that time I really kind of fell in love and developed

an intellectual curiosity about the criminal justice system. I've always had a passion for policing and law enforcement.

“He's one of those faculty members who is really engaged with students and teaching and also just an impressive research portfolio already. For anyone who's successful with grants, he's a good writer and that is important though he's got an impressive track record of success and it's a great benefit to the University.”

So we just received a National Science Foundation grant in order to study cybercrime units across the United States. We're recruiting five to ten agencies where we will go in and interview cybercrime detectives, but this study is exploratory in nature because we do not know a lot about cybercrime units in general. And so we are trying to capture those basic questions of, “What are you doing?” and, “What is your caseload focused on?” And so we know through victimization data and crime report data, we have a good idea about what types of crimes are occurring in terms of fraud. We don't know so much about what the investigations look like into those offenses.

That our faculty or tenure-track tenured research faculty are all in the classroom, whether it's face-to-face or teaching online courses, we're getting there, directly engage, and hopefully, instill our research knowledge and use those examples. You know everyone comes to the University with different sets of life experiences and those life experiences really influence our ideologies and our belief systems about the criminal justice system. You know experiences and TV are the two major sources of how people view our field.

Indiana State has a fair amount of diversity in their student population and so we get to experience, and I get to teach to students with different life experiences, different understandings. And so getting students to think and frame their worldviews and their ideas about the police and criminal justice system in the context of the research body is what I go for and what I try to pursue in my classes. So one of the things I pushed my students towards is take one idea that you're passionate about and at least in this class try to tear that idea apart, try to find what your line of thinking is wrong, or write about that topic and really challenge yourself and at the end of the class you come back to the exact same idea or starting point because you can support your position with data, then that's a victory. And if you changed your mind about the topic, then that's a victory as well. And it can be uncomfortable to change your worldviews, but that's what college is about. That's what the education process is all about. And so having those opportunities and presenting is a core part of my teaching.

President Curtis:

The people of ISU are lively, innovative, dedicated, hard-working individuals. I'm proud to lift up a few of these individuals who are working in new roles with us this year or who have just joined ISU. Andy Morgan, interim VP for Student Affairs; Jack Maynard, interim Dean for the College of Business; Jason Trainor, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management; Jeremiah Turner, Associate Vice President for Development; Rana Johnson, Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Strategic Initiatives; Mark Alesia, Director of University Communication. Each of these individuals brings an amazing set of qualifications and experiences to our work. I hope, I hope you'll take the opportunity when you see them to talk about the contributions they're making to this great place. Could I ask each of them to stand and be recognized? The primary

attribute of a great university is great people coming together every day to reach for aspirational goals.

Well, today we have some serious work ahead of us. And Maddie, I'm happy to tell you, I'm going to finish with a call to action. I want to conclude this address by asking us all to be engaged. We talked about taking ISU to the next level, writing our next chapter, and today here are three areas in front of us that demand our collective focused efforts.

Indiana's performance funding priorities, this indeed is a point of pride because in this biennium we hit all of those marks but let me say this, it is about funding of course and we're very, very excited to get that revenue, but these individual points are so key to the success of anybody we invite into Indiana State University. Degree completion is literally the same thing as student success and particularly at-risk degree completion, on-time graduation, I don't need to share with you all the pluses that that provides a student, but we need to be focused on it, and persistent success rates. As we take a look at our enrollment management, which I will in just a moment, I want all of us to think about how can we each impact this? What are some great ideas we can share?

I guarantee the strategic enrollment council is taking a look at all of these, not just to be able to be successful at all of them, but to provide that experience for the students who come to Indiana State. Our strategic enrollment model is pivoting. It's pivoting at a time that there are a lot of pivots out in society taking place as well about who goes to college, how many of them are there, and where they decide to go. But in this pivot, we're really taking a look at sharing with campus much in the way we're trying to develop a culture of philanthropy. I am asking you to engage in a culture of recruitment and retention that is owned by everyone on campus. "In the role I fill, how can I support this work?" Because, once again, at the end of the day, completing that degree is what equals student success. It's important to have the opportunity. It's important for it to be affordable, but the outcome can only be measured when they cross that stage with a degree in hand.

The two very favorite days of my year: when we see students come here and achieve what they've been after, which is that college degree. You and I know it's life-changing, it's back to that word, transformational. So the other piece in this strategic enrollment part as well as how do we communicate who we are as a university. From the day I returned back to campus and began to look at our challenges but also our benefits, it's been clear to me every single day in this job we are distinctive in the state of Indiana, and we deliver that message everywhere I go around the state. And of course, we need you talking about that as well and that will really point us towards the next action this year.

We're taking on the activity of engaging in a review of our mission, vision, and values which will be the precursor to next year's activity, which will be creating that next strategic plan for Indiana State. I've said to my colleagues I yearn for a mission, vision, and values, but as well a strategic plan that without our name in it, could be read and someone says that's Indiana State University. We know what those distinctive pieces are, we know, so I'm delighted to say today that Brad Balch has agreed to lead this initiative this year. I can't think of anybody better to do that on this campus. There will be opportunities for everyone on campus to engage with the process. As a matter of fact, very quickly. Some of that work starts tomorrow morning. This is the lead up to our next plan for in '20 and '21, and I'm going to ask you to keep that front and

center in your thinking. All these pieces we've talked about, about what's distinctive about Indiana State. Students come from Indiana, they stay in Indiana, we tie our programs to the work needs of this state, and those are key pieces in who we serve and who comes to Indiana State.

It's not new that we're 50% Pell-eligible and 50% first-generation. That's who we proudly serve, and those are the people with the most opportunity to have their lives transformed. We need that to appear in our mission, our vision, our values, as well as what comes next with our following strategic plans.

So I've said the words, "Let's take a look," a couple times, haven't I? Well, I want to introduce this concept to you now because I'm going to be saying it a lot. The state of Indiana and potential college-going students need to take a closer look at Indiana State University. There are not good perceptions of where we are today. People think we haven't moved in centuries. We have. We've evolved, we've become this wonderful, comprehensive, state university that provides all those services and opportunities to students and serves the state of Indiana. So, one more time, I'm going to finish up here with asking you to think about the important work we do every day. We'll finish with a look at Travis Eckert and his ISU experience. You know everyone should take a closer look at Indiana State. Well, I can't think of a better way to conclude these remarks today, so I'm going to let Travis have the last word.

Video segment:

I'm Travis Eckert. During my sophomore year at Indiana State University, I started my own drone photography business. I'm an unmanned systems major. I took the first couple classes, loved them, just being able to build a drone, being able to learn all the pieces and parts, and actually use your own hands, put them together. I think that's pretty cool, but I really want to be a fighter pilot. I'm also majoring in aviation management. While taking classes, I am training to achieve my private pilot's license. I've also been very active in ROTC and I'm an airman in the international guard in Portland. I love the flexibility. I've been able to schedule my classes around my busy life.

And then I was deployed to Afghanistan. I was in charge of building and inspecting ammunitions and also building thousand-pound bombs, while also processing 30 mil rounds for the intense war. I worked with my instructors to make sure I could complete all the classwork while I was deployed. I think that's not very common for people to go overseas and work on homework. Classes went on without me but when I came back to Indiana State, the instructors made it very easy for me to transition. I have learned a lot having aviation management, unmanned systems. I think I'll have a step up within the fighter pilot community.

President Curtis:

Indiana State, let's go get this. It's our time. This is the time, and when we all get engaged, there's nothing we can't do here. I look forward to working with each of you this next year as we chart that course. Join us for a reception in the Heritage Ballroom and Lounge. Thank you.

