

Momentum builds at Boise State

These are heady times at Boise State. Dynamic, vibrant, ambitious, up-and-coming, thriving ... those are just some of the words used to describe the atmosphere on campus these days. The reasons? Here are just a few:

• **More and better students** —

With the most stringent enrollment standards among Idaho's public institutions, Boise State's spring 2006 enrollment of 18,031 is a 2 percent increase from last year and the first time the university has exceeded 18,000 students in a spring semester.

• **A major increase in graduate students** — Graduate enrollment had a particularly robust showing this spring with a headcount increase of 23 percent and a full-time equivalent (FTE) increase of 11 percent.

• **Two new doctoral programs**

— In December the State Board of Education approved Boise State's Ph.D.



JOHN KELLY

The 54,000-square-foot, four-story Interactive Learning Center will include a 200-seat lecture hall and 12 standard classrooms in addition to a multi-media lab, multi-purpose/distance learning classroom, visualization classroom, experimental classroom, teaching and learning center and numerous study lounges. Construction on the \$14 million building is due to be completed in May 2007.

program in electrical and computer engineering, and in February the Board OK'd a Ph.D. program in geosciences, giving the university its third and fourth doctoral programs (page 19). In addition, the Board also approved BSU's new executive MBA program.

• **New buildings**

— The \$9.5 million Caven-Williams Sports Complex, an indoor practice facility, was recently completed, and construction on a \$14 million, four-story Interactive Learning Center is well under way and due for completion in May 2007 ("BSU building boom

continues," *FOCUS*, Fall 2005).

• **Record-setting research funding** — On the heels of last fiscal year's school-record total in federal funding for research and sponsored projects, the university's first-half report for the current fiscal year indicates it may enjoy another record-breaking performance in fiscal year 2006 (page 10).

• **The community college buzz**

— As *FOCUS* went to press, Boise State awaited the Idaho Legislature's action following Gov. Dirk Kempthorne's proposal for \$5 million in seed money for a community-college network and the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation's decision regarding funding for BSU's proposal to establish a community college in the Treasure Valley.

• **An ambitious Campus Master Plan** — Approved by the State Board of Education last fall, the plan would,



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The Caven-Williams Sports Complex, Boise State's new \$9.5 million indoor training facility, is one of the most recent manifestations of the major changes taking place on the main campus. The 76,000-square-foot building is 200 feet wide by 380 feet long and is one of the most impressive facilities of its kind in the country. (Donors honored, page 32.)

among many other initiatives, add 25 new buildings and nearly double the size of Boise State's main campus ("2005 master plan calls for future campus expansion," *FOCUS*, Fall 2005).

"Boise State stands uniquely positioned in Idaho as a metropolitan university empowered by a dynamic, high-tech economy and one of the most attractive regions in the nation," says President Bob Kustra. "Our future lies in the convergence of our metropolitan character, excellence in undergraduate education, and the research of our faculty, focused as it is on the regional and state economy and public policy, the Western landscape and the challenges of science."

Kustra says the Master Plan builds on the existing institutional values and core beliefs and creates opportunities for students and their future, developing partnerships, prioritizing academic programs, building research potential, and defining Boise State's identity.

How will Boise State pay for all this? First, the Master Plan is a long-term initiative and will be put into action as such, Kustra says. He adds that it will need to be approved and supported by the state's leaders and policy-makers and implemented with a thorough and prudent — yet entrepreneurial — funding strategy that will take a decade or two.

The Master Plan will make Boise State an exciting new force in the Pacific Northwest, Kustra says. But at the same time he acknowledges that there is much work ahead.

"Communicating this metamorphosis from Boise Junior College into an energetic university focused on innovation and groundbreaking research to stakeholders and the university's

50,000 active alumni, however, proves to be a continuing challenge," he says.

Another challenge is the community college issue, which was further complicated in the wake of maneuverings by Ontario, Ore.-based Treasure Valley Community College and Twin Falls-based College of Southern Idaho, both of which expressed an interest in establishing a two-year school in southwest Idaho. Like Boise State, TVCC met with the Albertsons Foundation to discuss funding for a community college.

"For well over two years, Boise State has called attention to the need for a community college in southwest Idaho and has repeated its commitment to do all it can to provide an initial presence on the BSU West campus and at other locations in the Treasure Valley," Kustra says. "Now, two other institutions have expressed an interest in setting up a two-year college in our service area. My hope is that this competition does not turn the opportunity to provide much-needed community college offerings to our citizens into an expensive duplication of services without appropriate accountability from the Idaho State Board of Education. As I have stated previously, much of what happens depends on the support of our legislators and how they respond to Gov. Kempthorne's community college initiative."

At press time, Boise State put a restructured proposal before the Albertson Foundation, requesting \$11 million to open a two-year school that would increase the number of students enrolled from early projections of 600 to 2,000 this fall and to 3,000 by 2008.

— Bob Evancho

GOV. CELEBRATES DAUGHTER'S GRADUATION WITH COMMENTS AT WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Those who attended Boise State's 2005 winter commencement ceremonies were presented with a surprise address from Gov. Dirk Kempthorne, whose daughter, Heather Myklegard, a health promotion major, was among 550 graduates who took part in the Dec. 16 event in Taco Bell Arena.

During his speech Kempthorne commented on the high quality of a Boise State education and told members of BSU's winter Class of 2005 that their diploma "denotes to anyone in the world that you are a graduate of one of the finest institutions in it. You can now compete with anyone in the world."

The governor also took a moment to praise the leadership of President Bob Kustra, calling him "one of America's great university presidents."

In all, 1,306 students qualified to earn 1,376 degrees or certificates. A total of 198 students completed their programs with honors: 25 summa cum laude, 51 magna cum laude and 122 cum laude.

Eight students received their Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction, making the 2005 winter class the largest doctoral class in school history.



A proud Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne escorts his daughter, Heather Myklegard, during Boise State's winter commencement. Myklegard, a health promotion major, was among the 550 graduates who took part in the Dec. 16 ceremonies in Taco Bell Arena.