

**Ball State University Black
Alumni Constituent Society
Board**

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August 8, 2018

President Geoffrey Mearns
Office of the President
Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana 47305

RE: The Ball State University Board of Trustees' decision to keep John Schnatter's name on the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise.

Dear Dr. Mearns,

As representatives of the Black Alumni Constituent Society of Ball State University, we are obligated to voice our deep disappointment and concern about the recent decision of the Board of Trustees to support John Schnatter by keeping his name on the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise. We feel this action by the trustees devalues and undermines prospective Black students, current Black students, and Black alumni. We ask that the Board of Trustees consider reversing its decision.

The Black Alumni Constituent Society is an organization that has represented Ball State Black alumni for more than thirty years and we have 93 years of history on the Ball State campus. Having this historical presence along with growing numbers of Black students enrolling at Ball State, the University must commit to its statement of diversity and inclusion by making sure we are represented on the Board of Trustees, the President's Cabinet, and the University Senate – all whom have input into the strategic direction of Ball State. When we are not at the table when critical decisions are made, we must question if Ball State truly values diversity.

At the beginning of the 2017/2018 school year, there were 1,396 Black undergraduate students and 343 Black graduate students enrolled at Ball State. When tuition and fees average \$20,128 per student, each year for four years, the economic impact is approximately 139 million dollars. Is not the value of this impact just as important as or greater than the financial contribution of John Schnatter? Parents of these students sacrifice whatever money they have to make sure their children are able to attend Ball State. Therefore, it is essential that Ball State uphold the pledge of Beneficence: "to value the intrinsic worth of every member of the community."

In moving forward, we request to be represented in the development of the new Multicultural Center. We also request that we sit on search committees for deans and other important positions that have major influence in how the various colleges are managed. We must be represented at the senior management level of the University so that there is a real level of commitment to diversity.

Our Black Alumni Constituent Society president Dr. Teresa Jeter and other Black alumni want to meet with you before the 2018/2019 academic year ensues to discuss how we can ensure that Ball State is a diverse University that makes us proud to be alumni.

Sincerely,

Ball State Black Alumni Constituent Board