

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY

State University of New York

SELF-STUDY REPORT 2022–2023

PREPARED FOR THE
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION
ON HIGHER EDUCATION





SELF-STUDY REPORT 2022-2023

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Buffalo State University

State University of New York

Dr. Katherine S. Conway-Turner, President



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BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Buffalo State College acknowledges that the college is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, including the Seneca, Tuscarora, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk nations, and of their Indigenous relations and neighbors, the Erie and the Wenro. We hope to demonstrate respect for the treaties that were made on these territories, and we pledge to work toward partnership with a spirit of collaboration with our current Indigenous neighbors, the Seneca and Tuscaroras.

SELF-STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE

Kelly M. Frothingham, Steering Committee Co-Chair, Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences
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AT A GLANCE INFORMATION

CAMPUS

125 acres, 38 buildings

ENROLLMENT

5,464 undergraduates, 981 graduate students

ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

School of Arts and Sciences
School of Education
School of Professions
Office of Graduate Studies

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROFILES

Average High School GPA: 2.90
60% female and 40% male
53% students of color

FINANCIAL AID

Approximately 90% of our students receive a form of financial aid. About 54% of undergraduate students receive Pell grants while 48% participate in the New York State Tuition Assistance Program

FACULTY

612 (318 full-time, 294 part-time)
Percent of full-time faculty with terminal degrees: 82%
Faculty members awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching: 53

STUDENT/FACULTY RATIO AND CLASS SIZE

14:1
93.4% of classes have fewer than 40 students

PROGRAMS

79 undergraduate programs
64 graduate degrees and numerous certificate and microcredential programs

UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

Leadership opportunities for students
Recognized clubs and organizations
Fraternity and sorority life
NCAA Division III athletics
Fine and performing arts



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUNY Buffalo State's self-study represents the work of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and alumni over the past two years. The standards-based workgroups began their work in remote operations of the pandemic; they were charged with critically examining all facets of the university through the lens of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation and to make recommendations for improvement. Because the pandemic impacted every aspect of university operations and our people had to be responsive to these effects, Buffalo State's Steering Committee and writing team updated the reviews and analyses of the workgroups to incorporate 2022's activities and a new strategic plan. After an overview of Buffalo State, each of the standards are discussed to validate the institution's full compliance with the MSCHE Standards and the Requirements of Affiliation. Findings and areas for innovation and improvement conclude each standard.

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS

This section introduces the mission, vision, and core values of Buffalo State and describes the strategic plan since our last reaccreditation review, as well the development of the new 2022-2026 plan we are in the process of implementing. This section details how the mission is central to strategic planning and our assessment practices align with our mission and support our effectiveness in achieving the university's goals. As we look to our future and a new president joining us in 2023, we suggest that the campus review our mission to assure we continue to meet our students' and community's needs.

STANDARD 2: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

This section describes Buffalo State's commitment to ethics and integrity in the areas of academic and intellectual freedom; freedom of expression; diversity, equity, and inclusion; the effective management of grievances; avoidance of conflicts of interest; fair and impartial practices for employees; honesty and truthfulness in internal and external communications; and affordability and accessibility. Buffalo State's commitment to ethics and integrity involves all faculty, staff, and students and encompasses all campus operations. We identify areas to improve our commitment by including the Campus Climate Survey in the university's planning initiatives and share results with the campus community, and the importance to identify additional opportunities to increase and retain the number of faculty of color at our majority minority institution.

STANDARD 3: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This section describes how Buffalo State provides high-quality educational opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level for a diverse student population. This chapter provides evidence that our students are engaged in educational programs designed to broaden their knowledge base and skills across disciplines. We also describe the variety of assessment activities and faculty resources that support teaching excellence. The Buffalo State student is prepared to think critically, embrace the values of diversity and inclusion, prepare for the ever-changing demands of the workplace, and value civic responsibility. We find that as the university creates innovative curriculum for students, it would be beneficial to consider a more streamlined approach to proposing, developing, and offering those programs, certificates, and microcredentials.

STANDARD 4: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This section describes the Buffalo State student experience and the ways we support our learners from admission to graduation. This chapter provides a detailed account of student life, including academic and holistic supports, retention initiatives, accommodations to students with disabilities, as well as preparation for employment or graduate study. We also describe the regulation of athletics, and other extracurricular activities and policies, and our protocols and safeguards governing student record retention. Buffalo State students remain the center of our mission and drive the university to continuously improve to meet current student needs. Although offices and departments that support student success follow established guidelines and policies, there is an opportunity to be more targeted in our data collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of data to make improvements which will benefit our current students and our alumni.

STANDARD 5: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

This section describes the development of the Buffalo State assessment efforts since our last self-study. Buffalo State practices ongoing assessment that includes rigorous department self-studies, required measurements of outcomes for accreditation, focused work group reports, and data gathering and interpretation. This chapter provides a detailed account of how Buffalo State's culture of assessment and continuous improvement has grown. While meeting the MSCHE and SUNY requirements, there are opportunities to strengthen assessment systems at the strategic, divisional, department, and program levels as the university moves forward with a new strategic plan.



STANDARD 6: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

This section describes how Buffalo State’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals. This chapter explains the university’s financial planning and budgeting process to alignment of resources with the strategic plan, goals, and priorities. We discuss our commitment to enhancing institutional effectiveness which is evident in the infrastructure surrounding planning, resources, and institutional improvement. We identify an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation tied to the new Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026.

STANDARD 7: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION

This section describes the process by which Buffalo State is governed in a manner that allows the university to realize its stated mission and goals to benefit the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. The chapter explains the role of the State University of New York (SUNY) system and the Board of Trustees governance, and then describes the local administration that takes place with the College Council, president, faculty senate, and student governance.

COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR INSTITUTION, OUR PEOPLE, AND THIS SELF-STUDY

It has become cliché to describe the impacts of the global pandemic as unprecedented. Nevertheless, the ways in which COVID-19 affected Buffalo State and its people - faculty, staff, and especially students, cannot be understated. When everyone left the campus on March 20, 2020, no one expected 16 months to pass before we returned. Nor did we imagine that remote learning, teaching, and campus operations would become standard in this crisis. A description of campus stakeholder challenges and responses to COVID-19 will be included in an addendum. However, it is important to highlight how the pandemic has impacted our students and continues to be a priority.

We have learned much about ways that COVID has impacted our country and the groups that have borne the brunt of the burden. We know that this global crisis has revealed and amplified the ways that marginalized people are underserved in this country. Black and brown citizens have been more likely to become sick with COVID, more likely to die, and more likely to suffer financially. As a majority minority university with a substantial population of first-generation students, our students left campus and frequently went home to “ground zero” for the emerging crisis. While continuing their studies, our students started full-time jobs as emergency workers in high-risk positions. They contributed to household economies, sometimes as the primary source of income, and became caregivers, and sometimes nurses to ill family members. Our students oversaw younger learners’ remote education, and somehow continued their own educations despite sharing computers with everyone in the household or working without internet connections or computers at all. We hope that as narratives in the following chapters discuss the challenges that our campus community has faced, the overarching theme of resilience will emerge. As our students demonstrate, we determine effective means to persist in the face of our challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1871 as the Buffalo Normal School designed to serve the city’s burgeoning student population, State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo State is SUNY’s urban-engaged anchor institution. Buffalo State has robust focus on civic and community engagement. In this role, Buffalo State coordinates high-quality, reciprocal partnerships with local, regional, national, and international community-based organizations that make a difference in the lives of our students, the institution, and the community at large. We are home to a diverse, engaged community of learners, scholars, and leaders whose passion is discovery, engagement, and social justice. Buffalo State has been part of the SUNY system since the state system was founded in 1948. As Buffalo State looks to the future, we have transitioned from a college to a university, effective January 2023.

SUNY is the largest comprehensive university system in the United States. Made up of 64 higher education institutions, SUNY includes research universities, academic medical centers, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive colleges, community colleges, colleges of technology and an online learning network, and enrolls nearly 1.3 million students each year. Guided by its mission to provide educational services of the highest quality with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional, and vocational postsecondary programs, the governing body of SUNY, the Board of Trustees directly determines policies to be followed by its constituent institutions. At state-operated



institutions, these policies include the authority to appoint the president of each state-operated institution; grant all degrees, diplomas, and certificates for the completion of studies at any state-operated campus; regulate the admission of students and prescribe qualifications for their continued attendance; and regulate tuition, fees and charges, curricula and all other matters pertaining to the operation and administration of each campus. As a constituent of SUNY, Buffalo State aligns its missions and goals to give students affordable access to the breadth and depth of learning opportunities and support opportunities that they could not find at comparable standalone institutions.

The accessible 125-acre campus borders the north end of what has become the richly diverse West Side of Buffalo. The racial and ethnic makeup of this neighborhood today includes Eastern European, Central American, Middle Eastern, African, and Southeast Asian communities. As a member of the inner-city community, Buffalo State is committed to our neighbors for meaningful exchange and advancement through a variety of partnerships that celebrate this cultural milieu. The campus is in Buffalo's vibrant museum district, adjacent to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and Olmsted-designed Delaware Park and is near trendy cafés, restaurants, shops, a beautiful waterfront development and Victorian-styled housing. The culturally rich and diverse city of Buffalo, home to more than 256,000 residents, is undergoing an economic resurgence and has been recently cited as one of America's most livable cities.

As of June 1, 2021, Buffalo State is comprised of three academic schools (Arts and Sciences, Education, and the Professions) and an Office of Graduate Studies. As of Fall 2022, Buffalo State offers 79 undergraduate programs, with honors options, 64 graduate programs, and scores of minor and certificate programs. After an 18-month process beginning in early 2020, the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Natural and Social Sciences combined to form the School of Arts and Sciences.

With one of the largest teacher education programs in New York State, Buffalo State offers a vast array of liberal arts and professional programs as well as several programs not available at any other SUNY institution, including art conservation (graduate), adult education, fashion and textile technology, fibers, forensic chemistry, forensic science (graduate), metals/jewelry, and wood/furniture design. The foundation of the undergraduate curriculum is the General Education Program, Intellectual Foundations (IF). IF promotes an understanding of the continuity of human history, the depth of inherited knowledge, the validity of diverse modes of inquiry, the value of artistic expression and the richness of our collective experience. The purpose of the IF program is to develop the skills and habits of the mind required for a life of intellectual curiosity and civic engagement.

Buffalo State strives to transform the lives of our students through intentional opportunities for service-learning, community activism, civic engagement, study abroad, social justice learning, and academic excellence. Buffalo State empowers students to make a difference in their local, regional, and global communities. In 2020, Buffalo State ranked 35th out of 1,449 benchmarked colleges and universities in the CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index; advancing 100 positions since 2016. This distinction reflects Buffalo State's longstanding commitment to improving the lives of students from all backgrounds, including first-generation college students.

Buffalo State also offers 64 graduate programs through the Office of Graduate Studies, including data science and analytics, creativity and change leadership, higher education and student affairs administration, and the internationally recognized Patricia H. and Richard E. Garman Art Conservation Program. Several new graduate programs are currently under consideration or have been newly added. These include business management, dietetics and nutrition, conflict analysis and resolution, and disaster and emergency management.

The university incorporates high-impact applied-learning opportunities throughout the curriculum such as first-year seminars, service learning, community-based projects, learning communities, undergraduate research, internships, field experiences, and study abroad opportunities. Many internships, learning labs, art and design studios, and applied research opportunities are available to Buffalo State undergraduate and graduate students. Buffalo State's Campus House, with state-of-the-art technology and facilities, provides an innovative, hands-on training and research laboratory for students in the Hospitality and Tourism Department. Buffalo State's Great Lakes Center – the only field station on the Great Lakes within the SUNY system – celebrated 50 years of research in 2016, demonstrating our commitment to research as a highly valued component of the academic profile.

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) coordinates campus efforts to support research and creativity in ways that build scholarly and creative interaction among students and faculty. OUR sponsors an array of programs: the annual Student Research and Creativity Conference (SRCC), held on campus each spring to showcase both undergraduate and graduate projects, has received over 3,500 abstracts with nearly 6,000 students presenting or performing at the annual event since its inception in 1999; the Early Undergraduate Research Opportunity (EURO) program awards stipends to lower-division students for participation as faculty research assistants; the Small Grant Awards assist undergraduates in conducting research and creative activities



during the academic year; the Undergraduate Travel Program support presentations at professional disciplinary conferences; and Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowships support major independent student projects under faculty mentorship each summer. As a result, Buffalo State has been nationally recognized for engaging undergraduates in research. The Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Student Association, coordinates an Annual Graduate Student Research Fair allowing graduate students to attend and participate in an event exclusively focused on master project and thesis research. Buffalo State students have participated in active study-abroad programs in 40 countries since 2018 and the university has welcomed international students from 38 countries around the world. Additionally, the International Graduate Program for Educators (IGPE) currently has approved sites in 39 countries. Buffalo State was recognized for its global engagement efforts by NAFSA: Association of International Educators in 2019.

Other academic centers that contribute to our role as an anchor institution and provide community resources are the Burchfield Penney Art Center, the Community Academic Center, the Center for Health and Social Research, and the Small Business Development Center. Since 2014, Buffalo State has led Anchor Institutions initiatives nationally through the Coalition for Urban and Metropolitan Universities National Anchor Learning Network. This distinction highlights Buffalo State's commitment to purposeful use of human and economic capital to enhance the Buffalo community.

Buffalo State, in its mission, vision, and strategic plan, is aligned with SUNY's emphasis on promoting diversity, opportunity, and inclusion and addressing issues of racism and division. Since the submission of the last Self-Study in 2013, the State University system has experienced several transitions in leadership, with three different chancellors. Each of those chancellors has recognized the challenge presented by the need to diversify faculty to match our increasingly diverse student populations and have set forth plans to address not only greater opportunity and inclusion, but also affirmative plans to address racism. Accordingly, Buffalo State has been recognized as a key partner and leader, proud to be a 2015 recipient of the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification, becoming the first campus to receive funding under the PRODiG (Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth) initiative in fall 2019, hiring three new faculty members. The campus launched a new degree program in Africana studies in 2019, a move championed by students. Moreover, Buffalo State has received the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, for eight consecutive years. Buffalo State also received the Inclusion Diversity Equity Awareness (IDEA) Award from Buffalo Business First in January 2021.

Buffalo State is not exempt from the enrollment challenges facing institutions of higher education, nor the revenue challenges associated with declining enrollment. Several long-term demographic trends will present significant challenges for enrollment over the next five years. As the number of prospective students is shrinking, competition from other colleges and universities is increasing. Enrollment in community colleges across the state of New York has also experienced a substantial decline over the past 10 years which has led to a corresponding decline in new transfer students. Although fall 2020 enrollment reflects an overall decline of 3.7% from fall 2019, much of this decline was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Decreases in residence hall density to adhere to health and safety guidance and concerns over cohabitation in a time of global pandemic resulted in a decline of over 25% in residence hall occupancy; however, graduate student enrollment in fall 2020 increased by 1.3% from fall 2019.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Our self-study process began in fall 2020 with the establishment of a Steering Committee by the President and Cabinet. The individuals who were serving as co-chairs of the Steering Committee and the Accreditation Liaison Officer in 2020 attended the MSCHE Self-Study Institute during the fall semester. During the institute, they met with the Middle States staff liaison. After this meeting, the Steering Committee for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study was formed. The members of this group were chosen to represent faculty, administration, staff, and student constituencies from across the campus and its members also served on nearly 100 departmental or university-level committees or subcommittees.

The Steering Committee unanimously recommended approaching the Self-Study from a standards-based approach for a number of reasons, among them is the fact that this is the first time Buffalo State is embarking on a Self-Study since MSCHE moved from 14 standards to seven standards; all members of Buffalo State's administrative cabinet are new to their posts since the completion of the last Self-Study in 2013; and Buffalo State, like higher education institutions across the country and specifically those in New York State, has experienced reductions in levels of state support for ongoing programs and faces challenges for funding initiatives. A comprehensive review at this time would help identify and confirm institutional needs and priorities that require funding and support, even as future revenue and support may be uncertain. The university's institutional priorities were integrated into each working group based on their alignment with each specific standard.



INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES IN THIS SELF-STUDY:

1. **Long-term viability:** Foster a culture of dynamic, evidence-based decision-making to ensure the sustainability of the college's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
2. **Student retention, support, and success:** Improve student success as measured by students we admit, engage, retain, and graduate.
3. **Serving as an Anchor Institution:** Enhance opportunities for campus and community members to serve the City of Buffalo as active, inclusively aware citizens.
4. **Academic and creative excellence:** Intentionally commit to academic and creative excellence through socially just, reflective, and collaborative actions, policies, and practices.

In a collaborative, reflective process, Steering Committee members connected these priorities to the Mission Statement, the goals of the Strategic Plan, and MSCHE accreditation standards. What emerged from these extensive conversations was a common belief that Buffalo State occupies a distinct and important place in the educational community. While significant challenges lie ahead, Buffalo State is committed to fulfilling its important role in transforming the lives of our students. Our overarching goal is to be the institution of first choice for students, faculty, and staff. To do so, we will carry out the following:

- **Educate** students through rigorous and engaging academic programs.
- **Create** an engaged campus community that fosters civic responsibility.
- **Enhance** institutional effectiveness.
- **Provide** appropriate facilities and resources to support all activities.

This report is organized sequentially according to the Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation. We demonstrate compliance based on evidence presented within the narratives and in our Evidence Inventory. We organized standards according to the criteria and sub-criteria associated with that standard to make our case for compliance with Standards of Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.





STANDARD 1

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

This section describes the ways in which SUNY Buffalo State meets the four criteria and sub-criteria of Standard 1 and the *Requirements of Affiliation 7 and 10*.

MISSION

Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive campus committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our mission is to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning. Buffalo State is dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment (S1.C1 Mission, Vision, and Values).

We celebrate the diversity of our student population and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for our campus community. The university prioritizes providing access to a wide variety of high-quality experiences to our students both inside and outside of the classroom. We recognize the importance of preparing our students for an increasingly global society and we are purposeful in ensuring that our students have every opportunity to celebrate and foster their cross-cultural competencies. These aspects of our mission, vision, and values serve as the foundation for the work of each member of our campus community.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

[S1.C1 and C2] Buffalo State's current mission statement was developed in 2003 under the leadership of the former president as the college embarked upon a mission review process and development of a new strategic plan. Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 7*, the process included numerous meetings with campus and community-based stakeholders to ensure wide support and approval of the College Council, Buffalo State's governing body. The review of Buffalo State's mission aligns with a SUNY system-wide review process that requires each campus to reaffirm areas of alignment with SUNY's mission. This process provides Buffalo State with the opportunity to review its commitment to academic excellence, support of a diverse student body, access to a complete range of programs, and to address local, regional, and state priorities and goals.

[S1.C3] Buffalo State has incorporated its vision and values statements into its daily operations. Both sets of statements are consistent with our mission and provide clear guidance relating to student learning including the quality of learning experiences, as well as specific focus areas that address desired outcomes for students.

VISION

Buffalo State will be a nationally recognized leader in public higher education known for

- its caring and rigorous academic environment where lives are transformed through education;
- the intellectual and creative accomplishments of its faculty, staff, students, and alumni;
- its cross-culturally competent community dedicated to developing leaders for an increasingly global society.

VALUES

We, the Buffalo State community, are committed to:

- actively facilitating access to public higher education;
- excellent learning experiences in and out of the classroom;
- being student centered;
- the rigors, joys, and fulfillment of intellectual discovery;
- engagement, applied learning, and partnerships with the community;
- social responsibility;
- respect for diversity and individual differences;
- supportive and collegial relationships;
- opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential.



In spring 2017, Buffalo State adopted four institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) as recommended by the Senate Academic Plan Committee. The ILOs include the following: cultural fluency, urban engagement, scholarship and creative activity, and ethical reasoning. All four ILOs are closely tied to our mission, vision, and values as they connect to diversity, inclusivity, and intellectual growth; a passion for lifelong learning; and valuing community partnerships.

FULFILLING THE MISSION

[S1.C1a] The creation of 2016 – 2021 strategic plan and the 2022 – 2026 strategic plan provided the entire campus community with opportunities to review our identity as a college. Consistent with our mission, vision, and values, both plans addressed providing an excellent education to students inside and outside the classroom, the importance of Buffalo State’s role in our community, and the need to provide resources to support student success.

[S1.C1c] Buffalo State’s mission statement is approved and supported by the governing body in accordance with *Requirement of Affiliation 7*. College Council members review Buffalo State’s major plans, make recommendations as needed, and approve plans (S1.C1c Association of Council and College Trustees of the State of New York Handbook, pp. 2-4; S1.C1c College Council Minutes October 4, 2022).

[S1.C1d] Buffalo State’s mission, vision, and value statements guide our activities across the campus community by providing a framework for continued development of the university. This includes faculty, staff, and administrators who make decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and defining institutional and educational outcomes.

The 2016 - 2021 Strategic Plan included the goal to “Provide an Excellent Education Inside and Outside the Classroom.” Focus areas within the goal included creating engaging and distinctive academic programming, enhancing academic support services, and creating an engaged community. Program approval processes, curricular changes, and course offerings demonstrate alignment with strategic goals and priorities.

Similarly, the Strategic Plan’s priorities have guided resource planning and allocation. The Strategic Resource Planning Process (SRPP) is an integrated budget planning process that links the vision, priorities, people, and physical attributes of an institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making and action. It shapes and guides the organization as it evolves over time. The 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan aligns with the financial priorities as outlined in Standard 6.

[S1.C1e] Buffalo State’s mission, vision, and values supports scholarly inquiry and creative activity. As presented in Standard 3, faculty are active in publishing books, articles, chapters; presenting artistic work at regional, national, and international conferences; and securing funding from external sources. Faculty who excel in these areas are recognized for their contributions weekly in the *Daily Bulletin*, the university’s electronic newsletter.

Students collaborate with faculty members in their own research and creative activities.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONTEXTS AND CONSTITUENCIES

[S1.C1b] Buffalo State tracks information from several internal and external contexts and constituencies that impact the university as we continue to align with our mission, vision, and values. As we continue to operate within the context of declining high school graduates in the State of New York and a reduction in state support, the adoption of several strategies to respond to these changes has been a priority in our strategic planning. Our current Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan is in draft form and will be delivered to the campus community in spring 2022. The SEM aligns with our new strategic plan adopted in October 2022.



BUFFALO STATE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

[S1.C1d] Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 10*, Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 and Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 align with and advance the mission of Buffalo State. Each plan was developed with broad participation from the campus community. The process used in creating the 2016–2021 strategic plan was transparent and collaborative, involving participants from all areas of campus. Over the course of several months, members of the College Planning Council (CPC) conducted numerous SWOT sessions with diverse interest groups representing students, staff, faculty, administrators, board members, and community representatives. What emerged from these extensive conversations was a common belief that Buffalo State occupies a distinct and important place in the educational community. While it was acknowledged that significant challenges lie ahead, the College was committed to fulfilling its important role in transforming the lives of students. To do so, Buffalo State committed to successfully addressing the following goals:

- Goal 1: Provide an Excellent Education Inside and Outside the Classroom
- Goal 2: Continue to Create an Engaged Community
- Goal 3: Enhance Institutional Effectiveness
- Goal 4: Provide Appropriate Resources Necessary to Succeed

The CPC completed reports summarizing progress made toward Strategic Plan activities during the first four years of the plan, from 2016 – 2019. Reports are available to the campus community (S1.C1d Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021; S1.C1d Strategic Plan 2022-2026; S1.C1d 2017 – 2018 Strategic Planning Report; S1.C1d 2018 – 2019 Strategic Planning Report).

To guide Buffalo State through the challenges of the pandemic, President Conway-Turner provided the campus with strategic priorities for 2021 – 2022. These priorities were put into place to stabilize and maintain the momentum of campus during an extraordinary period. The priorities did not preclude other significant campus objectives based on the 2016 – 2021 strategic plan; rather, the priorities served as a bridge between the challenges of the pandemic and the completion of a new strategic plan. The priorities were as follows:

1. Stabilize new and continuing student enrollment
2. Evaluate campus operations, staffing levels, and job duties across campus to determine appropriate targets given current constraints
3. Increase fundraising activities to support current strategic priorities and expand opportunities to maintain the relevancy and strong position of a Buffalo State degree
4. Implement and maintain the campus focus on health and safety including those within our reopening plans and required by the CDC guidance, NY State Department of Health guidance, and SUNY guidance.
5. Continue to develop, finalize, or utilize plans to guide the campus efforts: including the next strategic plan; assessment plans for current efforts; strategic resource planning process; multi-year enrollment and divisional plans; implementing social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusive (JEDI) excellence or other plans that secure our future success (S1.C1d Strategic Priorities During the Pandemic 2021 – 2022).

In spring 2021, preparation began for the development of Buffalo State's new strategic plan with the creation of the Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee (IPAC). A campus-wide communication was made requesting all faculty and staff with a background or interest in developing Buffalo State's next strategic plan to consider membership in IPAC. All 38 individuals who expressed interest were provided membership to IPAC, resulting in broad representation from across campus. Co-chaired by the provost and assistant vice president of institutional effectiveness and planning, IPAC members served in one of five subcommittee groups which included Assessment of Student Learning, Student Support, Planning and Institutional Improvement, Evidence in Decision-Making, and Defining Features. Subcommittee structures were designed to bring assessment, planning, and accreditation expectations in alignment. IPAC moved forward with the development of Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 after receiving its charge from President Conway-Turner. Members reviewed the previous strategic plan, identifying areas of the plan that had been successfully completed and areas that were strong candidates for new plan carry-over. In some cases, there were components of the plan that were not connected to clear metrics or other institutional plans, resulting in



uncertainty of the degree to which the stated initiatives had been successfully completed. Recognizing an opportunity to build upon the strengths of the existing strategic plan and opportunities to make improvements, IPAC moved forward with best practice methodology as a foundational element of their planning process.

IPAC Members followed Society for College and University and Planning methodology with a thorough review of existing institutional data. An analysis of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats (SCOT) was completed, and results were shared with the campus community. Listening sessions were held with staff, faculty, and students through spring 2022 where comments were recorded and brought back to IPAC for consideration. In addition, individual presentations were made for various committees throughout campus including College Senate.

In summer 2022, additional information was gathered from the President's Leadership Retreat and incorporated into the strategic plan draft. Throughout the planning process, the campus community was invited to follow IPAC's progress by accessing the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning's website and the campus' newsletter where additional updates were provided by the provost. Individual groups on campus were also invited to request a presentation by IPAC members at any time throughout the planning stages. In October 2022, the strategic plan draft was approved by Buffalo State's governing body, College Council. Recognizing the need to improve upon strategic planning tracking and alignment with divisional plans, Buffalo State will use AchieveIt, our strategic plan management software, which will assist in generating reports to IPAC and the campus community. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning has made strategic planning feedback data collected from numerous listening sessions and presentations available to faculty and staff who are currently creating divisional and departmental plans (S1.C1d IPAC Committee and Subcommittee Membership; S1.C1d Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026; S1.C1d IPAC Timeline and Milestones).

The Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 includes the following five pillars which align with our mission and will guide our operations. Goals within each pillar are summarized below and include alignment with Institutional Priorities identified in Buffalo State's Self-Study Design.

Pillar 1: Commitment to Access, Equity, Social Justice, and Belonging

Buffalo State recognizes and celebrates the diversity of our students and is committed to growing and developing a welcoming and equity-minded culture in which our students can learn. Pillar 1 aligns with Institutional Priority 3, Serving as an Anchor Institution which prioritizes our commitment to enhancing opportunities to develop and support inclusively aware citizens. Pillar 1 also aligns with Institutional Priority 4, Academic and Creative Excellence which presents our commit to academic and creative excellence through socially just, reflective, and collaborative actions, policies, and practices.

Pillar 2: The Land We Occupy as an Urban-Engaged Anchor Campus

Buffalo State takes pride in our community and our civic-engaged campus. We strive to provide curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities, develop civic skills, and build reciprocal community partnerships that promote equity and address community-identified priorities. We commit to expanding upon and strengthening community-based research and scholarship, sustainable experiential, high-impact practice learning opportunities in our communities, and respond to partnership opportunities. Further, we commit to ensuring that community partnership data and feedback is used in assessment, academic planning, and institutional decision-making. Pillar 2 directly aligns with Institutional Priority 3: Serving as an Anchor Institution as we enhance opportunities for campus and community members to serve the City of Buffalo as active, inclusively aware citizens.

Pillar 3: A Shared Vision for Student Success

Our campus community will commit to continuously improving upon our understanding of our students and adapt and respond to their changing needs. We will accomplish this by supporting and creating clear pathways to unique and innovative programs, enhance opportunities for student involvement on campus, and monitor and respond to our students' sense of safety including their physical and emotional well-being, and empower students to self-advocate. We intend to strengthen data stewardship and practices and create innovative, efficient, and effective data strategies that lead to an outstanding educational experience for our students. Pillar 3 aligns with Institutional Priority 2: Student retention, support, and success where we will improve student success as measured by students we admit, engage, retain, and graduate.



Pillar 4: Professional Success for Faculty and Staff

We will celebrate the accomplishments of our exceptional faculty and staff and commit to addressing strategies to support and enhance their work. We commit to striving for excellence and fostering a positive campus atmosphere. Buffalo State will increase professional development opportunities that are relevant to our campus community and support work in serving our students, promote collaboration across campus, increase recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds, and acknowledge and reward faculty and staff for their exceptional work. Pillar 4 aligns with our Institutional Priorities on several levels, as supporting our faculty and staff in their ability to serve our students within a positive campus atmosphere will impact our success in all Priorities identified at the onset of the development of the Self-Study.

Pillar 5: Sustainability for a Better Future

During Buffalo State's 150-year history, we have demonstrated remarkable flexibility, creativity, and ingenuity. We recognize that while recent global pandemic challenges have affected all, our population of current and potential students has most significantly felt the burden of recent global events. The Buffalo State community commits to developing plans that are fiscally responsible, align with institutional priorities, follow best practices, and are environmentally responsible. Pillar 5 aligns with Institutional Priority 1: Long-term Viability as Buffalo State prioritizes decision-making to ensure the sustainability of the college's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.

ALIGNMENT WITH SUNY'S STRATEGIC PLANS

[S1.C2] Buffalo State's role as a comprehensive university within the SUNY system is to provide access to affordable, high-quality education and address local, regional, and state goals. As is the case with all SUNY institutions, Buffalo State operates with guidance of SUNY's mission and strategic plan, the Power of SUNY. The plan's three central themes, "To Learn, To Search, To Serve" are carried through in Buffalo State's mission which highlights our commitment to intellectual, personal, and professional growth of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni and our desire to inspire a lifelong passion for learning. Further, Buffalo State has dedicated itself to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment. These elements were embedded into Buffalo State's 2016 – 2021 Strategic Plan, and in the recent 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan's pillars and goals. As the Academic Affairs plan is currently in development, elements will continue to be defined at an operational level.

In 2018, SUNY identified four themes that comprised SUNY's vision for all campuses. They included Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Individualized Education, Sustainability, and Partnerships. Buffalo State's 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan addresses SUNY's vision in Pillar One: Commitment to Access, Social Justice, and Belonging, Pillar Two: The Land we Occupy as an Urban-Engaged Anchor Campus, Pillar Three: A Shared Vision for Student Success, and Pillar Five: Sustainability for a Better Future (S1.C2 NYS Education Law Title 1 Article 8 Section 351; S1.C2 SUNY Press Release September 14 2018 – Vision and Themes; S1.C2 SUNY Strategic Plan 2010; S1.C2 SUNY Mission)

INTEGRATION OF MISSION AND GOALS IN CAMPUS OPERATIONS

[S1.C3] President Conway-Turner frequently addresses the campus community in State of the College, Opening Year Addresses, and various other forums throughout the year. The president's speeches and messages are made available to the campus community and the general public on the President's Office Speeches and Messages website. The president's communications to the campus community address institutional achievements, challenges, and strategic-level initiatives (S1.C3 President's Office Speeches and Messages).

At the divisional, department, office, and unit level, faculty and staff identify how annual assessment plans align with the university's mission. Some examples include the following:

- Academic Affairs: Academic excellence and a student-centered approach go hand-in-hand. Our mission is to transform lives through the power of education; our faculty and staff are dedicated to providing the highest quality academic programming both in and outside the classroom. We are a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of knowledge in diverse academic fields but all with the same purpose—to prepare our students to become engaged, successful citizens in an increasingly complex world.



- The Division of Student Affairs is committed to the cultivation and enhancement of student learning, development, and student success through the provision of student-centered programs and services that contribute to the intellectual, social, and cultural growth of our students.
- The School of the Professions is a diverse community that expects its members to think creatively and critically, act responsibly, and lead effectively. Building on these defining qualities, the school transforms students through academic excellence and experiential learning.
- The Great Lakes Center (GLC) mission is to improve the quality of the environment by providing comprehensive and up-to-date science to enhance and sustain the ecological function of the Great Lakes' ecosystems into the future.
- The Maurene Callahan Bouras Center for Global Engagement is home to the International Student and Scholar Services, Study Away (International Education), and the Intensive English Language Institute, as well as the Center for China Studies and the Sponsored International Programs office. The office's mission is to provide leadership for the comprehensive internationalization of the Buffalo State community by fostering the growth and development of our international programs and services. By leading the charge for campus internationalization—where immersive cultural experiences both locally and globally impact students' abilities to respectfully engage with and learn from difference—we can meet the challenges of a globally connected society and be good citizens and stewards of the world.
- The Recognizing Opportunities Achieving Results program (ROAR) provides advocacy and customized support to first-year students. This effort is designed to ensure that first-year students have what they need to be successful, which aligns with the university's mission to empower students to succeed.
- The Department of Hospitality's mission is to educate and develop proven hospitality professionals by integrating a strong core curriculum with a deliberate emphasis on experiential learning. The department is defined by its extraordinary focus on student development and is firmly grounded in producing graduates that excel in communication, teamwork, professionalism, and problem-solving.
- The Office of Human Resources supports and influences the strategic direction of Buffalo State by providing managers and employees with innovative solutions to organizational and human resource issues. The department exists to provide services which help to attract, retain, and reward competent and dedicated faculty and staff who share a commitment to the values of excellence and innovation in teaching, research, and service to students and the community.
- The Residence Life Office supports, complements, and enhances the academic mission of the university by creating a dynamic residential life program that encourages and provides opportunities for individual growth and development for a diverse residential population.
- Information Technology is student-centered and dedicated to delivering customer-centric and data informed technology services to faculty, staff, and students, in support of the university's mission.

DISSEMINATION OF THE OF MISSION AND GOALS TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

[S1.C1f] Buffalo State's mission and vision statements are prominently placed on the university's website. The Handbook for Faculty and Librarians also references mission, vision, and value statements. The Undergraduate Admissions Office website links prospective and current students to the mission, vision, and values. Campus-wide presentations also typically present the university's mission.

ASSESSMENT OF MISSION AND GOALS

[S1.C4] Our mission, vision, and values guide our activities at Buffalo State. Annual assessment plans create a mechanism to determine the extent to which the mission is achieved at all levels of the university. Assessment plans require identification of unit and program alignment with our mission as well as identification of the outcomes that follow from the mission. This process was initiated in 2017 with the adoption of a software platform and continues to be in operation for annual reporting purposes (See Standard 5).



FINDINGS

- Buffalo State has a clearly defined mission, vision, and goals developed collaboratively by faculty, staff, and students and approved by the governing body.
- The mission is publicized internally and externally and guides the campus community in making decisions.
- The mission is central to strategic planning, which outlines what we need to accomplish for the success of our students.
- Assessment processes align with our mission and support our effectiveness in achieving the university's goals.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- Considering that the current mission has been in place since 2003, it would be in the university's best interest to review the current mission after a new president is in place in 2023.
- Although the university demonstrates commitment to the mission, it is recommended that the mission be prominently displayed in common areas of the campus.





STANDARD 2

STANDARD 2: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

This section describes the ways Buffalo State meets the eight criteria and sub-criteria of Standard 2.

Buffalo State University demonstrates ongoing commitment to advancing ethics and integrity in policies and procedures across the campus. Academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights are addressed at the campus level and at the State University of New York (SUNY) system level. The campus community values the importance of sustaining a positive campus climate and recognizes this as an opportunity for improvement. Grievance policies are in place for students and employees, with procedures in place to promote fair and impartial grievance and appeal processes. Communications with internal and external stakeholders are truthful, relevant, and occur in a timely manner. Buffalo State has put effort into maintaining affordability for students as state funding has steadily declined. Providing students with individualized guidance regarding financial aid options and responsibilities is a component of maintaining affordability for our students.

ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

[S2.C1] Buffalo State is committed to academic and intellectual freedom and freedom of expression. We adhere to guidance put forth in SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees, Title I, Academic Freedom. These policies are reiterated in the Buffalo State Handbook for Faculty and Librarians and Article 9 of United University Professions Contract (S2.C1 SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees - Academic Freedom; S2.C1 Handbook for Faculty and Librarians - For Faculty and Librarians, Responsibilities & Personnel Matters, scroll to Academic Freedom; S2.C1 United University Professions Contract, p. 12).

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

[S2.C1] SUNY provides guidelines to ensure that policies are in place to support freedom of expression for faculty, staff, and students in SUNY Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order, Section I.E. In addition, the university has developed its own policies and procedures guiding free speech of the campus community and reiterated its commitment during a critical time in our nation and our Buffalo community. In May 2021, President Conway-Turner and the College's Chief Diversity Officer set the tone for freedom of expression in a campus-wide Daily Bulletin article to faculty and staff which presented the campus' ongoing commitment to freedom of speech. The Dean of Students Office offers additional information to students covering the full range of policies and procedures that relate to free speech. Policies include maintenance of public order, facilities access, and use of facilities as a public forum. Faculty who serve as the university's "free speech experts" are listed on the Dean of Students website with their contact information (S2.C1 SUNY Policies and Procedures - Maintenance of Public Order; S2.C1 Daily Bulletin May 28 2021 - Freedom of Speech; S2.C1 Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS) VII.05.00 - Maintenance of Public Order; S2.C1 Administrative Policy Library - Facilities Access Policy; S2.C1 Administrative Policy Library - Use of Facilities as a Public Forum).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

[S2.C1] Buffalo State adheres to the SUNY Board of Trustees' guidance on intellectual property rights as outlined in SUNY Policies and Procedures: Title J—Patents, Inventions, and Copyright Policy, which is cited in the College's Handbook for Faculty and Librarians (S2.C1 SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees - Intellectual Property; S2.C1 Handbook for Faculty and Librarians - For Faculty and Librarians, Scholarship Research Creativity, Sponsored Programs, scroll to Intellectual Property).

INTEGRITY IN ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

[S2.C1] Academic integrity policies are clearly presented to students in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs where academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and falsifying academic materials are defined. In addition, all course syllabi should provide a statement that directs students to the Academic Misconduct Policy. A statement outlining formal university policies and procedures to be followed in cases of alleged academic misconduct will be on file in each dean's office, in the Academic Standards Office, and in the Student Life Office. (S2.C1 Academic Catalog, Undergraduate, Academic Policies, Academic Misconduct; S2.C1 Academic Catalog, Graduate, Academic Policies, Academic Misconduct)



CAMPUS CLIMATE

At Buffalo State, we believe that social justice is the undeniable human right to dignity, equity, and full participation in society.

–Center for Social Justice Report 2021

[S2.C2] President Conway-Turner has prioritized justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all levels of campus operations. In 2021, the president charged the Institutional Planning Advisory Committee (IPAC) to begin its work in developing a new strategic plan. The charge clearly states a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and these priorities were included in the focus areas (Pillars and Goals) of the new strategic plan (S2.C2 President’s Strategic Plan Charge; S2.C2 Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026).

In 2021, the Social Justice Subcommittee of the President’s Council on Equity and Campus Diversity completed a thorough report which included recommendations for Buffalo State to begin foundational work of establishment of a Center for Social Justice. The report included recommendations addressing campus infrastructure, social justice-centered curriculum and co-curriculum, and the importance of community partnerships (S2.C2 Center for Social Justice Report).

Buffalo State received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. The recognition in 2020 marked the eighth consecutive year that the university had received this national honor for demonstrating outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. Ongoing programming and activities that specifically led to Buffalo State receiving HEED recognition included establishing an undergraduate program in Africana Studies, an interdisciplinary field that examines the contributions of Africa and the peoples of the Black Diaspora to the global community. The Diversity Dialogue Speakers Series has gained a reputation for combining the use of interactive activities and dialogues as a means for participants to discuss issues of diversity, inclusion, conflict, and social justice, bringing together Buffalo State’s students, faculty, and staff. The Beyond Boundaries: Dare to Be Diverse film series is in its sixth year at Buffalo State and represents a partnership between the Equity and Campus Diversity Office, Communications Department, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center. This six-part film series is organized around categories of diversity including, but not limited to, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and abilities, with an emphasis on intersectionality. Buffalo State’s Anne Frank Project (AFP) uses the power of stories as vehicles for community building, conflict management, and identity exploration. Inspired by the wisdom of Anne Frank, AFP surfaces, develops, and shares stories stifled by oppression. Buffalo State has established the George Floyd Memorial Scholarship to uplift future African American leaders who support racial justice and equity efforts in their communities. The endowed scholarship aims to provide one incoming first-year student a \$10,000 scholarship that will be renewable over four years (S2.C2 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity HEED Award 2020; S2.C2 Africana Studies Program; S2.C2 Equity and Diversity Programs; S2.C2 Anne Frank Project; S2.C2 George Floyd Memorial Scholarship Press Release).

CAMPUS CLIMATE: STUDENTS

Providing high-quality educational experiences to diverse groups of students has been a long-standing priority for the university. Over the last ten years, however, Buffalo State has experienced a significant shift in student demographics. In 2012, undergraduate students of color comprised 31.4% of the total student population. In 2022, the percentage increased to 52.9%. Support programs offered to our diverse populations of students are presented throughout Standard 4.

The SUNY Student Opinion Survey is administered to all SUNY undergraduate students every three years, except for 2021. Results from the most recent survey administered in 2018 indicated that over 81% of students felt as though their academic experiences met or

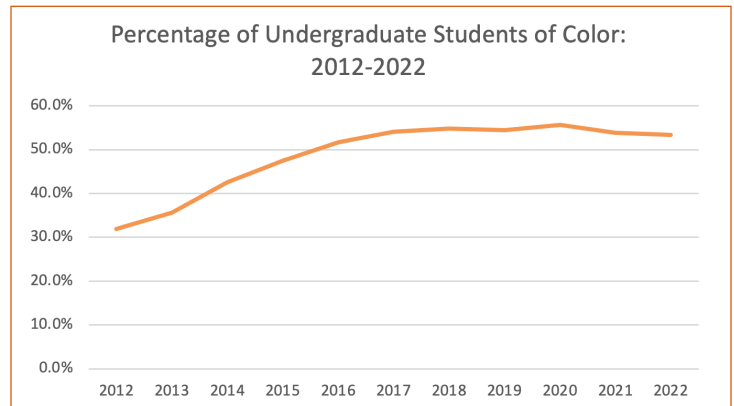


Figure 2.1 Percentage of Students of Color. Source: Institutional Research



exceeded their expectations. In addition, 91% of students indicated that they plan to graduate from Buffalo State. Among the top-rated survey items as compared to 11 other SUNY University Colleges included students' reporting of campus openness to opinions of others and racial harmony on campus. The next SUNY Opinion Survey will be administered in spring 2023.

First-year and senior students participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a three-year cycle. In 2020, 412 first year (31% response rate) and 461 senior students (37% response rate) rated their experiences at the university to be at or above peer comparison groups across all ten engagement indicator categories. Results from both surveys are available to the public on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning's website (S2.C2 SUNY Student Opinion Survey SOS Summary Report 2018, pp. 1, 2, 12; S2.C2 National Survey of Student Engagement NSSE Snapshot Report 2020, p. 1).

CAMPUS CLIMATE: FACULTY AND STAFF

In spring 2020, the President's Institutional Innovation Advisory Council (IIAC), in collaboration with ModernThink LLC, administered the Campus Culture and Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey to better understand Buffalo State's collective workplace, campus culture, employee engagement and satisfaction, and how these factors impact institutional performance. The survey results were shared in November 2020 following months of work by subcommittees on campus to organize the qualitative and quantitative data from the survey. The survey yielded the perspectives of 928 employees directly (approximately 50% response rate) and feedback from 246 employees who participated in follow-up focus groups. Recommendations from the survey identified "strategic pathways" to be considered in future strategic planning. These included 1) organizational agility, 2) pathways for innovation, 3) institutional effectiveness planning, and 4) employee engagement and satisfaction. The recommendations were carefully considered as the 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan was developed and will continue to support work currently in progress at divisional and departmental levels. The results of the study have been a frequent topic of conversation among faculty and staff who await specific action to be taken from the results. Buffalo State will administer the Campus Culture and Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey again in 2024 (S2.C2 Campus Culture and Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Study Report).

Buffalo State recognizes the importance of every member of our campus community having opportunities to work, study, live, and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds. However, as of academic year 2020-2021, approximately 28% of full-time faculty were persons of color. In an effort to increase the diversity of our faculty, the university has participated in the hiring of four faculty members as a part of SUNY's Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (PRODiG) initiative which aims to increase the representation of historically underrepresented faculty at SUNY campuses. Buffalo State also offers Provost Fellows to promising individuals who may fit a need in an existing program. These fellows are on two-year visiting lecture lines and have a two-year contract. Recent Provost Fellows include faculty from Fashion, Textile, & Design and Biology. The local PRODiG committee meets with Provost fellows and PRODiG fellows in the fall and spring semesters. In addition, the Office of Human Resources is intentional in advertising available positions to diverse audiences (S2.C2 Campus Culture and Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Study Report, pp. 21-22).

CAMPUS CLIMATE: INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

[S2.C2] The Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) manages mandatory workplace Title IX sexual harassment prevention training for all employees including student employees. In addition, OED maintains a webpage that provides resources related to Affirmative Action and several other policies such as Consensual Sex and Amorous Relations Policy, Disability Related Discrimination Policy, Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation Policy, Non-discrimination Policy for Veterans, Discrimination Based on National Origin Policy, and Discrimination Based on Religion Policy. OED also maintains a Students' Bill of Rights page that provides information and resources. The university complies with federal and New York State Education Law by conducting sexual violence prevention and campus climate surveys and posting results to our campus community (S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Affirmative Action; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Consensual Sex and Amorous Relations; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Disability Related Discrimination; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Non-Discrimination for Veterans; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Discrimination Based on National Origin; S2.C2 Administrative Policy Library - Discrimination Based on Religion; S2.C2 Student Bill of Rights; S2.C2 New York State Education Law Title 7 Article 129-B Section 6445 Campus Climate Assessments; S2.C2 New York State Education Law Title 7 Article 129-B).



GRIEVANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[S2.C3] In a continuing effort to seek equity in education and employment, Buffalo State has adopted a complaint procedure for the prompt and equitable investigation and resolution of allegations of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status, or marital status. Two specific policies, one that addresses complaints of discrimination and another that relates to sexual violence response are located on the Office of Equity and Diversity's (OED) website. Instructions for employees and students to file a complaint under Title IX are also managed and made available by the OED. Additional Grievance procedures for faculty and staff are outlined in the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Disciplinary Manual, the United University Professions Contract, and the SUNY Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure. Students can access information on academic appeal processes in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and on the Office of Academic Standard's webpage (S2.C3 Equity and Diversity Grievance Procedure; S2.C3 Equity and Diversity Discrimination Complaint Procedure; S2.C3 Administrative Policy Library - Sexual Violence Response; S2.C3 Equity and Diversity Title IX Compliance; S2.C3 Civil Service Employees Association CSEA Disciplinary Manual; S2.C3 United University Professions UUP Contract, pp. 7-11; S2.C3 SUNY Policies and Procedures - Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure; S2.C3 Academic Catalog, Undergraduate, Academic Policies, Student Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals; S2.C3 Academic Catalog, Graduate, Academic Policies, Student Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals; S2.C3 Academic Standards Academic Standing Review).

AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

[S2.C4] There are several safeguards in place at Buffalo State related to conflicts of interest, all of which are governed by SUNY and the State of New York. Research Foundation Conflict of Interest disclosures and conflict of interest management is facilitated by the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration via the Pre-Award and Compliance System (PACS). All Investigators on sponsored projects are required to annually review and update their conflict-of-interest Annual Disclosure Certification. Conflict-of-interest training is required every four years (S2.C4 SUNY Research Foundation Conflict of Interest Policy; S2.C4 SUNY Research Foundation Code of Conduct).

Procurement Services Code of Ethics requirements align with New York State procurement policies and SUNY's purchasing policies (S2.C4 New York State Procurement Guidelines; S2.C4 SUNY Procurement Policies and Procedures).

New York State Executive Law section 94 (joint commission on public ethics; functions, powers and duties; review of financial disclosure statements; advisory opinions; and investigation and enforcement), Public Officers Law section 73 (business or professional activities by state officers and employees and party officers), Public Officers Law section 74 (code of ethics), and Civil Service Law section 107 (commission on ethics and lobbying in government) govern Buffalo State's activities regarding ethics and conflicts of interest. In addition, the Ethics Reform Act of 2022 that was recently enacted as part of the 2022-23 state budget, established the New York State Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government to provide oversight as well as guidance and information for all public employees (S2.C4 New York State Executive Law Section 94; S2.C4 New York State Public Officers Law Section 73; S2.C4 New York State Public Officers Law Section 74; S2.C4 New York State Civil Service Law Section 107).

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES

[S2.C5] The Office of Human Resource Management provides public website information regarding policies and procedures for appointments, hiring procedures, evaluation, discipline, and separation of employees. Faculty and professional appointments must be made in accordance with SUNY policy. For employees represented by United University Professions (UUP) and Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), policies and procedures are clearly outlined in collective bargaining agreements. All positions for classified, faculty, professional, and graduate assistant vacancies are routed through PeopleAdmin, Buffalo State's Applicant Tracking System. Search committee procedures from approval of position release through completion of the applicant form are provided in Buffalo State's Guide to Effective Administrative, Faculty, and Staff Searches. As a part of this process, the Office of Equity and Diversity monitors, implements, and evaluates federal, state, and SUNY policies regarding Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action requirements (S2.C5 Human Resource Management - Appointments and Hiring Procedures; S2.C5 Administrative Policy Library - Personnel Transactions; S2.C5 Administrative Policy Library - Pre-Employment Background Screening; S2.C5 SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees - Equal Opportunity; S2.C5 United University



Professions UUP Contract, p. 13; S2.C5 Civil Service Employees Association CSEA Administrative Services Unit Contract, pp. 80-81; S2.C5 Guide to Effective Administrative, Faculty and Staff Searches).

In fall 2020, President Conway-Turner emphasized the importance of supervisors to provide “... honest and constructive feedback to their staff members to assist them in addressing any performance issues, and to provide positive commentary where appropriate to motivate and encourage excellent performance.” These elements are included in the university’s Performance Evaluation and Professional Development System (PEPDS) which consists of the review of three components: job description, performance program, performance program, end-of-year evaluation, and an optional mid-year discussion. Details regarding the PEPDS process and training materials associated with the process can be found on the Office of Human Resources’ website (S2.C5 Daily Bulletin September 17, 2020 - Performance Evaluations; S2.C5 PEPDS Job Description; S2.C5 PEPDS Performance Program; S2.C5 PEPDS Performance Evaluation; S2.C5 PEPDS Mid-year Discussion).

In 2021, SUNY University Faculty Senate called upon SUNY campuses to institute a 360 review of campus administrators. Buffalo State College Senate endorsed the resolution, and implementation of the review process began in the Office of Professional Development (S2.C5 SUNY Faculty Senate 360 Review Resolution).

HONESTY IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

[S2.C6] The Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) oversees communication standards and policies which are in place to cover any message or product representing Buffalo State that is directed at an internal or external audience. The policies cover brochures and advertisements, reports and letters, websites and new media, and are in place to help ensure that the university presents itself in an accurate, clear, and consistent manner. Web page policies must not violate state or federal law or any campus policy, or feature obscene, harassing, or discriminatory content; or contain any other inappropriate information. In addition, web pages must meet Section 508 accessibility standards. Communications staff are available to assist faculty and staff members in achieving news coverage for appropriate events, conferences, achievements, or grants through a variety of methods such as press releases and media alerts. The Communications Team within OMC offers media training for administrators, faculty, and staff to prepare for interactions with the news media. In response to the significant increase in the use of social media, the OMC web page Social Media as a Communication Tool, provides guidelines, procedures, accessibility requirements, strategy guidance, and maintenance of social media content.

OMC manages publication of *1300 Elmwood: The Magazine for Alumni and Friends of Buffalo State College* as well as the *Daily Bulletin*, the campus-wide communication for faculty and staff. The OMC collaborates with undergraduate and graduate admissions in managing content directed toward potential students.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) website provides detailed information regarding student enrollment, graduation and retention rates, and diversity of our student population. Reports and dashboards created and supported by OIR are available to the public (S2.C6 Marketing and Communication Standards and Policies; S2.C6 Institutional Research).

[S2.C9] Assessment of the university’s effectiveness in communicating to internal and external stakeholders takes place regularly. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) continuously makes updates, changes, and creates customized dashboards in response to internal stakeholder needs. OIR reports activities through their unit annual assessment report.

After two campus-wide emergencies took place during spring 2022, a survey was sent to all faculty and staff requesting feedback regarding their awareness of emergency protocols and their opinions of the communications they received during and after the incidences. Results were compiled and updates and improvements were made to the university’s Emergency Response Plan. During the President’s Leadership Retreat in June 2022, one topic for discussion was the current emergency response plan and how well it was communicated throughout our campus community. Feedback was collected to identify opportunities to improve emergency communication strategies within our community (S2.C9 Emergency Response Plan).



ACCESSIBILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

[S2.C7a] Buffalo State clearly identifies its position on accessibility. As presented with our mission, vision, and values statements, the university presents the first value statement as, “We, the Buffalo State community are committed to actively facilitating access to public higher education.” Buffalo State has consistently been recognized for its commitment to helping economically disadvantaged students become more upwardly mobile. In its first five years of inclusion in CollegeNET’s Social Mobility Index (SMI), Buffalo State rose 100 positions, ranking 132nd in 2016, 102nd in 2017, 82nd in 2018, and 32nd in 2019. Last year, in 2021, it ranked 34th in the index. In addition, Buffalo State ranks highest among schools within the State University of New York (SUNY) system and continues to be the highest-ranked four-year institution in Western New York. Buffalo State also scored well in another national ranking of college social mobility and affordability. In its 2022 assessment of top performers, U.S. News and World Report ranked Buffalo State 20th out of 171 colleges and universities in the North Region for social mobility. For the last five consecutive years, Washington Monthly magazine included Buffalo State in its Best Bang for the Buck: Northeast list, a compilation of colleges and universities that offer the most valuable and economically friendly degree programs. Buffalo State has consistently placed among the list’s top 100 four-year colleges and universities. The publication also recognized Buffalo State in its 2020 and 2021 Master’s University Rankings, placing the university in the top 100 spot among over 600 institutions.

Buffalo State is committed to keeping the university experience affordable for our students, even as the university operates with limited state funding. Overall, among the thirteen four-year colleges within the SUNY system, Buffalo State offers students a competitive price of tuition and fees in Western New York. Tuition and broad-based fee rates for SUNY campuses are determined by the SUNY Board of Trustees with limits set by the New York State legislature (S2.C7a SUNY Policies and Procedures - Tuition Schedule; S2.C7a Social Mobility Index 2022 - College Rankings by CollegeNET; S2.C7a US News and World Report College Ranking - Buffalo State; S2.C7a Washington Monthly 2021 Best Bang for the Buck Rankings - Northeast; S2.C7a Washington Monthly 2021 Masters Rankings).

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) provides information and counseling to students who qualify for the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), New York State Excelsior Scholarship Program, Campus Application Portal for Scholarships (CAPS), and the SUNY Tuition Credit (S2.C7a New York State Tuition Assistance Program TAP; S2.C7a New York State Excelsior Scholarship Program; S2.C7a Campus Application Portal for Scholarships CAPS; S2.C7a SUNY CUNY Tuition Credit Calculations).

[S2.C7b] Buffalo State supports students in their understanding of financial aid options and developing financial literacy that will inform their decisions as a student and beyond. Financial aid specialists in the Financial Aid Office (FAO) are available to work directly with students. Additional information for students and their families is located on FAO’s website where tools such as Financial Aid 101, cost calculators, grant and scholarship information, a financial aid guide which is offered in Spanish and English, and other information can be found. In an effort to deliver a best-in-class financial education opportunity to all students, SUNY partnered with the Inceptia Financial Avenue program. Financial Avenue is a series of 10 online courses based on the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Financial Literacy and Education Commission’s financial education core competencies. The content is delivered in a combination of text, graphics, and video in a unique, student-facing approach. Throughout the experience, students identify their personal money philosophy, gain knowledge of key personal finance concepts from budgeting to investing, and come away from each course with a customized action plan to translate concepts into behaviors. Students also strengthen their understanding of topics specific to student borrowers (S2.C7b Financial Aid; S2.C7b SUNY Financial Avenue – Smart Track).

COMPLIANCE WITH REPORTING POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

[S2.C8] Buffalo State complies with all federal, state, and SUNY-mandated reporting. The Offices of Institutional Research, Finance and Management, and Financial Aid are major contributors in required reporting. Staff within these offices are guided by internal policies and procedures and strive for a high degree of accuracy and timeliness in their reporting.

[S2.C8a, C8b, C8c and C8d] As required by federal law 34 CFR 668.43 and New York State Law 8 NYCRR Part 53, the university follows requirements regarding the disclosure of student consumer information on our website. This includes retention and graduation rates and pass rates on New York State



Teacher Certification Examinations. In addition, MSCHE requirements have been met. As a part of the accreditation review process, the Institutional Federal Compliance Report has been completed. The university has no substantive changes to report. (S2.C8 SUNY Student Consumer Information and Disclosures; S2.C8a Common Data Set; S2.C8a Common Data Set 2022-2023; S2.C8 New York State Teacher Certification Score Performance Data - 2020-21 Cohort; S2.C8 Institutional Federal Compliance Report).

[S2.C9] Ongoing assessment processes related to Standard II are embedded in the criteria above.

FINDINGS

- Academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights are a priority at the university, with campus and SUNY policies in place and information available to students, staff, and faculty.
- Fostering a climate of respect has been a long-standing priority. Buffalo State has been recognized in its efforts to create a culture of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusiveness, and weaves these priorities throughout institutional planning initiatives.
- Grievance policies for students, faculty, and staff are established and available for the campus community, including those who are represented by negotiated contracts.
- Conflict of interest policies and procedures are clearly documented, align with negotiated contracts, and are available to the campus community.
- Hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation policies are well-documented and available to the campus community.
- Campus communications are transparent, timely, and accessible. The college provides online support and individual counseling to students regarding their financial aid options with the goal of keeping their costs as low as possible.
- Buffalo State maintains records of its compliance with all required reporting policies.
- Assessment processes throughout the college track opportunities to improve upon practices and procedures.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- Results from the Campus Climate Survey should be included in planning initiatives, and progress toward meeting Campus Climate Survey goals and objectives should be presented to the campus community.
- While the university can expect participation in SUNY's Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth (PRODiG) initiative to increase the number of faculty of color, additional opportunities should be identified and supported by the university.



STANDARD 3: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

This section describes Buffalo State’s ability to satisfy Standard III criteria and sub criteria and *Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, 10, and 15.*

Buffalo State is comprised of three academic schools: School of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, School of the Professions, as well as the Office of Graduate Studies. They are connected by a common general education program, Intellectual Foundations, and offer a full range of academic programs in their areas of study with 36 academic departments. Buffalo State prides itself on the many opportunities for students and faculty across disciplines to engage in learning that promotes service, scholarship, teaching, research, creativity, and cultural enrichment. The university is committed to advancing student learning through high-quality teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity across a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

Buffalo State aspires to be a nationally recognized leader in public higher education known for its caring and rigorous academic environment where lives are transformed through education; the intellectual and creative accomplishments of its faculty, staff, students, and alumni; and its cross-culturally competent community dedicated to developing leaders for an increasingly global society.

The Buffalo State community is committed to actively facilitating access to public higher education; excellent learning experiences in and out of the classroom; being student centered; the rigors, joys, and fulfillment of intellectual discovery; engagement, applied learning, and partnerships with the community; social responsibility; respect for diversity and individual differences; supportive and collegial relationships; opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential.

Average class sizes for undergraduate students support engagement in classroom learning with about 87% of classes with fewer than 30 students and 93% of classes with fewer than 40 students in 2021.

| UNDERGRADUATE CLASS SIZE | FALL 2017 | FALL 2018 | FALL 2019 | FALL 2020 | FALL 2021 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Percentage of Undergraduate Classes with Fewer Than 30 Students | 81.4% | 80.6% | 83.6% | 79.7% | 86.7% |
| Percentage of Undergraduate Classes with Fewer Than 40 Students | 92.6% | 91.9% | 94.0% | 90.6% | 93.4% |

Figure 3.1 Undergraduate Class Size. Source: Institutional Research

STUDENT LEARNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

[S3.C1] The institutional policies for program and curriculum development are explicitly stated in several Curriculum Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS) policies that align with SUNY and New York State Education Department (NYSED) expectations. The collective policies describe a comprehensive process to guide the strategic growth of new programs that are well designed with specific student learning outcomes. The rigorous program approval process and systematic review of programs by faculty ensures that proposed degree and certificate programs are strategic, relevant, and completion requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for program completion. All bachelor’s degree programs at Buffalo State require a minimum of 120 credits that include the general education requirements and at least one major program of study (S3.C1 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS - Curriculum; S3.C1 Academic Catalog, Undergraduate, Academic Policies, Graduation Requirements).



Master's programs consist of a minimum of 30 credits in a focused field of study. Advanced Certificate programs require completion of 12 to 18 credits, except for the following post master's certificate programs in Teacher Leader (10), Educational Leadership Building (33), and Educational Leadership Building & District (38). Microcredentials offered at Buffalo State verify, validate, and attest that associated specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. Buffalo State recognizes four types of microcredentials in the DOPS policy. They can be credit or non-credit bearing and stackable. They are developed through the university's established faculty governance processes and designed to be meaningful and high quality (S3.C1 Academic Catalog, Graduate, Academic Requirements; S3.C1 Academic Catalog, Graduate, Academic Policies, Microcredentials; S3.C1 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:18:00 - Microcredentials).

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[S3.C1] As a comprehensive university in the SUNY system, Buffalo State offers more than 75 undergraduate academic programs designed to foster students' intellectual, personal, and professional growth. In addition to disciplinary majors, our Individualized Studies B.S. program provides students with a vehicle to design their own unique programs of study, which is particularly attractive to working adults and students on non-traditional education paths. Our interdisciplinary units and centers allow students to study a broad range of knowledge in cultural, identity, political, social, and industrial contexts. Our concentrations within majors add depth and breadth to students' respective programs of study. Individual program descriptions in the Undergraduate Catalog contain specific degree requirements for all majors, minors, and certificates.

As another option to offer cross-disciplinary learning opportunities, we create structures for undergraduates to pursue double majors and dual degrees and minors and certificate programs. As part of the SUNY system, Buffalo State students can cross-register at other SUNY schools to enhance or customize their learning experiences. The SUNY Cross Registration Agreement articulates course equivalencies so that courses students take at other SUNY campuses count towards graduation. Similarly, our Study Away programs allow students to participate in SUNY-approved national and international exchanges and ensure that the credits they earn will count towards timely graduation at Buffalo State.

We encourage our undergraduate students to pursue education outside the classroom through internships, field work, and community based and experiential learning experiences throughout our Buffalo community. Our students pursuing education careers participate in supervised and supported student-teaching. Recognizing that underserved and marginalized student populations have fewer inside connections within their career paths, we encourage students to participate in internship programs to develop professional skills and connections in many fields.

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

[S3.C3 and C4] The Collegewide Degree Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees policy outlines requirements that students must meet in order to graduate. Degree works, our degree audit system, tracks student progress toward achievement of graduation requirements. Information is recorded and up to date. The Advisement Policy outlines advisement requirements for students to help ensure students receive support when selecting and registering for courses within their chosen degree program. Programs with admission and degree requirements are listed in the academic catalog. The Academic Affairs Office in coordination with the Marketing and Communications Office updates website information, including the list of academic programs. Professional and faculty advisers keep Degree Works information accurate and up to date both program-wide for the content of degree requirements and on an individual basis for requirements completed. Though details, coursework, and student learning experiences vary by program, all undergraduate degrees require a capstone course/experience as part of their program of study. Student success via grading and participation in events such as the Student Research and Creativity Conference, and at the graduate level, the Graduate Student Research Fair and Master's Thesis and Projects can also be considered part of the capstone (S3.C3 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I:05:00 – Advisement Policy; S3.C3 Academic Programs; S3.C4 Master's Theses and Projects).

INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS—GENERAL EDUCATION

[S3.C3 and C5b] The Intellectual Foundations program promotes an understanding of the continuity of human history, the depth of inherited knowledge, the validity of diverse modes of inquiry, the value of artistic expression and the richness of our collective experience. The purpose of the Intellectual Foundations Program is to develop the skills and habits of the mind required for a life of intellectual curiosity and civic engagement.



Intellectual Foundations 2014 (IF 14) is the general education, or liberal arts, curriculum at Buffalo State. It encompasses the SUNY General Education Requirements and is designed to provide the intellectual and creative foundations for all educated persons regardless of their chosen profession. IF 14 promotes an understanding of the continuity of human history, the depth of inherited knowledge, the validity of diverse modes of inquiry, the value of artistic expression, and the richness of our collective experience.

The Intellectual Foundations 2014 (IF 14) program constitutes 33-39 of the 120 credit hours necessary for graduation, divided among 11 areas of knowledge and three areas of intellectual skills and competencies. In each of the 11 areas of knowledge, students may select from lists of approved courses. These lists are updated when additional courses are approved for inclusion in the IF 14 program, and only those courses that appear on the list during the semester the student successfully completes those classes may be applied to the IF 14 requirements. The three areas of intellectual skills and competencies (Writing Across the Curriculum, Critical Thinking, and Information Management) are infused in major courses or equivalents (S3.C3, C5b Intellectual Foundations Courses and Requirements).

Beginning in fall 2023, Buffalo State will launch a new general education framework as required by SUNY. The new program includes the following categories: Communication, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice, Mathematics and quantitative reasoning, Natural Sciences and Scientific Reasoning, Humanities, Arts, US History and Civic Engagement, Social Sciences, World History and Global Engagement, and World Languages. The student learning outcomes for each of the categories are similar to those of the current Intellectual Foundations 2014 general education program. Buffalo State continues its work in preparing for the new program.

SUPPORTS FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

[S3.C2d] The Equity and Diversity Office and the Office of Civic and Community Engagement offer a Social Justice Faculty Externship. The externship provides two faculty members per year with an opportunity to develop a relationship with a community partner to create a reciprocal partnership focused on faculty learning, community impact, and curricular change with the goal of increasing student learning regarding equity and social justice in the community (S3.C2d Social Justice Faculty Externship).

[S3.C5a and C5b] The President’s Council on Equity and Campus Diversity works to expand and deepen equity across campus and has several subcommittees focused on priorities articulated by the campus community. The Social Justice Subcommittee created recommendations for a Center for Social Justice (CSJ), articulating our commitment to doing more. The subcommittee defines social justice as the undeniable human right to dignity, equity, and full participation in society, and Buffalo State’s CSJ will intentionally acknowledge and deconstruct historical and current injustices and empower faculty, staff, students, and community members to transform policies, systems, and institutions to be equitable and accessible. Buffalo State will accomplish this through expanded education, research, and community engagement focused on justice and equity. The asset map below presents a partial list of areas of campus that align with the CJS’s priorities.

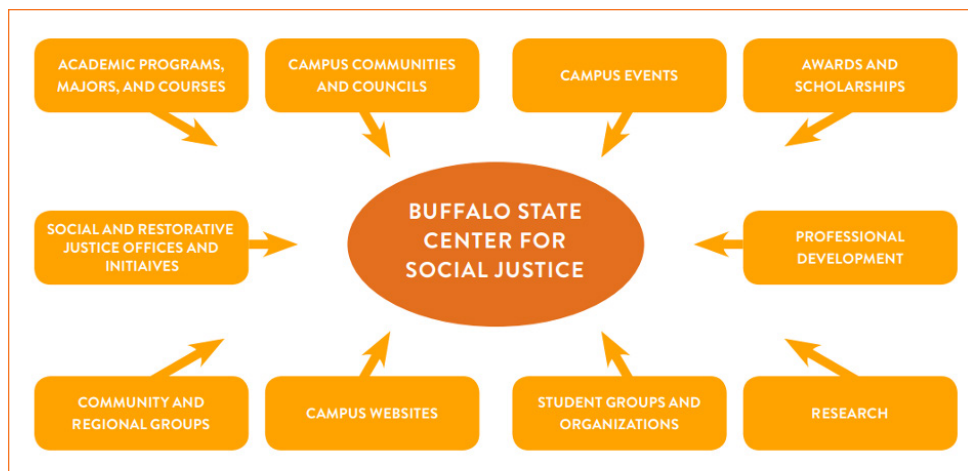


Figure 3.2 Buffalo State Center for Social Justice Asset Map. Source: Social Justice Subcommittee Report Spring 2021



The CSJ is dedicated to serving as a place that empowers students by providing opportunities and resources to lead students to graduation and to provide a space to discuss, explore, learn, and engage in restorative dialogue. In addition, the CSJ will serve our changing students, campus, and local community by leading our urban-engaged institution in promoting social justice for all, as well as providing innovative curriculum in addressing ever-changing social issues. CSJ's priorities and five-year plan are available in the CSJ's 2021 report (S3.C5a, C5b President's Council on Equity and Campus Diversity; S3.C5a, C5b Center for Social Justice 2021 Report).

The Equity and Diversity Office Diversity sponsors a number of programs to advance social justice learning and experiences. The Beyond Boundaries: Dare to be Diverse Film and Discussion Series provides multicultural experiences through documentary films and community conversations for faculty, staff, students, and members of the Buffalo community. The Diversity Dialogue Speaker Series combines interactive activities and dialogues as a means for faculty, staff, students, and community members to discuss issues of diversity, inclusion, conflict, and social justice. The Cultural Café meets monthly and brings together international and domestic members of the Buffalo State community over conversation, culture, and coffee (S3.C5a, C5b Equity and Diversity Programs).

The Office of Inclusion and Equity supports, celebrates, and embraces its campus community differences and experiences and offers faculty, staff, and student supports and services including diversity programming including understanding microaggressions, developing cultural competence, and understanding unconscious bias.

The Restorative Justice Center engages faculty, staff, and students in becoming restorative justice ambassadors who are trained to lead restorative justice circles, invited to participate in restorative justice conferences, and assist with other trainings.

Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project (AFP) uses the power of stories as vehicles for community building, conflict management, and identity exploration. Inspired by the wisdom of Anne Frank, AFP facilitates a three-day Social Justice Festival, Story-Based Learning Training, and Story-Building Workshops for faculty, staff, students, and community members annually, all of which aim to allow story building to improve the world.

Additional website resources including the Social Justice website, which centralizes information and resources on campus and community activities to advance social justice and A Black Lives Matter LibGuide was compiled by a committee of faculty and librarians and includes background on historical and systemic racism and bias, guides to teaching about Black Lives Matter, resources for facilitating discussions about race, and links to other historically relevant collections. (S3.C5a, C5b Butler Library LibGuide - Black Lives Matter).

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

[S3.C4, C5b and C6] As evidenced in the graduate catalog, Buffalo State offers 64 graduate programs in a wide range of disciplines. We boast more graduate education choices than any other SUNY campus, providing graduate students with a variety of learning opportunities that support the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking. Buffalo State offers traditional in-person programs, online programs for working adults, and a growing number of accelerated undergraduate-to-graduate pathways. Our 4+1 accelerated pathways provide students with an opportunity to complete both a bachelor's and a master's degree in just five years, saving tuition and allowing advancement into careers sooner. All graduate degree programs require a project, thesis, internship, comprehensive examination, or defense of graduate portfolio as evidence of mastery of the chosen field.

Individual program descriptions in the Graduate Catalog contain specific degree requirements. For programs that require a thesis, the formal approval process includes reviews by the thesis committee, department/program chair, and the Director of the Office of Graduate Studies prior to being formally posted in Digital Commons. All graduate degree programs comply with the project, thesis, comprehensive exam, or defense of graduate portfolio requirement. Master's Project Guidelines and Thesis Guidelines are located on the Office of Graduate Studies' website. Requirements for a master's degree are listed in DOPS Policy I:04:03. Requirements and standards for comprehensive examinations and defense of graduate portfolios are set by each individual program. Individual programs are responsible for setting the criteria for completion. Verification is required for degree conferrals (S3.C4, C5b, C6 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I:04:03 - Collegewide Degree Requirements for Master's Degrees; S3.C3 Academic Catalog, Graduate, Academic Requirements).

Graduate programs at Buffalo State offer many opportunities for the development and presentation of research and scholarship. They include thesis and/or capstone projects in the program of study, opportunities to present their research to the faculty and students in their programs and at local, regional, or



national conferences, university or grant-funded graduate assistantships that allow students to assist faculty with their research and/or other scholarly projects, formal or informal faculty-mentoring programs in which faculty members work with students on research projects tied to course curriculum in their courses, internship, practicums, and clinical experiences. Among the array of opportunities are the Graduate Research Fair, Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium, Student Research and Creativity Conference, Professional Development Schools (PDS) Conference, and Applied Learning.

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

[S3.C1] The Office of International Graduate Programs for Educators (IGPE) at Buffalo State facilitates the offering of a Master of Science in Multidisciplinary Studies for educators working at American/International Schools. The Multidisciplinary Studies Program is designed for individuals with unique professional and educational objectives not readily met by traditional master's degree programs. International/American school partners collaborate with the Buffalo State IGPE office to develop professional development and master's degree opportunities for educators abroad. Together, partners work to arrange schedules and any logistics for IGPE instructors to provide customized program curriculum and professional development workshops at the host school. The flexible and collaborative approach facilitates the design of a program that aligns with the school's professional development initiatives and the faculty's specific needs. International teachers and administrators at IGPE partner with host schools to complete coursework on-site. The master's degree program is provided by university faculty and hosted by American/International schools for cohorts of education professionals. The entire program requires ten courses that can be delivered at the school site, electronically, or through a combined approach of on-site/on-line instruction. As countries ease travel restrictions post-pandemic, IGPE has developed a three-pronged approach to increase its offerings aimed at generating long-term, sustainable partnerships. IGPE plans to return to in-person regional education association conferences for networking opportunities, collaborate with previous partner sites to reignite relationships to develop new cohorts, and leverage existing international partnerships of other Buffalo State offices and programs to potentially expand the breadth of those relationships to include degree cohorts through IGPE (S3.C1 International Graduate Programs for Educators IGPE).

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

[S3.C1] Buffalo State has made progress in using online modalities to effectively offer instruction to undergraduate and graduate students. Online curriculum, as with all courses and programs, follows the same course and program approval process presented above. Each distance learning course or program is offered in a manner consistent with the standards established by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) as well as SUNY, New York state, and federal requirements, and specific standards of program accrediting bodies. Among the current offerings are five master's degree programs and five certificate programs. Three of the five master's programs are offered solely as distance learning programs (S3.C1 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:07:04 - Online and Hybrid Course Offering).

All faculty teaching an online or hybrid course must document credentials in this delivery method (e.g., completion of online course development series, prior experience and credentials from an outside institution or reputable organization in online teaching and learning). Instructional Design and Distance Learning (IDDL) provides guidance and leadership for teaching in the online environment and delivering engaging high-quality courses, while providing support for the use of educational technology and promoting innovative practices to improve the quality of educational experiences. Faculty are encouraged to take advantage of additional training, workshops, and certifications to continue to ensure high-quality course delivery. Professional development opportunities include Online Course Development workshops for faculty who are new to online/hybrid teaching or have not taught an online course within the last five years. The Online Course Development Certificate series guides faculty through a systematic approach to the design and development of online synchronous, online asynchronous, and hybrid courses. The Course Design Review process provides a research-based course review and enhancement model for continuous improvement of online and hybrid courses. The Course Design Review process uses Buffalo State's customized version of the Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) rubric to focus on how instructional design and pedagogical best practices are applied to online or hybrid courses. The review process is overseen by IDDL (S3.C1 Instructional Design - Online Course Development).

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAM APPROVAL

[S3.C1 and C5b] The creation of new programs is guided by the curriculum approval processes of Buffalo State, SUNY, and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The quality of programs offered by Buffalo State is ensured by way of thorough internal and external reviews. Any new or revised course or program of study begins at the department level. Departments develop a course or program of study using the departmental process, which traditionally includes review by department curriculum committees and faculty vote. Upon favorable review at the department level, proposals are reviewed at the school level by the dean's office and a school-level curriculum committee if applicable. Proposals approved at the school level are then vetted by the



College Senate Curriculum Committee (CSCC), the elected faculty body that reviews all changes to curriculum and academic policies. After appropriate review, a supported proposal is forwarded to the president and provost for review (S3.C1, C5b Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:01:00 - Program Proposals and Review; S3.C1, C5b Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:06:00 - Proposals for SUNY Certificates; S3.C1, C5b Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:05:00 - Proposals for Minors; S3.C1, C5b SUNY Guide to Academic Program Planning; S3.C1, C5b College Senate Curriculum Committee).

[S3.C1, C5b and C8] For supported program proposals, a Program Announcement (undergraduate) or Letter of Intent (graduate) is prepared and sent to Academic Affairs for review and formal submission to SUNY. The formal response from SUNY to the program announcement or letter of intent may authorize proceeding with proposal development, suggest alternative approaches, or indicate that the central administration cannot support program development. If the response authorizes proposal development, the full program proposal is developed using the appropriate SUNY form. The full proposal is reviewed by the provost, and if approved submitted to SUNY. Credentialing programs must also undergo additional review by their external program accreditation agencies (S3.C1, C5b, C8 SUNY Guide to Academic Program Planning).

[S3.C1 and C5b] Revised and new programs are evaluated by SUNY and NYSED. Programs with a distance education component follow an approval process that includes SUNY and NYSED. Microcredentials, new to SUNY and Buffalo State, follow a campus-based process that includes the associate deans and the associate provost. Every submission of a new or revised program must include an assiduous review of the proposal. Inherent in the program approval process is the requirement to show need for the proposed program, how the need was determined, input from external evaluators, expected enrollment, and how the program relates to Buffalo State's and SUNY mission and strategic goals and priorities. This process serves to foster strategic growth of new programs and their viability. The initial impetus for a degree or certificate program may originate from any source including faculty, staff, administration, advisory boards, community agencies and organizations, or professional partners (S3.C1, C5b, C8 SUNY Microcredentials).

[S3.C3, C5b and C8] As new programs are created, the Credit/Contact Hour Relationships policy statement ensures that total credit hours for academic programs of study are defined. For programs, the Collegewide Degree Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees policy, and the Collegewide Degree Requirements for Master's Degrees policy outline requirements that students must meet to graduate. The Academic Affairs Office coordinates the collection of program data to be displayed for the undergraduate and graduate catalog. Academic department websites list course and program descriptions, degree requirements, and program-specific guides to help students plan their schedules and choose courses. The student information system (Banner) provides an accurate list of courses for which students can register. Students maintain access to the campus degree audit system which records students' academic progress toward meeting graduation requirements. Students can follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion. To help ensure students are meeting degree requirements and stay on track to graduate on time, advisers meet with students to discuss course scheduling and program requirements (S3.C1, C5b, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I:10:00 - Credit/Contact Hour Relationship; S3.C1, C5b, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I.04.00 - Collegewide Degree Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees; S3.C1, C5b, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I.04.03 - Collegewide Degree Requirements for Master's Degrees; S3.C1, C5b, C8 Academic Catalog, Undergraduate; S3.C3 Academic Catalog, Graduate).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

[S3.C8] Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 8*, academic program review is an integral part of the systematic review and improvement of academic offerings at Buffalo State. For non-accredited programs, Buffalo State conducts program review on a five-year cycle for face-to-face and online programs. Accredited programs are reviewed according to the schedule set by their accrediting agencies.

According to the SUNY Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs:

Program evaluation must be supported at the institutional level by creating a “culture of assessment” at all levels of the institution. Although often associated with accountability, program evaluation is a cooperative activity that requires energy and time to be done properly and has the greatest positive effect for all involved. The administration provides support by collaborating with the faculty, through governance, to establish clear roles and responsibilities for evaluation and assessment. These roles are shared across a broad spectrum of the institution and beyond, depending on the type of program. For example, a program that affects local schools would involve external constituencies as well as campus faculty, staff, and administration. The idea of a “culture of evaluation” acknowledges the ongoing nature of assessment. Programs must be revisited regularly in order to continue to improve over time. Administration and faculty should collaborate to develop a multi-year schedule, procedural steps and timelines in order to enable ongoing program evaluation of every program on campus” (S3.C8 SUNY Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs, p.6).



Every department engages in major program assessment activities to measure and benchmark quality as part of either accreditation review or a five-year internal/external review process. Both SUNY and Buffalo State provide guidelines for the five-year review. This assessment review includes a self-study, external review, and department response to the external review report. As required by *Requirement of Affiliation 15*, a review of core faculty within the programs is completed to determine the university’s ability to assure continuity of the programs. Upon completion of the review process, the dean and department work together to implement agreed upon recommendations for improvement (S3.C8 SUNY Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs).

As required by *Requirement of Affiliation 9*, assessment in undergraduate and graduate programs and certificate offerings is guided by each program’s assessment plan. Program-level student learning outcomes are of appropriate rigor and available on academic department websites. Other materials such as assessment plans, curriculum maps, and assessment results and actions are available in the Accountability Management System (AMS).

Reports detailing assessment activities, results, and responses are included in department annual reports which are sent to deans, the provost, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 10*, this information is used to inform new program development, strengthen existing programs, and set goals for student learning within programs.

CURRICULAR REVISIONS AND PROGRAM DISCONTINUATION

Consistent with SUNY guidelines and our mission, Buffalo State has strong guidance for curricular revisions (see Figure 3.3). The university’s policy for program discontinuation is clearly described in DOPS IV.01:01. These policies establish principles and processes for merging, deactivating, and discontinuing academic programs. Policies also align with the university’s mission “to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning” and its dedication “to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment.” Given the exceptional nature of changing the status of an academic program, shared governance is vital for these processes to be conducted with open, honest, and considerate discussion. (S3.C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV:01:01 - Change in Status of Academic Programs).

A formal proposal to change the status of an academic program may be initiated by the department chair, academic dean, or the academic vice president who has authority over the program. A formal proposal may be initiated via memo announcing a proposed change in status, with copies sent to all relevant stakeholders who may include program coordinator, department chair, chair of College Senate, dean, and provost. Once the memo is issued, the chair of the appropriate department and/or the chair of the relevant curriculum committee is responsible for holding meetings to determine stakeholders’ positions on the proposal. Final approval is expected within one academic year from the date of the initiating memo. In the case of a financial emergency, a shorter timeframe may be accommodated.

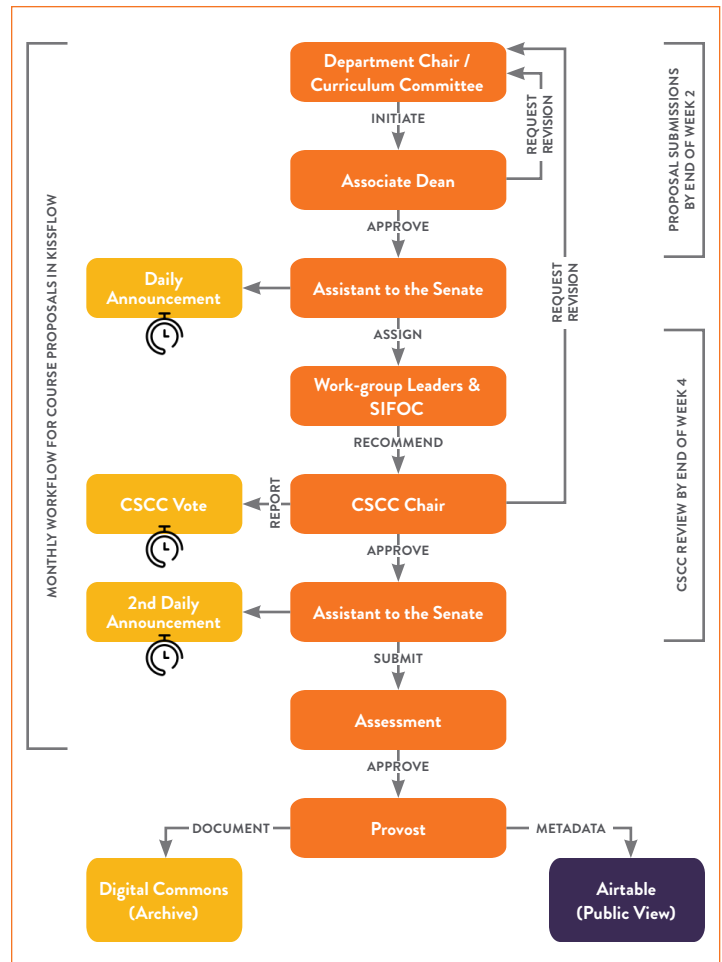


Figure 3.3 Workflow Diagram for New and Revised Curriculum Proposals. Source: College Senate



OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan's Institutional Priority, "Academic and Creative Excellence," focused on intentionally committing to academic and creative excellence through socially just, reflective, and collaborative actions, policies, and practices. We discuss resources related to academic programs in this section.

All students are provided with advisement and counseling at every stage of their university career, and they have many sources for determining their progress towards graduation. First-year and transfer student orientations provide information on Intellectual Foundations (IF) courses, transfer and advanced placement credits, and major requirements. Students can use the Undergraduate Catalog to locate updated academic policies.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, TEACHING, RETENTION

[S3.C2, C4, C6 and C8] Hiring and promotion procedures in addition to ongoing professional development opportunities help ensure that student learning experiences are supported by qualified professionals.

HIRING AND PROMOTION PROCEDURES FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

[S3.C2 and C8] The staffing of qualified professionals to support the student learning experience is consistent and systematic across campus. All positions for classified, faculty, professional, and graduate assistant vacancies must go through PeopleAdmin, Buffalo State's applicant tracking system. The Equity and Campus Diversity Office monitors, implements, and evaluates federal and state laws as well as SUNY procedures regarding equal opportunity and affirmative action. Advertising of open positions must be compliant with these laws and procedures. To help ensure an effective and equitable search, search committee members attend a Human Resources orientation to review search procedures and expectations of the search committee. A Guide to Effective Administrative, Faculty, and Staff Searches is provided to the search committee to detail search procedures, guidelines, interview techniques, and sample questions. The applicant tracking system uses a built-in workflow with checks and balances. All required individuals approve the job posting, recruitment plan, interview and recommendation report, and the appointment form. Once hired, new employees have access to the employee orientation toolkit. Faculty work with department chairs and deans to craft a Letter of Expectation (LOE) and Professional staff work with supervisors and managers to craft a Performance Program. Performance programs are reviewed each year as part of the Performance Evaluation and Professional Development System (PEPDS). The system consists of three components: job description, performance program, an optional mid-year discussion, and end-of-year evaluation. The performance program includes individual goals, professional development goals, and university community service activities. The optional mid-year discussion is an opportunity for the employee to receive feedback mid-way in the evaluation cycle and to review progress on the goals set in the performance program. The end-of-year evaluation is the final review of goal attainment and rating of overall performance for the year (S3.C2, C8 Human Resource Management - Applicant Tracking System; S3.C2, C8 Guide to Effective Administrative, Faculty and Staff Searches; S3.C2, C8 Human Resource Management - Faculty and Professional Recruitment Workflow; S3.C2, C8 Human Resource Management - Employee Orientation Toolkit; S3.C2, C8 Performance Evaluation and Professional Development System PEPDS).

Faculty renewals, promotions, and continuing appointments, general guidelines for expectations in the main areas of teaching, research and scholarship, creative activity, and service to the university and community are provided in the Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS) and in the Handbook for Faculty and Librarians. Promotion decisions for professional staff are also made according to DOPS policy (S3.C2, C8 Directory of Policy Statements; S3.C2, C8 Handbook for Faculty and Librarians; S3.C2, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI:04:01 - Policy Guidelines for Promotion; S3.C2, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI:05:00 - Promotion of Professional Employees).

Instructional faculty statistics, including data on earned degrees are available for reference on the Institutional Research Common Data Set website. The Faculty and Staff Profile (2021-2022) shows that there are 1,570 faculty and staff employed at Buffalo State, with 77% percent of faculty holding doctoral degrees and 82% of full-time faculty with terminal degrees. As of 2021, 55 faculty were awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Fall 2021 data show that 91% of all classes have fewer than 40 students and that the average class size is 15, with classes for undergraduate majors typically having between 12 and 16 students (S3.C2, C8 Common Data Set 2021-2022; S3.C2, C8 FACTS - Faculty and Staff Profile; S3.C2, C8 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI.15.02 - SUNY Chancellors Awards).



[S3.C4] Resources and departments such as E.H. Butler Library, Academic Success, graduate research support, and other support areas for students and faculty are staffed by qualified and vetted individuals. Faculty and administrators of the following offices exemplify special training and educational background in their respective areas: Educational Opportunity Program, Supplemental Instruction, Student Accessibility Services; Title III success coaches; Professional Advisers and advising center; Honors College; Undergraduate Research; Individualized studies; First-year and transfer programs; UNC 100 and Learning communities and goals; peer mentors; and global engagement.

[S3.C2] Professional staff are qualified based on the job posting requirements and qualifications specified by the hiring manager. For example, professional staff in Academic Success have a minimum of a master's degree. Directors hold either a Doctorate in Education, a Doctor of Philosophy, or a Juris Doctorate. All professional advisers hold a minimum of a master's degree with two possessing a Doctor of Philosophy. These figures demonstrate that professional staff connected to the success of students are knowledgeable in their fields. Excellence in supporting the student learning experience is also highlighted in Buffalo State's "Our Stories" web profiles, sharing information of faculty performing outstanding work inside and outside of the classroom (S3.C2, C8 Our Stories).

OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND INNOVATION

[S3.C6] Faculty have funding opportunities which can be used for a variety of professional development expenses including research, conference registration and travel, professional equipment purchases, and course development expenses. Faculty and staff are also eligible to apply for Individual Development Awards. This program is intended to develop faculty and staff to their full professional potential and to prepare for advancement by funding professional development activities (S3.C6 Individual Development Awards).

[S3.C2 and C6] Buffalo State also offers professional development opportunities to faculty and staff at no cost. Workshops, webinars, and self-paced opportunities for faculty and staff are listed in the online workshop registration system. The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) provides individual sessions, workshop series, and cohort programs to help faculty discover resources to promote effective student learning as well as promote their own learning in the form of scholarship and creative activities. In particular, the TLC brought together the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Program with Faculty Development. The Center works in close collaboration with Professional Development Center and Instructional Design and Distance Learning, as well as many other campus offices promoting student learning opportunities such as Undergraduate Research, Applied Learning, and Civic and Community Engagement. Through these collaborations, Buffalo State faculty have opportunities to participate in programming such as the High-Impact Practice Certificate Program, Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning, and the Applied Learning Faculty Fellow Program. To prepare faculty to support student learning in online and hybrid modalities, Instructional Design and Distance Learning facilitates the Online Course Development Certificate series each term. Faculty are also able to participate in professional development opportunities through SUNY, including the SUNY Center for Professional Development and SUNY Online Teaching Webinar Series (S3.C2, C6 Instructional Design - Online Course Development Certificate; S3.C2, C6 SUNY Online Teaching Webinar Series).

The Professional Development Center designs, facilitates, and coordinates opportunities for staff, faculty, administrators, institutional units, and campus constituent groups to enhance personal, professional, leadership, and work team effectiveness. The Center provides opportunities for individuals and teams to learn, develop, problem solve, innovate, and collaborate to support the mission, vision, values, and goals of the campus community. In addition to providing and facilitating ongoing workshop opportunities, the Professional Development Center supports cohort-based professional development, including the Manager Development Community of Practice and the Administrative Staff Working Group. Professional development opportunities offered through the Center have decreased since fall 2021 when the director left Buffalo State, leaving a professional staff member to facilitate a reduced suite of opportunities, usually in collaboration with the TLC. To support the development of professional staff, Human Resource Management also provides professional staff with resources for ongoing development opportunities such as defined Success Factors that outline behavioral and technical success factors for managers and professionals. These professional development opportunities are offered in various modalities, including in-person and online webinars (S3.C2, C6 Manager Development Community of Practice; S3.C2, C6 Administrative Staff Working Group; S3.C2, C6 Human Resource Management - Staff Development; S3.C2, C6 Human Resource Management - Success Factors; S3.C2, C6 Human Resource Management - Manager Success Factors; S3.C2, C6 Human Resource Management - Professional Success Factors).



MEETING OUR STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

As our student demographic has shifted, the Teaching and Learning Center has developed individual workshops and series to support faculty as they tailor their pedagogies to connect directly with learners and to meet students' unique challenges. In addition to SUNY Center for Professional development offerings, the TLC's workshops include the following:

- Tutoring, Learning, and Student Success: What Every Professor Should Know
- Writing Prompts that Work: Designing Successful Writing Assignments
- Give them Options: Why and How to Incorporate Student Choice into Your Courses
- Teaching Sensitive Topics
- Creating Safe Spaces for Difficult Discussions Exploring Race, Class, Gender, Identity, Oppression and Liberation
- Lightening the Paper Load: Responding to Student Writing Effectively and Efficiently
- Seizing the Teachable Moment: Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zones to Respond to Classroom Microaggressions
- Student advising 101: the faculty point of view
- Supporting International Students in the Classroom

The TLC also offers book-length reading groups that examine contemporary scholarship in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These conversations encourage deep and reflective conversations about ways of revising courses to support learning and increase students' sense of connection and belonging in their classroom communities and educational programs.

[S3.C2d] The Buffalo State Equity and Diversity Office also offers programming open to faculty, staff, students, and members of the Buffalo community. This programming aligns with Buffalo State's commitment to ensuring a campus free from discrimination and harassment. Workshops, discussions, and programs include the Beyond Boundaries: Dare to be Diverse film series, the Diversity Dialogue Speaker Series, Men of Merit, and Let's Talk About It Series.

[S3.C2 and C6] Faculty have opportunities to support students in research endeavors through the Student Research and Creativity Conference, Graduate Student Research Fair and Capstone Contest, the Journal of Action and Inquiry in Education, and Action Research Mini-Grants from the Professional Development Schools office in the School of Education. The Fall Forum Booklets include examples of how faculty and staff network around common scholarly and creative interests to showcase and promote the culture of research and creative scholarship at Buffalo State (S3.C2, C6 Faculty Staff Research and Creativity Fall Forum).

SUPPORTING FACULTY AND STAFF TO OFFER CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Buffalo State's mission as an anchor institution reflects its ongoing commitment and continued investment in social, cultural, and community capital as Buffalo overcomes decades of hardship and experiences a renaissance. Consistent with its mission, Buffalo State has been recognized for its community engagement and for being a national leader in diversity and inclusion. The university also has been recognized for its commitment to supporting marginalized students in their pursuit of social, economic, and communal mobility.

Buffalo State ranked 35th out of 1,449 benchmarked colleges and universities in CollegeNET's 2020 Social Mobility Index assessment and 16th out of 174 regional colleges and universities in the north in U.S News and World Report's 2021 assessment of top social mobility performers. In order to have achieved these recognitions, Buffalo State has a strong commitment to equipping faculty and staff with the skills to offer civic engagement, community engagement, social justice, and international opportunities rooted in achieving justice and equity. This commitment is evident by the extensive services provided by the Teaching and Learning Center, Instructional Design Center, Undergraduate Research Office, Professional Development Schools, Center for Global Engagement, Equity and Diversity Office, and Civic and Community Engagement Office.

Being part of the larger SUNY system, as well as having faculty and staff membership in the United University Professions union (UUP) allow for additional supports and opportunities for equipping faculty and staff with the skills to offer civic engagement, community engagement, social justice, and international opportunities as well. Faculty and professional staff can receive financial support from UUP through Individual Development Awards and from SUNY



through SUNY Chancellor's Grant for Innovative Study Abroad Programs. The SUNY Consortium of Community Engaged Leaders, SUNY Applied Learning Community of Practice, and SUNY Office of Global Affairs all provide system level learning opportunities that prepare and equip faculty for effective leadership of these programs including a Global Learning for All initiative to support awareness and engagement domestically with global communities and new Americans. Opportunities afforded to faculty and staff through institutional memberships in Campus Compact, the Western New York Service-Learning Coalition (WNYSLC), and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities also provide an extensive number of relevant opportunities. These include webinars, in-person workshops, online tools, conference presentation and scholarship opportunities, offered through journals, newsletters, and conferences. Buffalo State faculty have extensive resources to support their scholarship including the SUNY Faculty Development Conference, SUNY Applied Learning Conference, WNYSLC Community-Engagement Conference, CUMU Annual Conference, Campus Compact National and Regional conferences, the SUNY Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement, and Buffalo State Annual Faculty/Staff Research and Creativity Fall Forum (S3.C2a SUNY Advising, Applied Learning, and Student Success Summit; S3.C2a Faculty Staff Research and Creativity Fall Forum).

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Buffalo State has seen robust faculty and staff participation in civic and community engagement opportunities with deep and broad outcomes which ultimately impact student learning. A Buffalo State Civic Action Plan completed in 2016 identified four priority areas to deepen existing success and strengthen civic and community engagement efforts. Implementation of this plan has created opportunities to strengthen the culture of civic and community engagement, broaden community input and impact, enhance support for faculty, staff, and students, and improve coordination and infrastructure on campus. A Civic Action Plan dashboard outlines progress on the goals and objectives (S3.C2a Civic Action Plan Metrics and Data).

Frequent civic engagement and community engagement workshops are offered to the campus community, ranging from one-hour to multi-day workshops, webinars, and conferences. An example includes a two-day applied learning faculty fellowship which equips participants with tools to structure, reflect, and assess experiential learning including activities which engage students with external partners to address community priorities. Additionally, Buffalo State collaborates with other regional higher education institutions in the Western New York Service-Learning Coalition, which offers a two-day service-learning faculty fellowship program on a bi-annual basis often facilitated by nationally known scholars.

A taxonomy of quality community engagement, developed by Buffalo State faculty and staff, articulates relevant student learning outcomes for four key areas of community-engaged learning- reciprocal partnerships, critical reflection, respect for difference, and civic responsibility. This taxonomy supports faculty in the development of appropriate course learning outcomes that align with Buffalo State's community engagement priorities. The Service-Learning Handbook for Faculty provides faculty members with information on community engagement, as well as resources to support the incorporation of community-engaged activities into their teaching and research. Service-learning course lists provide references for faculty and students to identify service-learning courses, partners, and example projects and foster network building across campus to expand connections and share best practices (S3.C2a Civic and Community Engagement Service-Learning Handbook for Faculty).

E. H. Butler Library's LibGuides curate research, materials, and resources to support faculty, staff, and student professional development. The Faculty Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide contains information for integrating community engagement into teaching and research and includes best practices, suggested reading, data and scholarship, and links to relevant organizations and resources. The Student Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide provides a list of resources to support community-engaged learning, civic engagement, and opportunities for leadership development and includes relevant student organization information, career information, and links to social media content. The Civic and Community Engagement Office provides a five-part video series for new and experienced community-engaged learning faculty and can be watched as a whole or in parts and revisited as a refresher (S3.C2a Faculty Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Terms and Definitions; S3.C2a Faculty Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Organizations and Associations; S3.C2a Student Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Community Engagement; S3.C2a Student Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Civic Engagement; S3.C2a Student Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Leadership).

Resources to support faculty community-engaged scholarship and research are newer additions to the university's support and includes publishing opportunities, information on Buffalo Commons, and information on the recently revised DOPS Policy VI:04:05: Supplemental Policy on Scholarship Encompassing Applied Research and Scholarship of Teaching, and Community-Engaged Research and Scholarship, which provides faculty members with information regarding how Buffalo State defines specific terms related to community engaged-research, community-engaged scholarship, and applied learning, as well as information regarding how to document these accomplishments for promotion and tenure. Additionally, DOPS Policy I:04:02: Approved Applied Learning articulates requirements for courses to carry approved applied learning designation, and DOPS Policy IV:16:00: Service-Learning Policy articulates additional criteria needed for courses to carry service-learning designation. These policies provide guidance on research-based and institutionally significant aspects of courses to guide faculty community-engaged learning activities (S3.C2a Faculty Civic and Community Engagement LibGuide - Research and Scholarship; S3.C2a Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI:04:05 - Applied Research; S3.C2a Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI.04.02 - Approved Applied Learning; S3.C2a Directory of Policy Statements DOPS IV.16.00 - Service Learning).



INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

[S3.C6] The Center for Global Engagement (CGE) at Buffalo State supports immersive cultural experiences, both locally and globally, to impact students' ability to respectfully engage with and learn from differences, meet the challenges of a globally connected society, and be good citizens and stewards of the world. The mission of the SUNY Buffalo State CGE is to provide leadership for the comprehensive internationalization of the SUNY Buffalo State community by fostering the growth and development of our international programs and services. The pandemic and the response to systemic racial injustice requires that global pedagogy enter a new era of cultural humility and social responsibility. Buffalo State is at the forefront of applying a social justice perspective to support and cultivate global citizenship. CGE provides individualized support and professional development for faculty interested in developing a study away program and provides a Short-Term Study Abroad Faculty Handbook as a resource. Eight faculty registered to utilize Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) in 2020-2021. Additionally, CGE offers information sessions to faculty who have international students and new Americans in courses or as advisees. In collaboration with CGE, the School of Education's International Professional Development School programs are faculty-led programs which support students in their study of education on an international level. Through these programs, faculty work with students to engage in service-learning projects, conduct research, and expand their knowledge and understanding of education. The Center for Global Engagement is working to align programs and initiatives with the university's institutional learning outcomes, which will lead to seamless integration with other campus efforts. Buffalo State works closely with the SUNY Office of Global Affairs which is dedicated to providing highest quality educational services designed to empower students and prepare them for the interconnected nature of today's world (S3.C6 Global Engagement - Short-Term Study Abroad Faculty Handbook; S3.C6 SUNY Office of Global Affairs).

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS

Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 8*, Buffalo State is committed to regular assessment as a key to continuous improvement of programs and has worked diligently to cultivate a culture of assessment. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning provides support for use of the Accountability Management System where all academic programs and co-curricular units plan and document assessment activities.

Program review is an integral part of the systematic review and improvement of academic offerings at Buffalo State. The quality and outcomes of existing programs are evaluated on a systematic schedule through program assessment plans. All academic degree programs are required to establish student learning outcomes identifying essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of program completers. Programs with discipline-specific accreditation have additional parameters established by the accrediting bodies for both content and objectives.

[S3.C1 and C8] For non-accredited programs, Buffalo State conducts program review on a five-year cycle. Accredited programs are reviewed according to the schedule set by their accrediting agencies. Every department engages in major program assessment activities to measure and benchmark quality as part of either accreditation review or a five-year internal/external review process. SUNY and Buffalo State provide guidelines for the five-year review. Assessment reviews include a self-study, external review, and department response to the external review report. Materials such as assessment plans, curriculum maps, and assessment results and actions are available in the Accountability Management System. Reports detailing assessment activities, results, and responses are included in department annual reports which are sent to deans, provost, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. Upon completion, the dean and department work together to implement agreed upon recommendations for improvement.

[S3.C1] The same standards established by the College Senate Curriculum Committee and the department are used regardless of instructional modality and are a regular part of the department's assessment plan. Whole course student evaluations are distributed electronically to online or hybrid courses to gather feedback from students to evaluate the course and support continuous improvement. The assessment of online degree programs follows the same periodic review processes as face-to-face programs.

[S3.C5a and C5b] Guided by Buffalo State's Principles of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning works with the Senate Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee (SIFOC) to assess the efficacy of the general education curriculum and outcomes. SIFOC deploys Oversight and Assessment Committees (OAC) that are composed of approximately 4-6 faculty and professional staff and faculty librarians, who serve as liaisons with faculty teaching in the general education program. Details for the general education assessment process are available on the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning website. Results of Buffalo State's general education program assessments are available on General Education Student Learning Outcomes page (S3.C5a, C5b Academic Affairs Assessment Plan 2019-2024; S3.C5a, C5b General Education Assessment Process; S3.C5a, C5b Intellectual Foundations Report - Communication 2020-21).



In the fall of 2018, Buffalo State implemented a new method of assessing student learning in its general education program (Intellectual Foundations or IF 14). Assessment is conducted over a 5-year cycle and the results are presented on Institutional Effectiveness and Planning - General Education Dashboards website.

The Institutional Learning Outcomes for graduates of Buffalo State are:

1. Cultural fluency - Graduates will be aware of how ideas are shaped by cultures and social norms and be able to engage with ideas different from or in conflict with their own; students will be aware of cultural, societal, and institutional factors influencing assumptions, prejudices, and privileges.
2. Urban engagement - Graduates, leveraging their experiences in Buffalo State's distinctive urban setting, will understand how to interact meaningfully in their communities and possess the skills to be wise, productive, and responsible citizens.
3. Scholarship and creative activity- Graduates will possess the quantitative, conceptual, and creative skills to pose, frame, and analyze a range of questions, problems, and issues. They will produce complex and intellectually challenging work and demonstrate essential technological skills.
4. Ethical reasoning - Graduates will deliberate ethical values and principles and apply them in ambiguous, complex, and controversial contexts. They will be conscientious persons, students, and professionals.

[S3.C8] Standardized surveys are also utilized to reveal short- and long-term impact of the student experience. Specific policies include I:16:00 Course Procedures and Grading Policies, I:16:01 Critique and Evaluation Period (CEP), I:16:02 Evaluation of Students, I:16:03 Policy on Grading, I:16:04 Grading (Internal Controls). Buffalo State utilizes graduation rates, retention rates, and enrollment rates to assess interest and effectiveness of programs. Areas of Intellectual Foundations (IF 14) are assessed by measures that include, but are not limited to rubrics, objective tests, surveys, and standardized and benchmarked national assessments.

FINDINGS

- Buffalo State offers undergraduate and graduate student learning experiences that are designed, delivered, and assessed by qualified faculty and appropriate professionals.
- Buffalo State hires highly qualified faculty for all teaching positions. The standardized hiring of qualified faculty and staff, regular and equitable review of faculty, and the equipping of faculty and staff with sufficient opportunities, resources and support for professional growth and innovation allows for the fostering of the strategic growth of new programs.
- Buffalo State's catalogs, degree audit system, and website provide students with accurate program requirement information that facilitates timely degree completion.
- Program assessment plans and reports delineate programmatic student learning outcomes and on-going assessment of student learning outcomes promotes continuous improvement in Buffalo State's curriculum.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- It would be beneficial for the university to consider a more streamlined approach to proposing, developing, and offering innovative curriculum, including microcredentials and certificates, for students.
- Lack of consistency in program- and department-level information provided on websites has been identified. Providing a university-wide mechanism for support of consistent messaging would benefit current and potential students.



STANDARD 4: SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

The following section describes Buffalo State's ability to satisfy Standard 4 criteria and sub criteria and *Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 10*.

STUDENT SUCCESS FROM RECRUITMENT TO GRADUATION AND BEYOND

[S4.C1] As a public, comprehensive, anchor institution within a large metropolitan area with a majority minority and under-served student population, one of Buffalo State's priorities is to recruit, retain and graduate a diverse student population. Our supports in place to support that goal include admissions and retention initiatives; new first-time and transfer student orientation programs; advising and academic support services; counseling and wellness services; co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities; facilities including gyms, playing fields, and intercollegiate athletics; Greek life and interest-based clubs and organizations. These opportunities for students support their academic, social, psychological, and physical well-being. Assessment-based practices show the university's commitment to support all enrolled students.

UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Buffalo State prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive university with an urban-engaged focus. A variety of processes and policies link admissions to our mission to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning. The Office of Admissions' main web page provides links to the application process for all prospective students which directs undergraduate, graduate, transfer, international, and re-admission candidates to the appropriate information and to facilitate the success of all students whose interests, abilities, expectations, and goals are reasonable regarding that success. Admission requirements, application procedures and deadlines are clearly communicated to prospective students.

Admissions brochures and other information are offered at a variety of recruitment events each year. Admissions recruits throughout the year at national, state, and regional college fairs, consortium travel, and transfer fairs at community colleges. Individual visits are also scheduled with feeder high schools and community colleges throughout New York state. The fall travel season begins mid-September and runs through early December, focusing on high school seniors and spring transfer students. Spring travel runs from March through May and is largely focused on high school juniors beginning their college search, admitted high school seniors, and fall transfer students. Campus tours and information sessions are offered on campus during the academic year and throughout the summer. A virtual tour of the campus is available and hosted on the Admissions Office homepage. In addition, a variety of recruitment programs are hosted throughout the year, including two fall campus open houses, and one admitted student open house in the spring. The Admissions Office also charters three buses from New York City to allow underserved students an overnight university experience on our campus to coincide with open house programs. Our open houses host academic department specific presentations for prospective students and families. Class visitation days for admitted high school students are held during February and April school break so students can get a sense of academic life at Buffalo State.

For prospective students and families who are unable to visit our campus, additional programming was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to expand opportunities to virtually visit and connect with campus. We offer both in-person and virtual application review appointments where students are considered for admission "on-the-spot." To accommodate all prospective students, the Admissions Office hosts regional accepted student receptions and school counselor information sessions in Buffalo, Syracuse, Long Island, Westchester, and New York City in the spring.

Some of these recruitment programs are focused specifically on assisting students applying to the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), a New York State program that provides access, academic support and financial aid to students who show promise for succeeding in college but who may not have otherwise received an offer of admission. Transfer student programming specific information sessions, next steps presentations for admitted students, and transfer-on-the-spot days prior to the beginning of the semester.



For graduate level studies, admission is granted jointly by the Office of Graduate Studies and the academic department in which students plan to pursue their graduate studies. Individual departments establish specific standards by which they judge admission. Guidance through the admission process including the online application, additional requirements, and deadlines can be obtained electronically through the Office of Graduate Studies website, in person from that office, or by calling or emailing the Office of Graduate Studies, all clearly available through the website.

Historically, Buffalo State attracted students from high schools and transfer students from area colleges and community colleges. In our 2013 self-study we identified a targeted shift in student locations as we began to recruit beyond our region to the greater New York City area. In Fall 2022, approximately 50.8% of students were residents of our local Erie County, while 27.1% were residents of Metro New York City. In Fall 2022, we enrolled 5,464 undergraduate students, of which 88.9% were full time. The demographics for undergraduate students were 29.9% African American, 0.5% American Indian, 6.5% Asian, 12.2% Hispanic, 3.8% Multiracial, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 46.2% White, and 0.2% undisclosed ethnicity.

By contrast, our graduate students are more likely to live in the Western New York area. In Fall 2022, approximately 61.8% of the students were residents of Erie County, while 6.5% were residents of Metro New York City. About 980 graduate students enrolled in Fall 2022, of which 37.3% were full time. Among the total 1,026 graduate students, 11.8% were African American, 0.1% American Indian, 2.6% Asian, 5.9% Hispanic, 1.9% Multiracial, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 75.3% White, and 0.4% Undisclosed ethnicity. The acceptance rate for Fall 2021 was 84.5%.

Buffalo State also has a tradition of transfer partnerships, articulation agreements, and jointly registered programs across New York State. We have dual enrollment agreements with six regional community colleges and articulation agreements with many colleges and universities across New York. Beginning in Fall 2014, SUNY announced the Transfer Guarantees initiative for all its campuses to allow students to seamlessly transfer between SUNY schools. This included the creation of Transfer Paths, which summarize lower-division requirements shared by all SUNY campuses for similar majors which are designed to facilitate completion of a bachelor's degree within four years. Buffalo State allows students to transfer up to 90 credits to their studies at Buffalo State; likewise, students can expect to transfer their lower-division courses seamlessly to other schools.

The university has similar programs targeted towards local high school students. The College Access Program (CAP), Charter School for Applied Technology (CSAT), and Middle Early College High School (MECHS) are three signature programs of Buffalo State which are aimed at introducing high school juniors and seniors to college level work and allow them to earn college credits for successful participation, as well as credits towards graduation from their home high school.

EXPENSES, FINANCIAL AID, SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, LOANS, REPAYMENT, AND REFUNDS

[S4.C1a] In accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), and as a requirement for Buffalo State's participation in Title IV student aid programs, the university is obligated to disclose specific information regarding the institution for current and prospective students and their families. Incoming and current students are provided with clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about the cost of enrolling, and opportunities for financial support. In the 2021-2022 school year, the Financial Aid Office (FAO) oversaw \$3.4 million in scholarships, \$31.5 million in grants, \$484 thousand in Federal Work Study, \$33.6 million in loans, \$46 thousand in Military aid, and \$519 thousand in Graduate Only Scholarships (S4.C1a Consumer Information).

Students begin their financial application process by completing the FAFSA, and New York residents are encouraged to apply for the State's Assistance Program (TAP) and the Excelsior Scholarship, which combined can pay all tuition expenses. Buffalo State offers scholarships based on academic excellence as well as aid directed to helping students from underrepresented populations further their education. Students are also encouraged to apply for other scholarships and grants, including Buffalo State's social justice-oriented George Floyd Memorial Scholarship, which aims to provide one incoming freshman each year with a \$10,000 scholarship that will be renewable over four years. Students are able to manage their awards through their student account in Banner, a self-service database for students. The site provides detailed information on funding resources, application processes, and requirements to secure and maintain eligibility, as well as billing and refund information for students.

In 2021, 64% of students received federal loans, and on average, students at Buffalo State carried \$21,294 in college debt (S4.C1a US Department of Education College Scorecard).



| STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATE | FY 2016 | FY 2017 | FY 2018 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Buffalo State College | 8.2% | 9.8% | 10.1% |
| National Average | 10.1% | 9.7% | 7.3% |

Figure 4.1 Average Percent Defaults on Student Loans by Cohort Fiscal Year. Source: National Student Loan Data System

As states have divested in higher education resulting in higher tuition rates, financial literacy has become an important area of support for students to reduce the burden of college loan debt. The Financial Aid Office (FAO) staff encourage the use of SUNY's Smart Track, which provides a free comprehensive collection of financial aid resources and literacy training modules that are useful to students throughout their college career and beyond. By completing the modules and reading the resource materials, students can increase their knowledge of all aspects of college financial aid planning and improve their money management skills. Throughout the academic year, FAO staff provides financial literacy support in internal and external aid presentations, provides pertinent information via social media, and showcases SUNY's Smart Track website. Finally, during individualized aid appointments, Financial Aid advisers educate students (and parents or guardians) regarding financial literacy tools to help them understand the aid package, out-of-pocket costs, loan repayment, and budgeting.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNDERSERVED STUDENTS AT BUFFALO STATE

[S4.C1b] At Buffalo State, we reject the deficit model that suggests that students may be underprepared for college study. We support instructional diversity and asset-based learning models. As a campus where 55% of the student population are Black and brown and nearly 30% are first-generation college students, we recognize that our students have been underserved in their communities and may not have the benefit of college preparation or close individuals to look to for support in navigating the systems leading to college success. To this end, we have invested heavily to support academic achievement. Students are offered many forms of support that are described on websites, in brochures on campus, and in direct emails. Academic Success provides support for students with academic, financial, health and safety, and housing and transportation concerns

In October of 2018, Buffalo State was awarded a five-year \$2.19 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP). Buffalo State's Title III grant is designed around two primary components linked by a predictive analytics framework to inform timely, efficient, and scalable services to students:

- Strengthening Student Services
- Strengthening Academic Services

[S4.C1b] Title III activities include developing and implementing a predictive model, digital supplemental instruction modules, an online summer engagement program, a first-year professional academic advising plan, Inside Track Foundational Coaching Training, other trainings provided by Inside Track, completion coaches, first-year learning communities, the Noel Levitz College Student Inventory, and automated flags in the Starfish Student Success Portal. (S4.C1b Title III - Activities; S4.C1b Title III - Mining and Modeling for Student Success; S4.C1b Title III - Digital Supplemental Instruction Modules; S4.C1b Title III - Online Summer Engagement Program OSEP; S4.C1b Title III - First Year Academic Advising Plan; S4.C1b Title III - First Year Learning Communities; S4.C1b Title III - Normalizing Tutoring; S4.C1b Title III - Inside Track Foundational Coaching Training; S4.C1b Title III - Inside Track Other Trainings; S4.C1b Title III - Automated Flags in Starfish)

Students who may need additional academic supports have a variety of options, including and beyond subject matter tutoring. These include the New York State Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), the Say Yes Program, COMPASS (Discontinued in Fall 2019) and Roar 2 Success. Additionally, Title III grant initiatives support incoming students including the online summer engagement program (OSEP), holistic coaching and peer mentoring, intrusive academic advising, digital supplemental instruction modules for high D, E, W gateway courses, and targeted tutoring.



The EOP combines access, academic support, and supplemental financial assistance to make higher education possible for students who have the potential to succeed, despite limited preparation and financial resources. Students who are admitted and enroll in the EOP program attend a four-week residential EOP Summer Academy, an opportunity for incoming EOP students to start their college career early as well as help in the transition of expectations and rigor from high school to college classes. Upon successful completion of the courses, students will earn college credits while engaging with Buffalo State faculty, EOP Staff, and peer mentors. EOP students are assigned to EOP counselors who guide and support them through their time at the college. There are also a wide range of tutoring and mentoring services available to EOP students, funded by the SUNY Office of Opportunity Programs, throughout their academic careers at Buffalo State.

The Buffalo State's Say Yes Program is an undergraduate student support program committed to supporting students' intellectual, personal, academic, and professional growth throughout their college career. Similar to EOP offerings, the Say Yes program is offered to students in the Buffalo Public or Charter Schools. They offer a Summer Success Academy to help students with team building, academic success and personal growth, time management techniques, social intelligence skills, self-reflection, study skills, and academic autonomy. Buffalo State Say Yes students have access to a host of academic support services throughout the year including academic advising, mentoring, FAFSA assistance, time management skills development, goal setting, tutoring, internships and career development support. Say Yes has its own mental health counselor from Best Self mental health services located in the Say Yes Unit and a host of other off campus individual and family support institutions. Upon admission, each student is assigned a counselor who also serves as an academic adviser to the student.

Roar 2 Success is a homegrown initiative and showcases post-grant sustainability. Roar 2 Success combines professional success coaching, mentoring, and programming to support first-year students. What makes this program unique is that it covers all incoming first-year students not already connected to an academic support program, ensuring that all first-year students entering Buffalo State have a support network upon entry. Professional success coaches begin their work with first-year students in orientation, sharing success tips and information about the student support network. The coaches also host a four-week virtual bridge program called "Countdown 2 College," which begins a month prior to the start of the fall semester. During the school year, coaches encourage students to meet with them at least three times per semester (equivalent to monthly) in order to ensure the greatest impact. Programs and mentoring services complement coaching efforts. All such efforts are aimed at first-year students defining and identifying their "why," and having a plan for the first two semesters including identifying resources and adding people to their support network. Unlike comparable campus support programs offered, students do not apply to be considered, nor are support services required. There may also be efforts made to work in tandem with Academic Success to mandate services to first-year students on probation or at risk of dismissal to help them get back on track for success.

UNC 100 (Mastering the Academic Environment) is a course intended for students who have been identified as needing additional support or who self-select to take the class. Students in EOP, Say Yes, probationary students, and those entering college with a high school GPA of 78 or lower are the primary participants. The goal of the course is to develop the soft skills that are foundational to success in college and a professional career. For example, the course content includes understanding the culture of higher education, financial management, personal responsibility, self-motivation, mastering self-management, self-awareness, employing interdependence, adopting lifelong learning, and developing emotional intelligence. This course provides underserved students with the tools to achieve the persistence and retention rates of their peers (S4.C1b Educational Opportunity Program EOP; S4.C1b Say Yes; S4.C1b Student Leadership and Engagement - ROAR to Success; S4.C1b Honors Program).

COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

Buffalo State has seen a rise in demand for mental health services. As noted in the introduction, our students tend to face significant mental health challenges due to familial responsibilities and financial burdens. As rates of anxiety and depression increase on top of stressors due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, students seek more mental health support services. The Counseling Center, in collaboration with the Health Center, and Health Promotions in the Weigel Wellness Center, provides students with physical and mental health support and personal growth opportunities in both individual and group settings.

The Counseling Center provides confidential services including individual and group counseling, consultation, daily "urgent care" walk-in hours to assist students who might be experiencing a mental health emergency, and they partner with Erie County Crisis Services to provide additional support on a 24-hour schedule. In addition to individual and group needs, the Counseling Center directs support services to marginalized groups. For instance, the Counseling Center offers weekly "healing circles" to meet the unique needs and requests of Black students in our campus community. The Counseling Center also offers LGBTQIA services including mental and physical health. Figure 4.2 below charts the number of student visits by year.



At the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, the Counseling Center continued seeing about as many regular appointments as the previous calendar year, although regular clinical appointments were transitioned to telehealth appointments, and added about 1,200 additional appointments specifically serving the students who were in isolation or quarantine. The reduction in 2021 – 2022 appointments may be explained by decreased enrollment throughout those years, however, during that time the student needs also became more complex and acute. At both Buffalo State and national levels, the students who sought services during the pandemic reported higher clinical severity levels. The average Buffalo State Counseling Center appointment required more from each counselor as students presented with increased stress, trauma, and mental illness while the pandemic decreased their access to supports, healthy coping strategies, and other resources. However, despite the increased clinical intensity, student reports of the Counseling Center’s effectiveness remained consistently high.

Despite the move to mostly-remote services during limited campus attendance, the Counseling Center continued providing a consistent amount of psychoeducational outreach hours. Counselors worked closely with orientation, residence life, and academic support programs (e.g., EOP, Say Yes, Veteran and Military Services, etc.) to provide students with presentations and workshops on topics such as how to access services, stress management, grief, substance use/abuse, mindfulness, and suicide prevention/bystander intervention. Since returning to in-person learning, the Counseling Center has increased outreach hours to address students’ need for mental health support (see Figure 4.3).

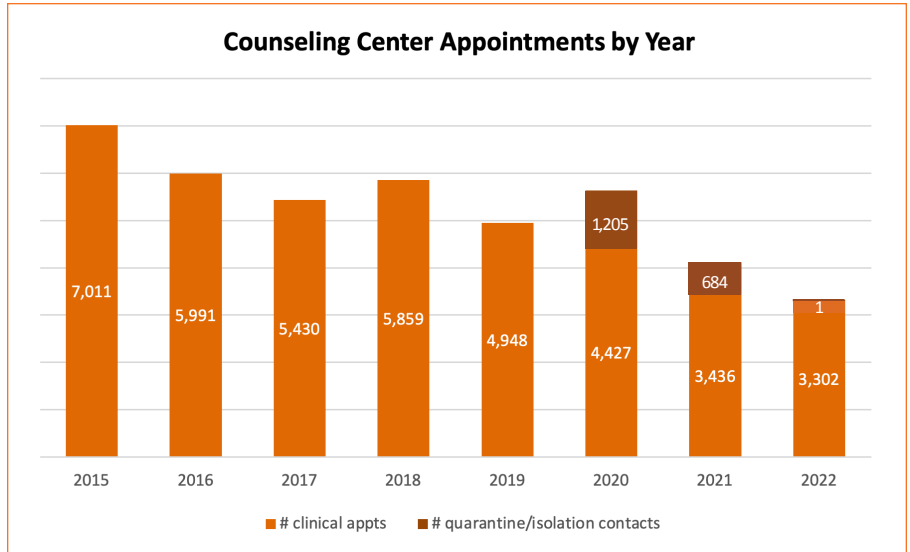


Figure 4.2 Counseling Center appointments by Year. Source: Counseling Center

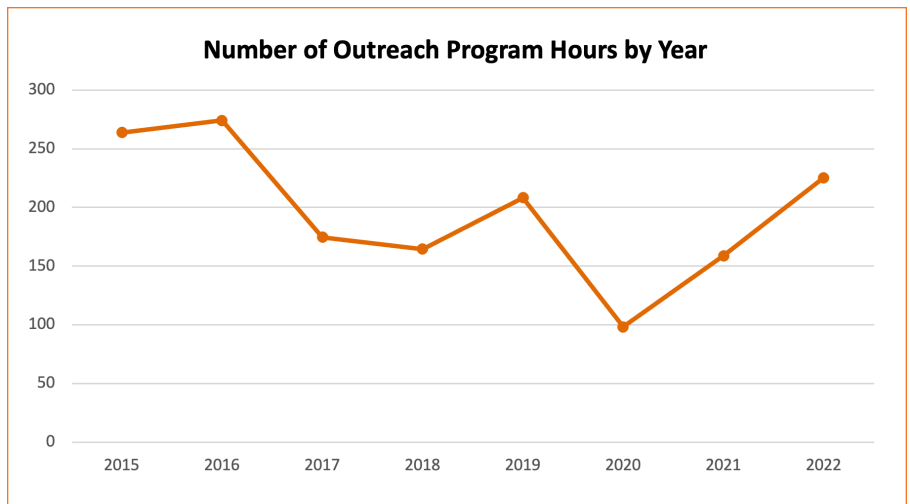


Figure 4.3 Number of Outreach Program Hours by Year. Source: Counseling Center



HOLISTIC HEALTH COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS

To further our commitment to students' holistic health, the Weigel Wellness Center provides the services of a primary care clinic, including diagnosis and treatment of illness and injuries, immunizations, educational counseling, and STI testing. Health Promotions offers free programs on many health-related topics such as yoga, stress management, coping skills, mindfulness, CPR/NARCAN training, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis reduction, and suicide prevention and bystander intervention. As the pandemic ends, Weigel staff identify and support student wellness by providing a texting option for non-emergency questions regarding mental health and wellness as well as a regular space for students and campus community members to come together and engage in a positive environment. Staff continue to study national and internal data, interventions, and grassroots methods to address the issues that our students face.

The Buffalo State Care Team intervenes to provide support for students who raise concern about their potential for harm to themselves or others. The Care Team assesses potential risk to personal and campus safety that might result from actions of individual students, connects students in need with appropriate resources, and monitors compliance with required support plans.

The Care Team committee is led by the Dean of Students and is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Collect information about students who demonstrate, through current or past behavior, conduct or expression that may pose a safety risk to themselves or the campus community
- Connect information that is collected into an assessment of risk that may exist
- Prevent possible harm by recommending appropriate action to either assist an individual in fulfilling their obligations as a student or to remove an individual student from the campus community.

Figure 4.5 shows that between 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022, the Care Team experienced a 58% increase in reports submitted.

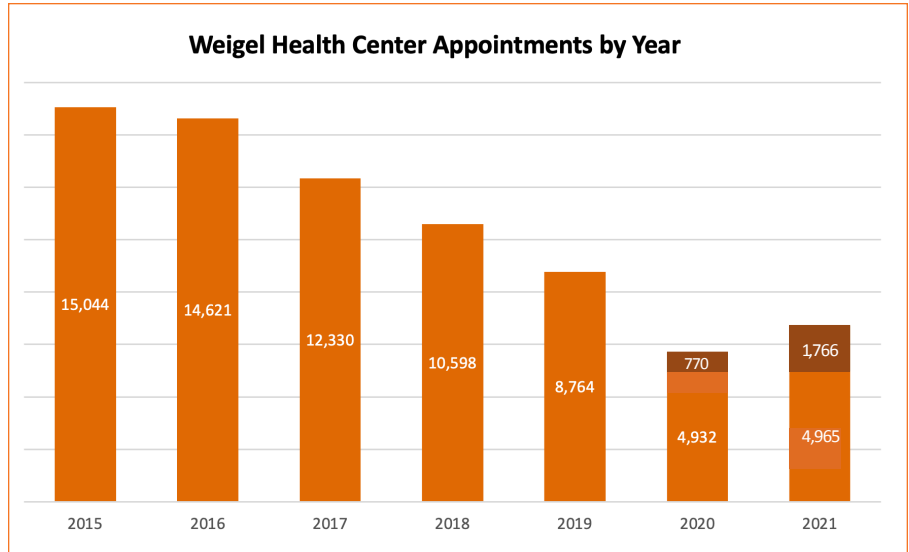


Figure 4.4 Number of Weigel Health Center Appointments by Year. Source: Counseling Center

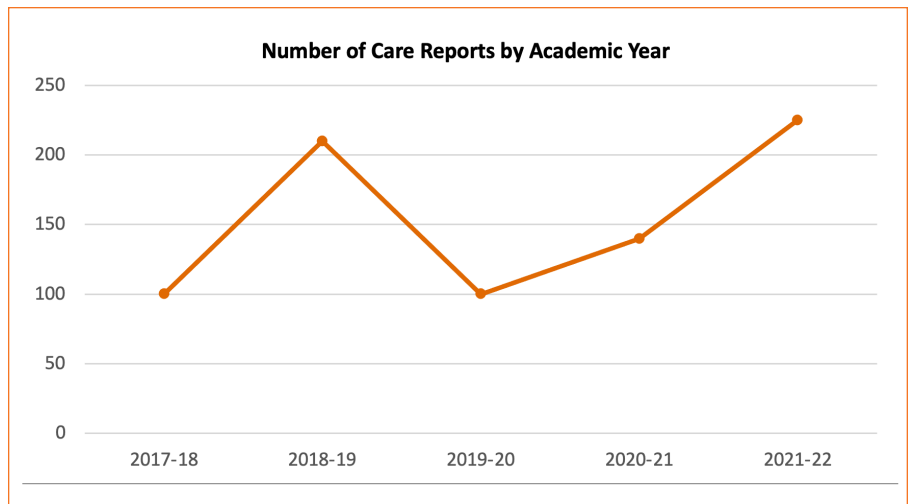


Figure 4.5 Number of CARE Reports by Academic Year. Source: Dean of Students



CAMPUS COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

Buffalo State recognizes that students’ struggle with food insecurity, which means they do not have access to the food they need to live active, healthy lives, leading to additional challenges in managing their studies. As an institution that enrolls underserved and marginalized students, Buffalo State addresses this need through Milligan’s Pantry by supporting students and their families who experience food insecurities. Founded in 2000, Milligan’s has seen a significant increase in visits to the pantry since its inception. In addition to offering shelf-stable foods to students on an as-needed basis, as a part of a SUNY program to address food insecurity, Milligan’s now offers refrigerated and frozen foods, as well as personal hygiene items and laundry soap. Over 1,800 visits have been made to the food pantry since 2017 (See Figure 4.6).

EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR STUDENTS

Open to all students, Buffalo State is proud to support our emergency program to assist students facing emergency situations in the short term and support them to graduate from college in the long term. These emergency grants (up to \$2,000 maximum) are available to address students’ unforeseen events and unexpected need for funds. Emergencies include homelessness or threat of eviction, medical emergency, natural disaster, domestic violence, theft, or loss of employment. Examples of expenses include overdue rent or utilities, clothing, furniture, medical expenses, back-up childcare, back-up transportation, and replacement of stolen items needed for school.

CAMPUS COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Because embracing diversity is a core value at Buffalo State, we infuse social justice across all structures on our campus to support student life. Programs promote inclusion and equity as campus members seek to understand others’ intersectional identities. For instance, the Anne Frank Project is a yearly festival that celebrates positive innovations in the face of adversity by providing multidisciplinary workshops and artworks that teach the tools and vocabulary to tell stories in challenging times to inspire hope and build strong, safe communities. Bengals Dare to Care is a day of service that elevates social responsibility, community building, and social justice while taking action to improve the world for every individual in our community. Community Circles provides restorative justice framework that provides space for discussion, action planning, and addressing harm at the group and individual levels. A variety of community support services and gender inclusive housing in residence halls are also available.

ONGOING SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS, RETENTION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

[S4.C1c] Consistent with SUNY guidance and our mission, Buffalo State abides by advising policies for students. All students are provided with advisement and counseling to increase their opportunities for success and to support our retention efforts. The Student Leadership and Engagement Office serves to enhance the experience of first-year students, transfer students, and their family members as they transition to Buffalo State. Buffalo State’s comprehensive orientation program introduces students to a wide range of opportunities available at Buffalo State and integrates them into life at the university.

[S4.C1c and C6] Academic advising at Buffalo State reflects the university’s strategic position as a transformational learning environment focused on student success. Since 2013, the retention rate of first-time, full-time students has dropped from 73.3 percent (fall 2013 cohort) to 49.3 percent (fall 2021 cohort). During this time frame, various initiatives have been implemented. Most notably are the development of the Academic Commons in 2016

| MILLIGAN'S FOOD PANTRY | STUDENT VISITS | UNIQUE VISITS |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Fall 2017 | 204 | 123 |
| Spring 2018 | 193 | 125 |
| Summer 2018 | 15 | 11 |
| Fall 2018 | 252 | 132 |
| Spring 2019 | 118 | 66 |
| Fall 2019 | 315 | 190 |
| Spring 2020 | 237 | 128 |
| March 2020– Dec 2020 | 131 | closed summer 2020 |
| Spring 2021 | 41 | 27 |
| Fall 2021 | 119 | 113 |
| Spring 2022 | 133 | 84 |
| Fall 2022 | 113 | 91 |

Figure 4.6 Milligan’s Food Pantry Visits by Year. Source: Dean of StudentsData System



and Performance Improvement Fund (PIF) grants in 2017 for summer bridge, supplemental instruction, tutoring, and peer mentoring. The Title III grant was awarded in 2018 to strengthen academic and student support programs through an Online Summer Engagement Program (OSEP), Digital Supplemental Instruction Modules (DSIM), intrusive academic advising, peer mentoring, and completion coaches. In 2019, the university administered the non-returnee student survey and the Ruffalo Noel Levitz College Student Inventory survey.

In Fall 2017, mandatory advising was introduced, and substantial structural improvements have been made through activities in the Title III grant. Foundational Coach Training by InsideTrack was offered to Buffalo State professional advisers, completion coaches, EOP counselors, and Say Yes counselors. Faculty were introduced in 2019-2020. That same year, Title III also sponsored Noel Levitz College Student Inventory training to allow advisers to analyze individual results and create student success plans for first year students. In 2020-2021 Buffalo State introduced a pilot of First Year Intrusive Academic Advising Plan that consists of minimum of three comprehensive academic advising interactions.

INNOVATIONS IN ACADEMIC ADVISING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

[S4.C1c and C6] Buffalo State's First Year Advising Plan includes three mandatory interactions between the student and their professional adviser in the Academic Commons that begin before the student arrives on campus and continue throughout the student's first year. When needed, advisers connect with individual students for further conversations as requested by the student and/or signaled by early alerts in Bengal Success Portal (BSP) and key indicators from the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz College Success Inventory (CSI). The three mandatory meetings detailed in this plan, however, provide a minimum baseline to ensure that all students achieve the outcomes set forth in the advising plan. This plan prescribes the new student onboarding process from accepting their offer of admission to the completion of necessary pre-registration steps. The plan details the student learning outcomes for each of the mandatory meetings, week by week communication plan for the entire academic year, topics to cover, and opportunities for the adviser and student to collectively prepare for their meetings.

Once accepted to Buffalo State, every new, first-time freshman is assigned a professional staff adviser. Some departments also choose to connect students with major faculty advisers in their first year. As a result, every incoming, first-time freshman will have one or more advisers listed in their Bengal Success Portal (BSP), Banner account, and Degree Works. Advisers provide academic guidance, assist students in selecting their courses and adjusting to life at Buffalo State. After working with a professional adviser, students transition to a faculty adviser, who will provide further guidance on specific career possibilities and postgraduate options. In addition to student-centered programs such as EOP, Say Yes and Honors, Roar 2 Success has been developed to ensure that every first-year student has wrap-around support for the entire academic year with academic mentors, tutoring and completion coaches. Undeclared students continue with a professional adviser until they have declared a major. Advisement for transfer students and continuing students is managed at the academic department level. Faculty advisers are required to participate in student advisement and must be familiar with university and departmental requirements and policies.

In 2018, a \$16 million reconstruction project began in Butler Library to create the Academic Commons, one-stop resource for student success. Under the structure of Academic Success, the Academic Commons supports Buffalo State's commitment to the persistence, retention, and completion of our students. Many of the entities within the Academic Commons were previously scattered throughout campus. The Academic Commons brings together offices with a diverse but united set of missions, each providing assistance to students as they seek to fulfill their academic potential and graduate in a timely manner. Academic Commons houses the Writing Center, the Math Center, Tutoring Services, the Educational Opportunity Program's Academic Center for Excellence (EOP-ACE), the Academic Advising Center, and Student Accessibility Services. The Academic Commons enhances each office's capacity to serve students while adding many new features that improve reception, triage, scheduling, program visibility, collaborative learning, and student convenience. Its location in the library also facilitates collaborative efforts between units and library staff.

GRADUATE ADVISING

Buffalo State sets an advising policy for graduate students consistent with SUNY guidance and the university's mission. The graduate student advising experience is robust and is shared across campus. Support services and engagement opportunities are offered in the Office of Graduate Studies and specific curriculum advisement is offered by faculty in the departments in which students study. Graduate assistantship opportunities are available from Graduate Studies and departments as well as the Career and Professional Education Center (CAPE) which provides career development and placement assistance.



Upon acceptance, graduate students are appointed faculty advisers based on their initial research or study interests, typically by the department chair or Graduate Studies Coordinator for each program. Graduate students are expected to meet with their advisers before registering for each semester to ensure they meet requirements and complete their degrees in a timely manner. The advisement guidelines and expectations vary depending on the department and students' course of study. Because many of our graduate students are also working adults with many responsibilities, students work with their advisers to determine both their academic path to graduation and timeline for completion. Students are also provided with a degree roadmap and have access to Degree Works to track their progress to graduation. Students may participate in a thesis project, extended project research, internship, comprehensive exams, or a portfolio of their work, among other possibilities.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISING AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

The International Student and Scholar Services office within the Maurene Callahan Bouras Center for Global Engagement supports students from acceptance through graduation providing new international orientation, programmatic offerings, student advisement, student service referrals, and visa advisement. The Bengal Success Portal is used to support students through academic and student support services. International students are given both an academic adviser and international adviser to track academic and personal progress while enrolled in Buffalo State. Prior to COVID-19, the Global Village Living Learning Community (LLC) was housed in Bishop Hall allowing international students themed housing with programmatic and academic experiences with US students that requested to live in the LLC to experience a global perspective (S4.C1c Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I:05:00 - Advisement Policy; S4.C1c Academic Catalog, Undergraduate, Academic Policies, Academic Advisement; S4.C1c Title III - First Year Academic Advising Plan).

STUDENT SUPPORT AFTER GRADUATION

[S4.C1c and C1d] Advising extends to career preparation and planning. The Career and Professional Education Center (CAPE) provides a full range of career counseling services to help students select a major, plan a career, apply to graduate school, and identify internship and employment opportunities. They also connect students with information about career options with Buffalo State majors. Assessment and exploration programs are available to assist in selecting a career well-suited to individual student interests, strengths, and other personal characteristics. In addition to hosting BengalLink, where students can find full-time, summer, and part-time jobs, as well as internship opportunities, the CAPE links students with employers and successful alumni through job fairs, on-campus interviews, and job-search programs.

CAPE has created several initiatives to support the campus' enrollment, retention, and persistence initiatives including offering UNC 111 (Career Planning in Theory and Practice), a course on career planning in theory and practice since the fall of 2000; Career Chats, where the CAPE staff is committed to attending events, collaborating with other offices, and providing services outside of their office location; workshops to apply, prepare, and interview for jobs and internships, including professional document preparation; promotion and usage of BengalLink, a resource available to students and alumni that houses full-time and part-time employment, internship, and volunteer opportunities; as well as a variety of internship awards.

The Buffalo State's Alumni Association offers engagement activities that support student success including mentorship programs, department panelists, and alumni career-focused speakers. The Office also hosts mentorship programs and matches students with alumni mentors. The partner programs highlight Buffalo State alums in the workforce, expose students to different career opportunities through onsite experiences, and provide students the opportunity to interact one-on-one with mentors. The mentorship program was created in 2019 and is hosted on an online mentorship platform. Over 200 students have participated through the platform to either be matched with mentors or participate in the programs featuring the company partners. There are 104 alumni on the platform and 63 additional users which are made up of members of the partner organizations and Buffalo State staff. There are professional opportunities for the alumni to grow their network and stay connected.

Collaborations with departments include supporting career-focused panels and speakers. The alumni selected either have graduated from the program or are employed in department-related fields. Presenters interact with students, sharing their professional experiences and answering questions from students. Some departments that have participated include Chemistry, Fashion and Textile Technology, Psychology, English, and Communication. Additionally, career-related panels and speakers are hosted by the Office of Alumni Engagement with a broader career focus that allows alumni to speak to a young alumni and student audience on a wide-range of professional topics. Over the last five years, the Office of Alumni Engagement has supported an average of six of these programs each year, generating over 1,550 total participants.



TECHNOLOGIES IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT SUCCESS, RETENTION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In 2015, the SUNY system introduced Starfish, a retention management system. Branded as Bengal Success Portal (BSP), this resource allows for efficient communication among students, faculty, advisers, support staff, and administrators to support student success and retention. It encourages students to become active in their academic lives by connecting them to the campus resources and support services they need to succeed at Buffalo State.

The campus has also invested significantly in other software systems to support student success. As a part of a SUNY initiative, Buffalo State instituted Degree Works, a student degree audit system designed to track individual student status and progress toward degree-specific and campuswide graduation requirements. Each degree program has a data structure within Degree Works including credits needed, transfer credits, and credits in progress. Student information appears within the data structure for the major program.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

[S4.C2] Buffalo State provides immersive experiential opportunities to our students, and rich academic offerings, activities, and programs centered around “learning by doing.” For example, the new Science and Mathematics Complex (SAMC) houses state of the art lab spaces to foster student learning and community-engaged research. Our faculty and students work with community partners to study pollution and conservation methods and conduct field work in Scajaquada Creek which flows north of campus. Recently renovated Caudell Hall features culinary, baking and food labs, and the Russell J. Salvatore Demonstration Kitchen and culinary theater. These spaces operate in a culture of community engagement and our units cultivate partnerships with business and industry to produce graduates that excel in communication, teamwork, professionalism, and problem-solving.

WHITWORTH FERGUSON PLANETARIUM

Buffalo State has housed a planetarium since 1964, which has been an important component of presenting astronomy topics to campus classes, school groups, and the public. Relocating to be part of the new Science and Math Complex (SAMC), the Whitworth Ferguson planetarium plays a key role in experiential learning for students across the curriculum. The planetarium is used by Earth Sciences classes related to astronomy, planetary geology, and 3D cognition, but other classes from across campus also visit the immersive theater. Notably, Education classes use the space to learn about topics they will be teaching. Recently, students from the Television and Film Arts Program wrote, filmed, and edited an immersive horror movie for the planetarium, and students in the Art and Design Department produced immersive computer animations for the planetarium as part of their course work.

Buffalo State promotes the Planetarium in Buffalo and Western New York as part of our commitment to urban engagement and life-long learning. In addition to campus groups, the Planetarium also hosts many pre-K through 12 school groups, homeschool groups, summer programs, Scout groups, and other private events. Unlike many college planetariums, Whitworth Ferguson faculty present public programs every weekend which has raised awareness of the sciences and the Planetarium across the campus and Western New York. In the 14 months since reopening in the new space, the planetarium has welcomed approximately 9,000 guests to SAMC and to campus, including 140 planetarium professionals from across the U.S. and five other countries who attended the 2022 Great Lakes Planetarium Association Conference co-hosted by the Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium. Planetarium faculty continue to build attendance visible in the WNY community as they prepare for the 2024 total solar eclipse which will pass over Buffalo.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Civic and Community Engagement Office advances the urban-engaged anchor mission of Buffalo State by providing curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities, developing civic skills, and building reciprocal community partnerships that promote equity and address community-identified priorities.

Community-engaged learning and other forms of applied learning are implemented in courses across the campus. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 305 courses were designated as applied learning and 144 courses were community-engaged across 34 departments. These courses, taught by 147 faculty, engaged 3,744 students in experiential learning opportunities with 92 community partner organizations. Overall, 49% of students had a community-engaged or other experiential learning opportunity during the 2021-2022 academic year.



Community-based and experiential learning is supported by the appropriate offices, faculty, and staff to ensure that the experience is highly integrated and connected to course content and learning outcomes. The university dedicates professional staff to support community-engaged and other forms of experiential learning. Those staff roles ensure high quality supports are provided including faculty development in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Center, community partner professional development, and logistical supports. Additionally, faculty and staff support positions ensure that all SUNY requirements and relevant accreditation requirements are met. Resources include in-person workshops to provide dialogue and discussion, online videos, student and faculty libguides, and other resources to allow for continuous improvement of efforts to support the student experience. Department internship coordinators and faculty cohorts meet regularly to review requirements, resources, and build supports for students.

The Civic and Community Engagement Office (CCE) tracks student participation in designated service-learning and applied learning courses to determine the impact on student persistence and retention. The most recent assessment of students identified a 13% higher rate of retention for students enrolled in designated service-learning courses compared to the retention rate of the Buffalo State student body as a whole. Similarly, end of semester student self-reported data demonstrated a positive correlation between service-learning and retention, with 74% (151 students) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, “My service-learning experience made me more likely to continue my education at Buffalo State.” The same methodology was used to assess the impacts of other forms of experiential learning on retention and persistence, and found an 8% higher rate of retention for students enrolled in applied learning courses including field study, internships, research, civic engagement, and community service. Civic and Community Engagement Office conducts a variety of assessments on graduation, retention, student learning, community partner, and faculty impacts. The product outcomes have been significant, and data shows there has been positive impact in all those areas.

ALTERNATE METHODS OF EARNING CREDIT

[S4.C2] Guided by SUNY standards, Buffalo State provides various alternate methods of earning college credit. Options include credit for academic achievement through approved Advanced Placement Exam (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Entrance Examination Board College Level Examinations (CLEP) and New York State College Proficiency Examinations (CPE) exams. Up to 45 undergraduate credits may be accepted from sources such as published examinations, course challenge, military service credits, non-collegiate institutions, and proprietary institutions.

Credit for college-level experiential learning is available for matriculated students who consider their previous learning experience as college-level creditable by enrolling in INS 300, Educational Assessment and Portfolio Development. In INS 300, students conduct a self-appraisal and inventory of all potentially creditable prior learning. The portfolio will be treated as an application to appropriate departments for the award of college credit.

TRANSFER COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Transfer credit policies are clearly stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, Undergraduate Admission website, and in brochures that outline the number of credits accepted in specific situations and the required grade for courses to be eligible for transfer. Buffalo State complies with SUNY’s “seamless transfer” requirement by aligning its General Education program and major requirements with system-wide learning outcomes and discipline-based “transfer paths,” which facilitate transfer students’ progress toward a bachelor’s degree. Dual enrollment and articulation agreements with many colleges and universities across New York focus on facilitation transfer and degree completion. The Transfer Articulation Buffalo State (TABS), an extensive course-equivalency database that articulates course equivalencies at U.S. colleges and universities supports transfer pathways. Transfer admission advisers review accepted students’ transcripts and prepare a transfer credit evaluation, which allows students to plan their programs of study.

Students may also cross-register in other SUNY Institutions. The SUNY Cross Registration Agreement is for students cross registering at SUNY institutions and is for matriculated undergraduate-level students and graduate-level students. Most SUNY campuses participate in this agreement. Courses may be taken at other institutions for transfer credit as long as prior approval from the department chair is obtained and the Study Off Campus Form from the Registrar’s Office is completed and returned to that office. Up to 15 undergraduate college credit hours may be awarded for education received through military service, specialty schools, technical training schools, and basic training programs. Evaluation of this experience is based on its relation to college degree requirements and recommendations suggested by the American Council on Education Credit Manual (S4.C2 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I.04.01 - Alternate Methods of Earning College Credit; S4.C2 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I.01.05 - Transfer Students; S4.C2 Academic Catalog, Undergraduate, Alternative Methods of Earning College Credit).



PROTOCOLS AND PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENT RECORDS

[S4.C3] Buffalo State and the Registrar's Office place a high priority on securing the privacy and security of our students' records. Resources are provided to assist faculty and staff when making decisions about the disclosure of student information, ensuring that the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is followed (FERPA – 20 U.S.C., 1232g; 34CFR Part 99) and administered by the U.S. Department of Education (S4.C3 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS I:13:00 - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act FERPA; S4.C3 Registrar's Office - FERPA).

PROTOCOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENSURING PRIVACY

Safe maintenance of student records is secured through several technologies. All records of consequence are stored in password-protected digital repositories such as in campus-wide programs such as Banner, Starfish, Degree Works, Blackboard, and email. Since September 2022, all faculty, staff and students must use multi-factor authentication to access several protected college software systems.

RESIDENCE LIFE HOUSING, DINING, AND COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

Buffalo State's commitment to educating our students goes beyond the classroom. The Residence Life Office supports, complements, and enhances the academic mission of the university by creating a dynamic residential life program that encourages and provides opportunities for individual growth and development for a diverse residential population. Students have a variety of accessible residential options from traditional shared rooms to apartment style living and family housing. Other opportunities include Bengal Hall, which is designated for first-year students, as well as halls and spaces reserved exclusively for cohorts of honors students, international students, student athletes, and learning communities. Gender inclusive housing is available for our LGBTQIA+ students. Staff offer programming and support such as sexual violence prevention, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication and study skills.

Buffalo State Dining offers a variety of meal plans designed to fit the needs of Buffalo State's diverse student population. Residential students have a variety of options for dining and freshmen and sophomores living on campus are required to select a meal plan. In addition to the Bengal Kitchen, an all-you-can-eat dining facility in Campbell Student Union, students can choose from nine different concept options in a retail food court. Dining also offers additional satellite locations across the campus for students to get coffee, a meal, or a snack throughout the day.

REGULATION OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

[S4.C4] Athletic, Student Life, and other extracurricular activities are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs. All are designed to encourage students to remain active and healthy to be better equipped to handle the stress of academic work and stay focused. Buffalo State recognizes that student clubs and organizations are an important part of students' experiences. These learning experiences complement the university's commitment to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students. Student organizations enhance the co-curricular education of Buffalo State students to empower them to succeed and are charged with providing meaningful, fulfilling, and culturally enriching contributions to the campus community.

The many activities offered at the Sports and Recreation Center are governed by regulatory bodies that serve such facilities as well as by policy and safety rules of the university. The many activities offered at the Athletic Department are governed by regulatory bodies that serve such facilities as well as by policy and safety rules of the university. These regulatory bodies include: IAB Review, NCAA, Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards, and other professional accreditation.

Compliance with SUNY policies for student activity fees assures financial transparency. Every campus is expected to follow SUNY administration policies for various areas and departments and the fees they collect. Intercollegiate athletics, recreation, intramural programs that are funded through mandatory student fees and budget allocations are overseen by the Intercollegiate Athletics Board which is comprised of campus faculty, staff and students.



NCAA DIVISION III SPORTS TEAMS

The day-to-day operations of the athletics department adhere to all compliance rules set forth by the NCAA and are monitored by the senior associate director of athletics who serves as the institution's NCAA compliance officer. Student-athletes consistently perform better than the general student body in terms of graduation rate and academic performance, evidenced by a 2.74 cumulative grade point average during the Fall 2021 semester.

Intercollegiate coaches and assistant coaches are provided with a budget and support to recruit talented student-athletes who are the right fit for Buffalo State. Intercollegiate Athletics and Enrollment Management have worked together to establish a position of Assistant Director for Student Support/Completion Coach that has been instrumental in retaining and supporting first-year student-athletes and non-athletes, especially given the challenges of acclimating new students post-pandemic. This assistant director meets and reaches out to every single student athlete to ensure they are on track and learning the skills needed for academic success. Intercollegiate Athletics also offers robust programming in life skills such as financial literacy programs, healthy relationships, sexual violence prevention, partners with career development, and supports the activities for engagement through the Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Moving forward, coaches and full-time staff will be taking a more instrumental role as mentors for students across campus to help to infuse the same 360-degree approach to retention that works so well for our student-athletes.

To participate in intercollegiate athletics at Buffalo State, per the NCAA, a student-athlete must be in good academic standing by the university's definition. At Buffalo State, a student-athlete must maintain a cumulative 2.0 after their first year to be in good academic standing and participate in team sports. Student-athlete support stems from a wrap-around, 360 concept. The student-athletes primary head coach, athletic training and sport performance staff, administrative staff, sports information and media staff, and Faculty Athletics Representative all have vital roles in supporting student-athletes. The position of Assistant Director for Support/Completion Coach is the primary contact and bridge to campus for advising, registration, administrative challenges, retention, residence life, and dining. Student-athletes and teams are expected to engage on campus as well-rounded students and members of our community. Each team has expectations of volunteering on campus and in neighboring communities. Student-athletes' academic successes is celebrated in equal measure to their sport successes by recognizing them individually at the end of the academic year.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES DESIGNED, DELIVERED OR ASSESSED BY THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS

[S4.C5] Campus departments at Buffalo State receive guidance from Procurement Services and Finance and Management regarding the review and approval of all student support services that are designed, delivered, or assessed by external vendors. Procurement Services works together with the Buffalo State community to acquire various goods and services needed for the successful operation of the campus. At the same time, it is their responsibility to ensure the expenditures of State funds are in accordance with existing procedures, policies, laws, and regulations of New York State and the State University of New York.

Information Technology oversees all requests for Buffalo State campus departments who wish to purchase or use computing or instructional technologies offered by external vendors. Faculty and staff who wish to purchase or use an outside vendor are required to submit a ticket with Information Technology through the IT Self-Service Portal. A project management team comprised of staff members from Information Technology will be assigned to review the proposal and determine if it meets campus guidelines for external vendors.

External vendors and outside community organizations that wish to operate on campus on a temporary basis must submit a reservation request through Events Management. An Events Management staff member will then work with the outside vendor or organization to review their request that may include, but are not limited to, a review of venue requirements, food services, University Police presence, and any other office collaborations that may be needed to ensure a successful event. All external vendors and community organizations that are approved to be on campus must sign a reservation contract and complete a revocable permit. Additionally, the client will be asked to have a signed and notarized revocable permit, and a \$1,000,000 insurance rider naming "Buffalo State, State of New York, SUNY and the Buffalo State Foundation" as co-insured.



ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS SUPPORTING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

[S4.C6] As described in other sections of this report, Buffalo State regularly assesses the principles and procedures that govern how we support the student experience. We strive to offer effective, up-to-date, and accessible experiences for students. The university has systematic assessment processes in place to determine the effectiveness of programs that support students. Data from assessments inform actions taken to address student retention, advising, transfer, and enrollment. Buffalo State administers several university-wide surveys to students on a regular basis.

The Division of Student Affairs has participated in assessment processes via the assessment management system since 2017. Departments within Student Affairs submit annual reports which track assessment activities including identification of outcomes, metrics used in measuring outcomes, and results of assessment activities. In 2022 the Division of Student Affairs developed a divisional self-study plan for departments that do not undergo a regular professional accreditation review cycle. Each department completes a self-study review every five years based on Council for the Advancement of Standards Professional Standard for Higher Education. Each year, up to three departments will be scheduled to complete the self-study process which includes teams consisting of internal and external faculty, staff, and students. Once complete, results will be shared at the department and divisional levels.

FINDINGS

- The campus has the infrastructure to recruit, admit, and provide academic, career, and personal support services.
- Information related to admissions, financial aid, academic, and career support are available in clear and easily accessible forms.
- Changes in advising and academic support and centralizing services are the result of continued commitment to enhance support services for student success.
- The university follows FERPA and SUNY-wide record retention policies and regularly updates procedures and technologies to safeguard student records.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- Although offices and departments that support student success follow established guidelines and policies, there is a campus-wide opportunity to be more targeted in data collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of data to make improvements which will benefit our current students and our alumni.





STANDARD 5: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

The following section describes Buffalo State's ability to satisfy Standard 5 criteria and sub criteria and *Requirements of Affiliation 8, 9, and 10*.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

[S5.C1] Since the completion of the 2013 self-study, the university has adopted four institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) as recommended by the Senate Academic Plan Committee in spring 2017. The ILOs include the following: cultural fluency, urban engagement, scholarship and creative activity, and ethical reasoning. All four ILOs are tied to the university's mission, vision, and values as they connect to diversity, inclusivity, and intellectual growth; a passion for lifelong learning, and valuing community partnerships. The ILOs interrelate with SUNY's new general education program as well as program-level learning outcomes. Assessment of the ILOs will be incorporated within the new general education assessment process scheduled to launch in fall 2023 (S5.C1 Institutional Learning Outcomes).

To maintain alignment with SUNY recommendations and requirements regarding best practices in general education programming, Buffalo State has experienced changes to its Intellectual Foundations (IF) general education program. Until spring 2014, the university operated under the original IF program. Beginning in fall 2014, a new IF program, named IF14, continues through spring 2023. In fall 2023, Buffalo State will begin offering a new general education program to students.

The mission of the current general education program, IF14, "...promotes an understanding of the continuity of human history, the depth of inherited knowledge, the validity of diverse modes of inquiry, the value of artistic expression and the richness of our collective experience. The purpose of IF14 is to develop the skills and habits of the mind required for a life of intellectual curiosity and civic engagement." The IF14 program includes the following categories:

- Basic written and oral communication
- Mathematics and quantitative reasoning
- Cognate foundations (arts, humanities, natural science, and social science)
- Foundations of civilizations (American History and Western and non-Western civilizations)
- Diversity
- Global engagement
- Intellectual skills and competencies (writing across the curriculum, critical thinking, and information management), which are infused in each major program

Buffalo State's IF14 general education program is regularly reviewed according to SUNY General Education Requirements (SUNY-GER). The SUNY Board of Trustees establishes these regulations, and the SUNY Office of Academic Programs, Planning and Assessment provides guidance and coordination for implementation of the SUNY-GER, reviews campus-approved proposals for SUNY-GER courses and campus requests for programmatic waivers and maintains a database of SUNY-GER courses that supports seamless transfer within the SUNY system. The only IF14 general education category that exists outside of SUNY requirements is Buffalo State's long-standing Diversity requirement, which is closely aligned with the university's mission and values. It is notable that beginning in 2023, all SUNY institutions will be required to include Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice as a required knowledge and skill area in the new SUNY general education framework (S5.C1 Intellectual Foundations Fall 2006 – Spring 2014; S5.C1 Intellectual Foundations 2014; S5.C1 SUNY General Education Framework SUNY GE; S5.C1 SUNY General Education Requirements).

Each academic major has program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) which are publicly available on departmental websites. Academic programs have assessment plans in place and assess SLOs over a four-year cycle. The program-level academic major assessment plans include clear delineation of SLOs, a curriculum map of courses in each academic program linking program and course-level SLOs, measurement and criteria used in determining the degree to



which students are achieving goals and objectives, procedures for making changes suggested by assessment results, and a sustainable timetable for completing the programmatic assessment process. This type of educational planning is consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 10*.

Support services and programs are assessed and revised on a regular schedule. Each year, units in both Academic and Student Affairs reaffirm their mission statement, provide updates to their assessment plans, identify measurable outcomes under review, indicate the methodology used to measure each outcome, and provide details of their results and how the unit intends to use the results to improve student learning.

ORGANIZED AND SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENTS

[S5.C2] Buffalo State’s current assessment system for evaluating student learning reflects long-standing features as well as more recent revisions to our organizational structure, processes, and procedures. The current assessment system is supported by the work of faculty and other professionals, and it allows Buffalo State to evaluate student achievement at the degree and program levels.

Among the changes in organizational structure that occurred in 2017 included the reorganization of the Office of Curriculum and Assessment. Oversight of curriculum was embedded into a newly conceived associate provost position, while assessment duties were delegated to a newly created associate vice president for Institutional Effectiveness position. Beginning in 2017, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness developed procedures for general education, program, and unit assessment. These procedures were piloted in 2017 and eventually chartered officially into the Buffalo State Assessment Plan 2019-2024 which included improvements from the previous Assessment Plan 2014-2019.

Until 2021, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) led the Assessment Advisory Board, charged with oversight of academic program assessment. Membership included individuals identified as stakeholders from all institutional areas: two faculty members and associate deans from each of the schools, the associate provost, and one member from the Office of Graduate Studies. IE also provided oversight of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, charged with measuring the extent to which institutional performance satisfied Buffalo State’s mission. The Online Oversight and Readiness Committee also was led by IE with a charge to support the online initiatives found in the strategic plan as well as other areas such as policy, growth, assessment, compliance, and governance. The College Planning Council’s charge was to monitor and assess the progress and completion of all goals associated with Buffalo State’s Strategic Plan 2016-2021. Archived reports from all four committees can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning website. (S5.C2 Assessment Plan 2014-2019; S5.C2 Assessment Plan 2019-2024; S5.C2 Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Reports)

While foundational work in assessment structures was completed between 2017 and 2020, further structural changes took place in 2021 to advance overall planning, assessment, and data structures. The College Planning Council was disbanded and replaced with the Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee (see Standard 1). IPAC’s members are drawn from the previous College Planning Council membership and assessment-related groups such as the Assessment Advisory Board and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, both of which were disbanded in the new structure. Other faculty, staff, and students who had an interest in serving on IPAC were also invited to participate. The intent of the restructuring was to integrate strategic planning with assessment processes, providing a more efficient way to ensure that the new strategic plan is fully supported by assessment data and used in planning and resource allocation.

An additional structural change took place in 2021 when the Office of Institutional Effectiveness was updated to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) with expanded responsibilities including oversight of the iterative strategic planning process, implementation, and review. A new assistant vice president was hired to lead the office and serve as the university’s Accreditation Liaison Officer. A Director of Planning position was added to the office, and within the last year, the Office of Institutional Research moved to Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. With existing responsibilities maintaining the assessment management system used by academic and functional units across campus, the new IEP office structure is positioned to integrate assessment processes, strategic planning, and institutional data systems. One additional shift took place upon the appointment of a new Director of Institutional Design and Distance Learning who reports to the associate provost and serves as Chair of the Online Oversight and Readiness Committee. Several individuals and campus committees have key roles in supporting and advancing curricular and assessment processes. Consistent with *Requirements of Affiliation 8*, undergraduate and graduate programs engage in a comprehensive evaluation process approximately every five years. Guided by the SUNY University Faculty Senate Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs, the academic evaluation process is collaborative, and includes the writing of a self-study, an external evaluation completed by a colleague from a peer institution, the evaluation report, and implementation of the recommendations that arise from the evaluation process. Results of program review are shared with appropriate internal constituents. Programs that are accredited perform program reviews in accordance with the policies of their accrediting body. A complete list of accredited programs is available on Buffalo State’s website.



There are two College Senate committees dedicated to ensuring that Buffalo State is regularly reviewing and revising academic programs: the College Senate Curriculum Committee (CSCC) and the Academic Plan Committee (APC). The CSCC reviews curriculum programs, including the IF14 general education program, on a regular basis to ensure program viability, educational need, adherence to capus policy, and SUNY’s requirements. The CSCC also reviews course proposals that are submitted by departments or interdisciplinary units to support their programs. The CSCC can also recommend program updates, revisions, deactivations, and new programs. After approval, new programs require submission to both SUNY Central Administration and New York State Education Department for their approvals, as do significant program revisions that meet certain SUNY criteria. In addition, the CSCC oversees the policy and progress of the Senate Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee (SIFOC), which oversees the IF14 general education program. Figure 5.1 summarizes the College Senate Curriculum Committee (CSCC) activities between 2016 and 2021.

| CSCC ACTIVITIES | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| New or Revised Items Submitted | 118 | 128 | 134 | 117 | 107 | 98 |
| Courses | 97 | 102 | 105 | 98 | 90 | 74 |
| Major Programs | 15 | 15 | 23 | 11 | 10 | 15 |
| Minor Programs | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Advanced Certificates | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Undergraduate Certificates | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Submitted to SUNY | 10 | 18 | 19 | 18 | 13 | 19 |
| Submitted to NYSED | | 11 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 5 |
| Programs Added | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Advanced Certificates Added | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 0 |
| Undergraduate Certificates Added | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Microcredentials Added | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 7 | 4 |

Figure 5.1 Summary of College Senate Curriculum Committee Activities. Source: College Senate

In 2019, the President’s Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention (PACUR) was convened. The president charged the provost and the vice president of student affairs to lead efforts in assessing retention efforts and recommending future policy and process improvements. PACUR membership includes representatives from both Academic and Student Affairs, demonstrating shared responsibilities in retention initiatives. Members of PACUR serve on the following three subcommittees:

- Strategic Initiatives Inventory subcommittee inventories retention initiatives and determines their success in retaining students.
- Assessment and Evaluation subcommittee supports assessment of current and future programs.
- Future State and Benchmarks subcommittee develops recommendations for aspirational annual retention goals and recommends appropriate data to support retention goals.

PACUR continued its work until 2022 when responsibilities for retention efforts moved to the division of Enrollment Management.



[S5.C2c] In 2017, Buffalo State procured Watermark’s online accountability management system (AMS) to streamline campus-wide assessment efforts. Academic and support unit assessment documents and activities have been warehoused and tracked in AMS to increase transparency, facilitate sharing of data and analyses, ease real-time reporting, and to provide a vehicle for feedback from deans and vice presidents. Assessment information for each department and unit, such as mission, goals, program assessment plans, curriculum maps, and program review self-studies are recorded and maintained in a reporting workspace within AMS. Within department and unit annual reports, SLO assessment results are included. The flow of annual assessment information is routed from the program or unit to their respective deans or unit directors, and then to the vice president level. Records can be shared easily with all members of a unit or department to promote collaboration. Final feedback from deans, directors, and vice presidents can be provided through the AMS, further promoting discussion, and sharing of results.

Although AMS is used as the campus-wide tool to track and house assessment information, each department and unit determines if supplemental tools and procedures are needed to gather, analyze, and disseminate data. Additional procedures include the completion of quarterly reports that summarize assessment results. In addition, strategy management software such as AchieveIt is available to track and manage assessment of key performance indicators at the strategic level. Data visualization tools such as Tableau and PowerBI are also available to support assessment processes. The Office of Institutional Research provides analytic support for the planning, evaluation, and policy initiatives of senior leadership and serves as the institution’s reporting agent. Division-specific data gleaned from these sources are summarized in annual reports housed in the AMS (S5.C2 Program Reviews by Year; S5.C2 SUNY Guide for Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs; S5.C2 Accredited Programs).

MEANINGFUL CURRICULAR GOALS AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION

[S5.C2a] As previously presented in Standard V and aligned with *Requirement of Affiliation 9*, Buffalo State has meaningful educational goals at the institutional, program, and course levels that are linked to the mission of the university. Faculty and relevant staff use various direct and indirect measures to evaluate the extent to which students are achieving educational goals.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since 2017, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Planning (and the previous Office of Institutional Effectiveness) collaborates with the Senate Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee (SIFOC) to assess the education curriculum outcomes on a five-year cycle. SIFOC deploys Oversight and Assessment Committees (OAC) that are composed of four to six faculty, professional staff, faculty librarians, and an associate dean who serves as a liaison with faculty teaching in the general education program. The SIFOC OACs are charged to design, refine, and execute Buffalo State’s Assessment Plan for general education on an annual and ongoing basis. The IF14 general education program assessment process includes the following steps for categories undergoing assessment:

1. The associate provost, in consultation with associate deans announces membership of the Oversight Assessment Committee.
2. Faculty teaching courses in the IF category are notified and assessment orientations are held for faculty.
3. Students receive a survey in weeks three and thirteen to measure perceived level of familiarity with each SLO.
4. At the end of the semester, faculty upload samples of student artifacts that represent criteria for each SLO standard, the number of students who scored in each SLO rating scale and provide information regarding their thoughts on what they feel went well in their assessment processes and what they expect to change.
5. Results are distributed to OAC members who complete a report that is submitted to SIFOC, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, and the larger campus community.

As the General Education program completes a five-year cycle and as the university moves toward integration of assessment and planning, the general education assessment process will undergo a review in preparation for the new General Education program (S5.C2a General Education – Mission, Role and Process).



UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE MAJORS

Program review for academic majors is an integral part of the systematic review and improvement of academic curriculum offerings at Buffalo State. The program review process includes the development of a self-study and discussion of the program-level SLOs that are submitted annually via the AMS as part of each department annual report. Each program curriculum map identifies where SLO content is introduced, reinforced, and mastered. Most undergraduate program-level SLOs are assessed in upper-level, required capstone courses that are designed to allow students to demonstrate their learning through applied learning activities, such as senior seminars, studios, research-based courses, internships, student teaching, and clinical placements. Graduate program SLOs are typically assessed based on student theses, internships, portfolios, exhibitions, and culminating exams. Departments use assessment results from their annual reports and program review self-study or discipline-based accreditation processes to improve their curriculum and student learning. Upon completion of the program review, deans and departments work together to implement agreed upon recommendations for improvement. Course SLO assessment performed throughout undergraduate and graduate courses contributing to program curriculum ensures that assessment of student learning includes significant involvement of department faculty members.

PLACEMENT AFTER GRADUATION AND CONNECTING WITH ALUMNI

[S5.C2b] Buffalo State’s mission includes our commitment to our students gaining a “lifelong passion for learning.” The university’s vision includes the desire to be known for “intellectual and creative accomplishments of faculty, staff, students, and alumni” and “developing leaders for an increasingly global society.” Buffalo State demonstrates its commitment to alumni in a variety of ways, including a periodic university-wide survey administered to all graduating seniors, and collection of alumni information by individual departments.

Alumni surveys are also administered at the program and department levels, and in some cases, the collection of data aligns with accreditation requirements. For example, all graduates from Teacher Education Unit are surveyed one-year and three-years post-graduation. Data from undergraduate and graduate art education programs indicate that a majority (84-93%) of students surveyed in one-year post-graduation indicated that they had knowledge in key content areas. In addition, among the students who graduated from the art education program between 2014 and 2020, 45 of 60 (75%) indicated they are teaching in the field of fine and performing arts in New York State. Results from graduates of undergraduate program in Chemistry indicate that among graduates from 2017-2022, 25 graduates went on to graduate school and four went on the professional schools. Regarding the employment of graduates in Chemistry who responded to a survey, 51% of graduates from the past six years are working in their industry. Results from the Psychology Department alumni surveys that were administered between 2018 and 2022 indicated that between 4 and 24% of graduating seniors were planning on working full time in a psychology-related field, while between 2 and 20% were accepted to graduate school (in both psychology and non-psychology programs). Several departments track their alumni through informal means, including scanning LinkedIn posts and surveying faculty and staff about their alumni connections. Departments also highlight alumni accomplishments on their websites, including an interactive map of alumni jobs on the Geography and Planning Department website (S5.C2b Physics Careers and Alumni News; S5.C2b Communication Alumni Success Stories; S5.C2b Philosophy - Troy Caruana’s Story; S5.C2b Geography and Planning Alumni Job Map).

SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AND COMMUNICATING RESULTS

[S5.C2c] With oversight of the AMS software, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) supports the campus in their annual assessment reporting by providing notification of annual assessment due dates and by providing support for use of the AMS. The IEP, in collaboration with the associate provost, the associate deans in each school, department chairs, and faculty supports the assessment of general education. As previously discussed, the office of IEP and associate deans coordinate 5-year program reviews. Notification of both IF14 and academic program review assessment schedules are discussed at the school level at department chair meetings and in individual department meetings. All general education and academic program review reports are publicly available (S5.C2c General Education Reports; S5.C2c Program Review Reports).

Buffalo State offers a range of professional development activities to improve educational effectiveness. Opportunities are available to both faculty and staff under the general view that all campus employees are educators in their own way and meeting the needs of the whole student requires a campus-wide effort. Professional development is offered by a variety of offices on campus, including the Teaching and Learning Center, the Professional Development Center, Instructional Design and Distance Learning, as well as trainings directly related to Global Engagement, Civic and Community Engagement, and Undergraduate Research. Buffalo State also has resources made available by SUNY’s Center for Professional Development.



Professional development topics cover a variety of areas including the following:

Teaching techniques

- Just-In-Time for Reading: Helping Students Come to Class Prepared
- Flipping Your Course
- Structured Reflection: Case Studies from the Field
- Using Online Journals

Technical guidance

- Creating video-based discussion on Flipgrid
- Adding Gamification and Badging to an Online/Remote Course
- Using Podcasts/Webcasts to Connect with Students

Pedagogy

- Promoting Academic Rigor
- Metacognition in the Arts
- Creating Measurable Learning Objectives
- Formative Assessment Tools that Can Be Used in Face-to-Face, Online, and Hybrid Courses

Learning inside and outside the classroom

- Tutoring, Learning, and Student Success: What Every Professor Should Know
- Being Mindful of Financial Aid Implications When Advising Students
- COIL: Bringing Internationalism into the Classroom
- Civic Engagement Webinar: Exploring the Connection: Community Engagement and College Completion

Student supports and student success

- Teaching Sensitive Topics
- Understanding and dealing effectively with the impact of psychological distress on student learning
- Using a Team Approach to Support Students on the Autism Spectrum in the College Classroom
- Implicit Bias and Inclusive Pedagogies Impact on Student Success
- Life After #MeToo: The Impact of Trauma on Applied Learning



While there are benefits to workshops, Buffalo State also believes in the power of ongoing cohorts of faculty and staff working on learning efficacy. The “cohort models” take various forms, but typically involve multiple days of intense work that is followed up throughout the next year. Cohort programs include:

- Becoming HIP (high-impact practice)
- Applied Learning is HIP (high-impact practice)
- Bringing Open Educational Resources to a classroom near you
- Title III’s Digital Supplemental Instruction program
- Master Educator Program
- FITT Academy (Fostering Innovation in Teaching with Technology)
- Learning Communities are HIP (high-impact practice)

In addition to workshops and long-standing cohorts, Buffalo State is committed to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Since 2001, The SoTL initiative seeks to promote effective student learning by carefully exploring and systematically documenting the efficacy of various teaching practices, learning environments, and institutional policies. The studies produced have been grounded in the existing literature and tailored to the needs of Buffalo State students. Through its association with the Carnegie Foundation and organizations such as the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Buffalo State has been recognized on the worldwide SoTL stage.

The university’s programs as well as our rankings are available to the public. Assessment results that demonstrate the degree to which students are successful in meeting general education and program student learning outcomes are addressed available for review. Other areas where programmatic assessment is communicated include departmental and senior leadership meetings where results are shared. Additional efforts are made to include administrative units in the sharing of assessment results where information is used to support decision-making at various levels of the university.

USING ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

[S5.3] Buffalo State’s mission and vision emphasize empowering students to succeed, and our vision and values provide guidance to campus stakeholders on supporting the mission. Buffalo State is committed to supporting students from the point-of-entry to graduation and beyond. Results from our assessment processes are shared with appropriate constituencies and used to improve educational effectiveness as evidenced by examples included in the following section.

ASSISTING STUDENTS TO IMPROVE THEIR LEARNING

[S5.C3a] As a student-centered institution, Buffalo State has several institutional procedures, guidelines, and structures in place to support student learning. We have planned and budgeted for several programs and support services that provide opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential and improve upon their learning throughout their experience at Buffalo State.

COLLEGE WRITING AND MATHEMATICS COURSE PLACEMENT

Buffalo State views placing first-year students in appropriate gateway courses such as introductory writing and mathematics courses as an important step in positioning students to experience academic success in their first semester in college. Prior to the fall 2021 semester, our system to place students in their first general education IF 14 basic written and oral communication course and mathematics and quantitative reasoning course was based on standardized tests scores and time-intensive analysis of student transcripts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, incoming students were not completing standardized tests and this fact, coupled with the fact that our placement system was deemed inefficient and cumbersome, led to the spring 2021 development of a new multiple-measures placement system that was implemented in fall 2021 and fall 2022. The new method is based on an analysis of a six-year historical database (fall 2015-fall 2020) of students’ high school GPAs and final grades in introductory college writing and math courses. These data were used to



determine high school GPA threshold scores above which students successfully completed their introductory college writing and math courses and below which they did not. For fall 2021 and fall 2022 placements, incoming students with a high school GPA below the threshold score were placed in developmental sections with additional support structures. Threshold scores also were used to place students in an appropriate level math course. A full academic support plan for students in developmental sections and an assessment plan of this new placement method have not been developed; however, early analysis of the fall 2021 writing placements indicates that more students with a high school GPA below the threshold score earned A and B grades in the developmental sections (28 versus 19%) and fewer of these students earned a failing grade in these sections (34 versus 44%).

REVIEWING AND IMPROVING PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM IN GENERAL EDUCATION

[S5.C3b] Several significant revisions have been made to the General Education program in the last ten years, primarily to maintain alignment with SUNY's General Education requirements. Between 2017 and 2019, the university developed a four-phase assessment process similar to the process that currently is in use. Faculty and staff collaborated to create an assessment process that utilized direct and indirect assessment measures to be applied to the IF14 general education categories. By the end of academic year 2022-2023, each IF14 general education program will have undergone a full cycle of assessment of each of the general education categories. General education assessment reports are available to the campus community and the public, making results accessible to a wide range of campus constituents (S5.C3b General Education Reports).

A revision of the current IF 14 general education program began in 2019 and work continues as the university adjusts to the new SUNY General Education Requirements (GER) that will be implemented in Fall 2023. In 2019, the College Senate General Education Ad-Hoc Task Force on Curriculum (GEATFC) was charged with revising the IF14 program in accordance with current requirements for student success and to ensure that the IF14 program was meeting SUNY's GER. The GEATFC has been reviewing the IF14 assessment data, a report produced by the 2018 Provost's General Education Task Force, the new SUNY GER, and other relevant information including institutional learning outcomes and the Social Justice Learning Institute recommendations to draft a general education program revision. A GEATFC subcommittee was charged in Spring 2022 to make recommendations regarding how Buffalo State will implement SUNY's GER.

GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES AND CONTENT AREAS

As Buffalo State approaches the end of a full cycle of General Education assessment of IF14 competencies and content areas and prepares for a new General Education program, spring and fall 2022 provide the campus with an opportunity to reflect upon assessment processes that have been in place since 2019. A review of the assessment process has resulted in the following information under consideration as the university prepares for a new general education program.

It is apparent that general education assessment has generated a significant amount of data over the past five years, as every student in every general education course under review has been assessed. However, data has been used inconsistently, and in some cases, specific types of collected data have not been used in the assessment process, calling into question the value of the current assessment processes. Overall, Oversight and Assessment Committees (OAC) have consistently made the following recommendations:

- Students need to be made aware of the general education student learning outcomes. Ensuring that SLOs are included in syllabi is an important component of the general education program. Student involvement in their learning will strengthen the program.
- Dean's offices should reach out to faculty teaching general education courses to ensure that instructors are aware of the SLOs and plan accordingly.
- SIFOC and the CSCC should conduct a regular review of courses included in general education to ensure they are still appropriate for continued inclusion in the program. Courses meeting the general education category should revise and improve content and presentation in keeping with current issues and research, student interests, and strategies for active engagement.
- Faculty development needs to be provided to enable enhanced performance in teaching general education courses. This will provide an opportunity to enhance the preparations and delivery of curriculum so that it is more relatable to the needs of students, while generating overall improved performance which results in meeting the requirements of the SLOs.
- Course section data analysis included in the reports indicates that a majority of students in some general education courses met/exceeded standards, but they did not in other courses; the possible reasons for these large variations need to be explored.



REVIEWING AND IMPROVING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

[S5.C3b] Assessment is integral to improving academic programs and support services. Over the period of review, our assessment process has led to multiple curriculum changes and initiatives designed to improve student learning and achievement. Examples are highlighted in the following section.

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Faculty within the School of Arts and Sciences (formerly the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Natural and Social Sciences) have used program-level assessment results, program review self-study reflection, external review feedback, and other informal student feedback to improve existing programs and create new, innovative programs. The Biology Department and the Psychology Department developed courses to better prepare students in their major programs for upper-level courses. The English B.A. program was revised based on years of departmental feedback, assessment reports, and changes to the discipline. The revision included an intermediary course designed to bridge the gap between the introductory courses and upper-level courses and a new practicum-type capstone course. Based on a five-year program review in 2015-2016, the Earth Sciences Department revised both their major programs, which included changing the Geology B.A. to a B.S. and aligning curriculum to Professional Geologist licensing requirements. In 2020, the Communication Studies B.A. program was revised to replace older, outdated courses with newly developed courses in media production that will provide students with content on current industry standard practices in the field. The B.A. program in Africana Studies was revised and it began enrolling students in 2021.

The following new programs, certificates, and microcredentials have been recently developed:

- In 2020, the Psychology Department developed an undergraduate certificate in Child Advocacy Studies. This certificate includes learning experiences outside the classroom and active community partnerships.
- In 2021, the English Department began enrolling students in a Technical Writing undergraduate certificate that includes upper-level writing intensive courses from several other department across campus including biology, chemistry, engineering, and technology and allows non-matriculated students to gain skills in activities such as applying for grants or start-up funds.
- Two new undergraduate microcredentials are also being offered: Interior Design-Fundamental Theory and History (Fall 2021) and Geospatial Technologies (Fall 2022). These microcredentials also provide students with learning opportunities in and out of the classroom as well as applied learning opportunities.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (SOE)

The School of Education has 40 educator preparation programs that comprise the Teacher Education Unit (TEU), all accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Findings from the 2021 CAEP self-study and accreditation site visit confirmed that the TEU has a viable, functioning quality assurance system known as the Buffalo State Education Assessment System (BSEAS). The BSEAS has yielded results that prompted TEU faculty to make curriculum changes at the course and program level. Examples include course revisions based upon low test scores in specific areas for early childhood education majors. A downward trend from 2016 to 2018 on the pedagogical item on the Math Content Specialty Test led to incorporating an assignment on this topic into a math education course. Changes were incorporated into several art education program courses in response to low Art Content Specialty Test scores.

Regarding program revisions, the Exceptional Education Department added an Urban Studies Concentration to its teacher education programs in 2018-2019, which aligned the curriculum to Buffalo State's mission and directly addressed our urban engaged institutional learning outcome. The Exceptional Education Department also revised the undergraduate Special Education and Childhood Education B.S.Ed. to include initial certification in two specialties because a survey of professionals identified that teacher candidates should have a dual certification. Recently, the SoE has been purposefully increasing efforts to recruit and retain more candidates from diverse backgrounds. The TEU is encouraged to seek out methods to support these candidates, so they progress through the program and experience success through completion. One example of supports that appear to be working is through the Buffalo Urban Teacher Pipeline Residency Program with Buffalo Public Schools. Almost all candidates who started the program have successfully retained over time (at the graduate level, 15 began Fall 2019 and 13 completed). A key aspect of this initiative includes program features such as evening and weekend classes, in person or hybrid formats, regular contact with dedicated advisers and instructors, and emphasis placed on the value of their lived experiences (S5.C3c School of Education Assessment Report; S5.C3c Educational Pipeline Initiative Office Assessment Report; S5.C3c Teacher Education Self-Study - Educational Pipeline Initiative Report).



SCHOOL OF THE PROFESSIONS (SOP)

Faculty in the School of the Professions have used program review self-study reflection, external review feedback, and student feedback to improve existing programs and create new, innovative programs. The Criminal Justice Department instituted a capstone course based on feedback from their self-study. The Electrical Engineering Technology Program made several revisions to their BS program based on the analysis of data obtained from student course grades and results on the Society of Manufacturing Engineers outcome assessment for two- and four-year colleges and universities. The Higher Education Administration graduate program made improvements to the internship and culminating experiences requirements based on feedback from their self-study.

SoP faculty have also developed new programs, certificates and microcredentials in response to our student body's needs and interests. Examples include the following:

- The Business Department developed a new Master of Science in Business Management program to meet the needs of students across campus who are interested in a graduate management program but are not interested in obtaining the traditional MBA. The first cohort was enrolled Fall 2021.
- The Creativity and Change Leadership Department has developed two new graduate microcredentials: Applied Creative Thinking and Problem Solving and Creative Education: Innovative Learning, Thinking, and Problem Solving.
- The Criminal Justice Department has been responsive to student and community needs. The creation of a combined BS/MS Pathway for students in the BS program to continue directly to the MS program, was designed to offer students with an efficient pathway to completion. The new Policing Analytics graduate microcredential provides new, practical, and marketable skills to graduate students.
- In response to feedback from students and alumni, the Higher Education Administration Department developed an online graduate certificate in Assessment in Student Affairs, which began enrolling students in 2019. The department also developed a new graduate microcredential in Data Management and Storytelling in 2021.
- In 2020, the Speech Language Pathology Department began enrolling freshmen students directly into their BS program (admission previously had been a two-step process). This has resulted in an earlier connection with students and has increased enrollment.

STUDENT SUCCESS SUPPORT SERVICES

The Division of Student Affairs is committed to the cultivation and enhancement of student learning, development, and student success by providing student-centered programs and services that contribute to the intellectual, social, and cultural growth of our students. Comprised of ten departments, the Division of Student Affairs oversees a variety of programs, services, and activities including athletics, dining services, health center, leadership, residence life, and career development. Not only do these offerings help meet the mission, vision, and goals of the Division of Student Affairs, they contribute to improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates. Recent examples of improvements are summarized here. Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) has key performance indicators that are assessed regularly. Specific data are analyzed monthly, and actions are taken as a result. The Career and Professional Education Office (CAPE) staff meets bi-annually to establish goals, assess progress, and ensure that activities align with best practices and industry standards. The CAPE collaborates with offices in the Division of Student Affairs and with faculty and staff throughout campus. Career education is woven throughout the curriculum, and a one-credited career theory and decision-making course is also offered by CAPE staff. The Student Union, which is part of Student Leadership and Engagement (SLE), has worked over the last two years to align their operation to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Through this process, the Student Union team developed learning outcomes for the various groups they engage with and began a pilot assessment project for event planning with student organizations. Through this process, several changes have already been made to event planning procedures and results indicate that the process is teaching students soft skills.

PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR THE PROVISION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

[S5.C3e] The mission and Strategic Plan guide planning and budgeting of academic programs and services. Buffalo State has been engaged in a Strategic Resource Planning Process (SRPP). The SRPP is an integrated resources planning tool that is used in conjunction with program and unit assessment results to inform resource allocation to programs. Academic and student support planning and funding are critical components of SRPP, as departments and units across campus complete workbooks each fall semester that contain data such as student enrollment, number of faculty, student retention, and graduation rates. The information included in the workbooks facilitate data-informed decisions that lead to success for students throughout their college experience and beyond. This information allows us to improve student learning, review and revise academic programs and supports, and implement other processes and procedures that improve educational programs and services. Buffalo State has invested significant resources in student support areas through grant funding, such as the SUNY PIF grants and the on-going Title III grant.



INFORMING APPROPRIATE CONSTITUENTS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION AND ITS PROGRAMS

[S5.3f] As discussed above, assessment results are communicated with administration to inform decision-making processes. Marketing and Communications utilizes print and social media messaging to provide information to a wide audience. President Conway-Turner and vice presidents provide frequent updates to the campus community and the Dean of Students Office offers the Bengal Family Newsletter to parents, family members, and friends of the university.

IMPROVING KEY INDICATORS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

[S5.C3g and C3.f] As mentioned in several areas throughout the Self-Study Report, Buffalo State has implemented several programs designed to improve retention, graduation, transfer, and placement of students. In 2018, the university was awarded a Title III grant to strengthen academic and student support programs. This was a \$2.2 million grant over five years to provide academic support to enhance retention on campus through an Online Summer Engagement Program (OSEP), Digital Supplemental Instruction Modules (DSIM), intrusive academic advising, peer mentoring, and completion coaches. Another portion of the grant was dedicated to hiring a data analytics staff member. A Title III Coordinator was hired in 2019, and the following initiatives have since been implemented:

- The OSEP provides tailored comprehensive programming to peer-matched cohorts, facilitated by professionally trained completion coaches.
- DSIM were designed for introductory gateway courses with high D-E-W rates.
- An intrusive academic advising model was developed and implemented to augment and complement the professional coaching and peer mentoring initiatives.
- The retention management system Starfish (Bengal Success Portal) is now in use to monitor and give immediate feedback and tracking for student success.
- Targeted tutoring is widespread and improves the efficiency and scalability of existing tutoring services by coordinating schedules for individual and group tutoring.
- The ROAR 2 Success (Recognizing Opportunities Achieving Results) program provides additional supports to first year students to make connections on campus with peers, staff, and faculty.

The President’s Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention (PACUR) also has provided results on student learning. One positive finding by the committee was that several programs and departments use models that are proven to contribute to higher levels of student retention. For example, Athletics, EOP, Honors, and Say Yes all provide students with specific contact people such as counselors and coaches, and reinforcements such as summer programs and tutoring to support students. The College Student Inventory (CSI) was utilized by PACUR to collect data on incoming students and the programs supporting them. The CSI is a nationally recognized readiness assessment for incoming undergraduate students that identifies at-risk students in the incoming class using the leading noncognitive indicators of college student success. Results from the CSI are useful for identifying student strengths and weaknesses in their preparation for college. The CSI Summary and Planning Report is generated each year and contains statistical data and specific recommendations for selected students. The report is designed to provide information on the aggregate data available from the cohort of students who have completed the CSI. Roughly 20% of students participated in the first iteration of this survey.

Additional progress on the 2016 strategic initiatives included development and expansion of Undergraduate Research, the Honors Program, and Learning Communities, and the securement of a Performance Improvement Funding (PIF) Grant. The PIF grant was utilized for a Summer Bridge Program for nearly 200 COMPASS and general admission students, consisting of a four-day course in the week before classes, focused on strategies for success in college. The PIF grant also funded expanded tutoring and peer mentoring, as well as a Supplemental Instruction (SI) program for courses with high attrition rates.

| RETENTION RATE | FALL 2017 | FALL 2018 | FALL 2019 | FALL 2020 | FALL 2021 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 66.2% | 60.9% | 58% | 64.5% | 48.3% |

Figure 5.2 Retention Rate. Source: Institutional Research



IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EXPERIENCES

[S5.C3h] In addition to the programs discussed in Standard 4, several types of assessment results have been used to improve educational programs. For example, Enrollment Management and IPAC have reviewed a significant amount of data collected from faculty, staff, and students regarding students' experiences. As a result, transfer students have become a priority for the new campus strategic plan and for Enrollment Management's strategic plan. Considering the percentage of transfer students that Buffalo State receives each year, specific initiatives will support the transfer student experience. Several other initiatives designed to improve the student experience are included in Enrollment Management's plan includes financial aid support, advising improvements, and communication strategies with students.

PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

[S5.C5] Assessment at Buffalo State is an on-going process that includes all members of the Buffalo State community. Campus constituents can influence the processes utilized for improvement of educational effectiveness; for example, individual faculty members have a large impact on the courses offered and the programs those courses support. Faculty and staff members are actively engaged in assessing educational effectiveness in student support areas. The College Senate plays key roles in curriculum development and administrative offices and committees also influence Buffalo State's assessment processes and activities. Given the varied ways members of the campus community can engage in our established assessment processes, there are ample opportunities for many voices to be heard and new insights to be applied to our assessment processes.

FINDINGS

- Buffalo State has clearly articulated ILOs and SLOs for our IF general education program, academic major programs, and student support programs. Moreover, this self-study has demonstrated how these outcomes are influenced by Buffalo State's mission, vision, and values.
- Buffalo State has an organized planning and assessment structure that facilitates monitoring educational effectiveness by way of assessment of student learning and program review.
- Buffalo State has meaningful learning objectives that are periodically assessed using methods that ensure that the assessment process is manageable, informative, collaborative, transparent, and on-going.
- The university has demonstrated that assessment results have been used across campus to improve educational effectiveness in multiple areas including our general education program, academic program development, and student support initiatives.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- Although the university fulfills its assessment of student learning obligations as required by MSCHE and SUNY, there are opportunities to strengthen assessment systems at the strategic, divisional, department, and program levels as the university moves forward with a new strategic plan. It would benefit the university to provide support for assessment activities.





STANDARD 6: PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

The following section describes Buffalo State's ability to satisfy Standard 6 criteria and sub criteria and *Requirements of Affiliation 8, 10, and 11.*

MISSION-DRIVEN PLANNING AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

[S6.C1] Assessment at Buffalo State occurs in all academic and support departments as an iterative, reflective process consistent with the university mission and strategic plan goals. Those processes are vertically aligned. We base strategic and financial planning and allocation on the results of these assessments. The policies that govern assessment processes at Buffalo State are included in the Buffalo State Assessment Plan and are assessed on rolling cycles in connection with our mission-driven strategic plan.

The mission, vision, and goals of Buffalo State are the bedrock upon which the 2016 – 2021 and the 2022 – 2026 strategic plans have been built. From the Strategic Plan, departments create their individual goals. This system is driven by annual input from various directors and chairs. Job descriptions, performance programs, and optional mid-year discussions for individual employees throughout the campus can be used to compose the annual reports to make up the data used in the AMS (S6.C1 Performance Evaluation and Professional Development System PEPDS; S6.C1 Strategic Plan 2016-2021).

Adherence to the strategic plan is the responsibility of the entire university, however some groups have a special charge to monitor its progress. The College Planning Council (CPC) was charged to monitor and assess the progress and completion of all goals associated with the Buffalo State Strategic Plan (2016–2021). The CPC reviewed progress on all elements of the goals assigned to members of the cabinet and created a timeline for all cabinet members to report the status of goals under their direction. The Institutional Planning Advisory Committee (IPAC) will serve this purpose for Buffalo State's new Strategic plan.

The President's Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention (PACUR) convened in fall 2019, reviews campus efforts to identify initiatives that have been successful in retaining students. PACUR reviews data related to student departure and recommends adjustments to policies, initiatives, and programs that can positively affect efforts and create a shared responsibility for retention that is focused on understanding the breadth of retention initiatives, reducing duplication of efforts, and collaborating across divisions, and focus on recommendations that support efforts that retain students. Subcommittees within PACUR include the Strategic Initiatives Inventory, Assessment and Evaluation, and Future State and Benchmarks group. The Strategic Initiatives Inventory will be used to assess campus retention initiatives and determine their success in retaining students. The Assessment and Evaluation group will develop recommendations and an inventory related to assessment of current and future programs, and the Future State and Benchmark group will develop recommendations on aspirational annual goals related to retention increases and the data recommended to monitor.

The newly developed Academic Commons in E.H. Butler Library improves students' academic success and serves as a one-stop shop for students seeking academic assistance in math, writing, or general study skills and will also serve as the new home for the Student Accessibility Services Office.

In October of 2018, Buffalo State was awarded a \$2.19 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant is designed around two primary components linked by a predictive analytics framework to inform timely, efficient, and scalable services to students. Buffalo State strengthened student services by designing a new Online Summer Engagement Program, which provides tailored comprehensive programming to peer-matched cohorts, facilitated by professionally trained completion coaches. The completion coaches will work with their cohort of students throughout the first year. Upon arrival on campus, students will have developed community ties prior to beginning their work with the Bengal Experience and Transition Team (BEAT) peer mentors. Completion coaches will utilize results from Noel Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) to develop personalized student success plans to assist students in the transition to college and respond to early life and respond to early alerts from the Retention Management System (Starfish). Buffalo State strengthened academic services by developing digital supplemental instruction modules for introductory gateway courses with high D-E-W rates. An intrusive academic advising model will be designed to complement the professional coaching and peer mentoring initiatives, and tutoring will help to improve the efficiency and scalability of existing tutoring services by coordinating schedules for individual and group tutoring.



Buffalo State and InsideTrack partnered to develop a Student Journey Map that detailed the student journey from inquiry through their first year. The project mapped specific campus roles, highlighted key milestones for the purpose of creating role clarity, detected institutional silos, identified the current and ideal state of the student journey, and created recommendations for cohesive improvements with a focus on enhancing student success and retention.

The Bengal Success Portal (Starfish) serves as the university's Retention Management System, which allows for efficient communication among students, faculty, advisers, support staff, and administrators to support student success and retention. This platform is used by academic departments and support offices on campus including Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions, Academic Advising, Student Leadership and Engagement, Accessibility Services, Education Opportunity Program, and Tutoring Services. The Bengal Success Portal encourages students to become active in their academic lives by connecting them to the campus resources and support services they need to succeed at Buffalo State. Students can use the Bengal Success Portal to contact professors and advisers through email, make appointments online with advisers and professors, and find tutoring information.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects survey responses from first-year students and seniors. Buffalo State conducts this survey on a 3-year cycle. NSSE was last administered in 2020 and will be launched again in 2023. A snapshot of the engagement indicators, high-impact practices, multi-year report and first-year experiences and senior transitions data can be found on the Institutional Dashboards. NSSE data is used to assess current programs, services, recruitment methods, residential experiences, academic programs, and initiatives. Assessment methods provide opportunities to enhance or develop current initiatives including but not limited to increasing support for students with learning differences and building learning-living communities (S6.C1 National Survey of Student Engagement NSSE).

EDUCATE STUDENTS THROUGH RIGOROUS AND ENGAGING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[S6.C2] Until 2021, the Academic Assessment Board (AAB), provided oversight of academic assessment with the primary purpose of improving the curriculum, provide continuous feedback, promote exchange among faculty, and justify resources. Schedules and Procedures for departmental program review and Intellectual Foundations assessment are housed on the Institutional Planning and Effectiveness website.

As with the larger academic assessment, Intellectual Foundations (IF) assessment runs on a rolling 5-year cycle. The IF website hosts all the assessment reports for its categories generated by the Oversight and Assessment committees. This process assesses the General Education Student Learning Outcomes which are described in more detail in the Academic Affairs Assessment Plan According to the 2019-2024 Academic Affairs Assessment Plan (S6.C2 Academic Affairs Assessment Plan 2019-2024).

Assessment of departmental activities is carried out by individual departments. Academic departments engage in a 5-year program review process for non-accredited programs. Accredited programs maintain assessment schedules as dictated by the respective accrediting body. Program review complies with the SUNY Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs. All support units have their own mission and support outcomes that align to the campus strategic plan. Support departments have an assessment plan that endeavors to identify the effectiveness of the unit. Departments utilize key performance indicators in their assessments over a 5-year cycle which are updated at the end of the fiscal year.

A variety of other reports funnel into the academic and support unit reporting cycle for the campus. This includes the Butler Library's annual SUNY Library Acquisitions and Retirements survey which charts expenditures and material acquisitions among SUNY libraries. This data is compiled into a dashboard which enables SUNY libraries to benchmark themselves against peers. The Butler library also administers the LibQual+ survey every three years. This survey requests that library patrons rate the quality of library services, spaces, and collections. The results of this survey inform the distribution of quiet and social spaces in the library. They were also used in the recent renovation of the Academic Commons which is housed in the Butler library. As a result of the survey, several improvements were made to Academic Commons spaces including increased individual study spaces and more electric outlets (S6.C2 SUNY Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs).

PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES

[S6.C2] Buffalo State's current Facilities Master Plan spans from 2013 to 2023 and describes the roadmap of capital improvements to the campus. This plan presents the investments in the campus across academic, support, and campus life facilities and identifies opportunities for the campus to develop unused spaces and redevelop existing facilities.



This plan was updated in October of 2019 to include links to the campus Strategic Plan including enriching the student experience and improving community engagement. New projects that support these goals included the Science and Math Complex renovation, the Dart Street development project, and the new Academic Commons at the Butler Library. Part of this updated plan included a space and classroom utilization study. Among its findings were that the campus has a deficit of student spaces for gatherings and recreation. It further identified a surplus of classroom spaces and a deficit of properly sized office spaces.

[S6.C2 and C3] In the 2013 Self-Study Accreditation Report, the university reported that a goal of moving to an all-funds budgeting process. The campus began by developing a Business Intelligence System and background data to be included. This integrated resource planning is informed by data and information linking the vision, priorities, people, and the physical institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making, and action. The first two years consisted of assessing and establishing the infrastructure and in December 2020, the SRPP was launched.

In December 2021, Buffalo State introduced the Strategic Resource Planning Process (SRPP) to identify areas for growth and development within the campus. The yearly process has three phases which gather data from departments and functional units via a comprehensive workbook. Units prepare an analysis that reflects the relationship between departmental needs and the priorities of the institution. The workbooks are consolidated and analyzed; growth and investment opportunities are derived from the analysis.

In a precursor to the launch of the Strategic Resource Planning Process for fiscal year 2021-22, President Conway-Turner led the campus through a three-year budget rebalancing process (2017–2020) that has reduced our expenses by \$7 million. The rebalancing process carefully reduced expenses by focusing on savings from retirements, resignations, modifications, and reorganizations. These efforts were executed to be minimally disruptive to our work, our systems, and our current norms.

This collaborative approach rolled out in December 2020 and includes the SRPP budget planning approach that links the vision, priorities, people, and physical attributes of the university in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making, and action. Integrated resource planning is an active and flexible process that supports data-informed decision making. Because it is conducted with transparency, it allows stakeholders to understand how decisions are being made.

To provide support and assistance with the procedures of assessment, The Enrollment and Resource Planning Taskforce (ERPT) was created in January 2019 to identify, review, and prioritize necessary materials and data sources to provide actionable insight. This group, which includes representation from across campus, works with appropriate campus units to provide resource planning tools. This focus on creating data for decision making resulted in the creation of Tableau data dashboards, accessible by members of the ERPT and senior executive staff, which are used by other planning processes, including the Strategic Resource Planning Process. ERPT has worked on internal projects to help create new academic program offerings through cost benefit analysis and market analysis. ERPT has also partnered with Enrollment Management to assist in strategic enrollment management planning including producing enrollment projections and identifying multi-year key performance indicators related to reenrollment management (S6.C2 Enrollment Resource Planning Taskforce ERPT Report 2021).

FINANCIAL PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND RESOURCE ALIGNMENT

[S6.C3] Buffalo State's campus community recognizes our current financial challenges. University leadership has laid the groundwork to foster innovation across campus and to prepare for a prosperous and sustaining future. Planning has been key to this work. The university has worked toward identifying greater efficiencies and creative solutions to offset some of the consequences of the national and regional shifts that have negatively affected our campus budget.

Buffalo State's new Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 prioritizes enhancing academic support services, creating an engaged community, and providing an outstanding on-campus student experience by assessing, planning, and improving initiatives to address student retention, support, and success initiatives. Evaluative methods are used to determine areas of efficiency, need, support, improvement, and innovation to assist with student retention, support, and success initiatives. The President's Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention, Title III Activities, Student Journey Map, Bengal Success Portal, and academic departments and support services offices are dedicated to improving student retention, improving student support, and fostering success at Buffalo State.



Buffalo State’s Financial Sustainability Plan 2022 – 2026 was designed to align with our new strategic planning efforts. The Financial Sustainability Plan identifies the following seven priorities:

Priority 1: Increase Enrollment

Increase enrollment with a focus on undergraduate retention and increasing our share of varied student sub-populations (transfer, out-of-state, international, and nontraditional students) and graduate populations. This priority will be completed in collaboration with Academic Affairs to modify or develop attractive program offerings to address current student interests.

Priority 2: Increase Community Directed Programs

Increase community-directed programs such as workforce programs, continuing education, and special short-term programs.

Priority 3: Increase Collaborations to Promote the Use of Campus Facilities

Increase collaborations with partner agencies, organizations, and outside entities to promote the use of campus facilities to meet the needs of partners while offering a steady source of revenue for the university.

Priority 4: Continue Successful Fundraising Activities

Continue successful fundraising activities for programmatic needs of the university and cultivate additional supporters that fund program needs.

Priority 5: Continue Workplace Efficiency Plans and Develop Collaborations with other SUNY campuses.

Continue current workplace efficiency plans and develop collaborations that use integrated services and technological solutions between campus units or with other SUNY campuses.

Priority 6: Focus Attention on Advocacy Goals with the State of New York

Focus attention on advocacy goals with the state of New York to improve the university’s overall financial standing.

Priority 7: Continue Workforce Planning to Address the Budget Deficit

Strategically continue workforce planning across the university to address the budget deficit while maintaining the essential components for our education-enterprise and adhering to compliance requirements. Workforce planning will be grounded in appropriate metrics, benchmarks, and the campus budgeting processes.

A Financial Sustainability Plan dashboard is available to the campus community where progress toward meeting each priority is presented.





Buffalo State’s Strategic Resource Planning Process (SRPP) is an integrated budget planning process that links the vision, priorities, people, and physical attributes of an institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making, and action. The process aligns current and future financial, human, and physical resources with the needs and goals of our institution, consistent with our academic priorities. It is an active rather than static process that employs strategies and considers integrated data and analytics. SRPP provides a framework to review its financial capacity, align its resources to support its priorities, and assess potential areas for new investment.

As a component of the SRPP, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Management and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs collaborate with units to plan for future years. The process includes the review of many factors including enrollment, tuition revenue, staffing, research expenditures and proposals, endowments, unit spending plans, capital and space planning, risk and contingencies, and investment proposals. The division of Finance and Management also collaborates with the division of Student Affairs to set broad-based fees that will be assessed to students to provide specific services and ensure that the university is accommodating students’ needs. This annual process is approved by SUNY and consists of the following three phases:

Phase 1: Three-Year Plan Information Collection

October to mid-February

Key Outcome: Buffalo State will share guidance, based on the university’s financial position, to help units provide input and communicate their needs via a three-year plan workbook.

Phase 2: Analysis, Discussion & Decision-Making

Mid-February to March

Key Outcome: There will be a shared understanding of units’ positions and needs to inform the resource planning decisions of the College Budget Committee.

Phase 3: Closure of Annual Resource Planning Process

April to August

Key Outcome: Buffalo State will confirm unit expectations and outcomes in order to finalize three-year plans and implement resource planning decisions.

The planning process employs a comprehensive workbook to support key outcomes. The workbook provides for the review of many factors at the unit level, including the following:

- Broad-based fees
- Capital and space needs
- Headcount, credit hours and tuition revenue
- Information technology needs
- Innovation and optimization of operations
- Institutional advancement and fundraising
- Research expenditures and proposals
- Risk contingencies
- Strategic priorities
- Workforce planning

(S6.C3 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI:23:00 - Faculty Roles and Obligations).



HUMAN RESOURCES, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

[S6.C5] Buffalo State recognizes the need to assess and mitigate risks across the university and the need to have an institution-wide enterprise risk management framework and a proactive approach towards risks and emergencies. The enterprise risk management framework adopted by the university recognizes and assesses all types of risks to the institution, including the following:

- Strategic risks-risks to the organization’s ability to achieve its goals
- Financial risks-risks that could result in a loss of assets
- Operational risks-risks that affect the institution’s ability to do everyday work
- Compliance risks-risks that involve externally imposed laws and regulations as well as internal policies and procedures
- Reputational risks-risks to the institution’s brand or reputation.

Buffalo State takes a comprehensive and strategic approach towards risks and emergencies, recognizing that not all risks are equal. Therefore, the University incorporates a risk assessment framework in which hazards are formally and individually evaluated. The framework ranks the risks by their likelihood and potential impact. “Most likely” and “significant” risks receive the greatest attention.

Buffalo State’s enterprise risk management framework and emergency planning structure’s goal is to increase the flexibility and adaptability of the institution and ensure that the institution can respond to disasters. The university has elaborate emergency response plans that offer guidelines on the handling of emerging health and safety emergencies, and in April 2022, the university added an Emergency Manager to support our work. The Campus Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CCEMP) sets forth operating procedures using the Incident Command System (ICS) for handling emergencies resulting from fires, floods, storms, hazardous materials incidents, and other potential disasters. The CCEMP is updated annually in coordination and collaboration with SUNY System Administration and the SUNY University Emergency Management Committee. The Committee is comprised of eight university police chiefs and emergency response managers and directors from various SUNY campuses. The CCEMP includes a chain of command establishing the authority and responsibility of various individuals. In emergencies, procedures sometimes must be changed at an instant’s notice; therefore, responsible and knowledgeable people who know the procedures have the authority to make necessary modifications. The plan’s goal is to ensure protection of life, incident stabilization and preservation of property in case an emergency occurs (S6.C6 Emergency Response Plan).

Buffalo State’s operations continuity plan has a protocol for the procurement of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the essential employees, based on the various tasks and individual needs of the employees. The process ensures that in the event of a health disaster, employees of the university receive appropriate protective equipment to reduce the risk of infection. During a health disaster, the university is committed to ensure an ample supply of medical and non-medical supplies, such as PPE. Moreover, the university has an elaborate exposure protocol that outlines how an exposed or an infected employee shall be guided, and how the entire worksite shall be disinfected to prevent the infection of others. The exposure protocol has a series of procedures to ensure that every individual physically reporting to the campus is screened for infectious diseases. The exposure protocol also ensures proper tracking of exposed employees to reduce the rate of infections. Furthermore, the protocol outlines a plan for emergency housing for essential employees to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

CAMPUS FACILITIES AND TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

[S6.C6 and C7] Buffalo State’s facilities (buildings, grounds, and underground infrastructure) are an institutional asset and must be maintained and updated to enhance the learning and working environment of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The basis for maintaining and upgrading facilities began with the 2013-2023 Facilities Master Plan. The three main goals, renew campus facilities, strengthen the quality of the campus experience, and engage the communities around the campus established during the plan still apply.



The connection to strategic priorities is established through the SRPP process. The SRPP process includes capital and space needs as part of the workbook which is combined with the critical capital maintenance needs of the campus to create a campus-wide priority list of projects recommended from the Capital Development Board (CDB) to the President. This priority list of projects is then included in the yearly campus work plan and 5-year capital plan maintained by the State University Construction Fund (SUCF) and the yearly capital plan submitted to the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) (S6.C6 Capital Development Board - Membership Charge and Scope).

Most of the funding for capital is allocated from SUCF who manages the capital planning, design, and construction for non-residence hall facilities for the SUNY system. The campus receives a small direct allocation of critical maintenance funding based on a formula and the remaining funding is requested and allocated to the campus based on a variety of factors. Buffalo State competes against all 64 SUNY campuses for the non-allocated funding. This includes funding for major full building renovations to minor critical maintenance needs. Since 2013 the campus was able to complete through funding from SUCF construction of two new buildings, the Technology Building, Jacqueline Vito LoRusso Alumni and Visitor Center, fully renovate two buildings, Caudell Hall and Science and Math Complete-renovation and addition, and partially renovate three buildings, Butler Library—Academic Commons, Rockwell Hall third Floor, and Campbell Student Union, and replace Iroquois Drive, various underground utilities, and multiple building infrastructure systems. The campus is currently in construction of a full renovation of Elms Hall (formerly the Classroom Building) and Karner Hall (formerly Building 50), the new home of University Police, and various critical maintenance projects. The university is highly active and a strong advocate to SUCF for funding to maintain and upgrade its facilities, grounds, and infrastructure (S6.C6 2013-2023 Facilities Master Plan; S6.C6 Memo from President March 22, 2020 – Internal Control Program at Buffalo State).

The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) oversees the design and construction of our state-owned residence halls. This includes critical maintenance, renovations, and new buildings. This is bonded money which the university pays back through revenue from the residence halls balanced with operating the residence halls. Any loss of bed revenue affects the university's ability to renovate its facilities. In 2015 the campus completed a 2015 Housing Master Plan and updated the demand portion in 2019. This plan has guided the renovation of the residence halls. Until 2017 the campus had a very robust residence hall capital plan. Since 2011 the campus has fully renovated four residence halls and opened a new 500-bed residence from non-state funding. Since 2017 the campus has seen a decrease of occupied beds, thereby impacting the capital program and limiting its program to maintenance.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Capital Development Board (CDB) was charged in the spring of 2019 to guide long range physical development of the campus and create a place where campus constituents present ideas regarding its physical development. CDB membership includes the Vice President of Finance and Management, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, and the Chief of Staff. The CDB's charge is to:

1. guide long range physical development of the campus, including buildings, land, landscape, and infrastructure
2. guide strategic efforts to continually review and update the comprehensive physical master plan
3. review and advise on policies, standards, and procedures related to capital and space development and management
4. make recommendations regarding Buffalo State's one, five and ten capital plans and priorities, addressing vision, policies, processes, and funding plans that ensure effective implementation.
5. decide upon major policy and project action recommendations made by subcommittees to the Board. Board decisions are the formal steps to be taken to ensure major plan actions occur.
6. receive regular updates on capital plan implementation and facilitate continuous improvement activities, assessing policies and processes that best advance the university's capital plans
7. advise on capital plan communication to internal and external audiences



Besides recommending the capital and space priorities to the President from the SRPP process, the structure of the CDB allows for campus constituents to bring ideas or needs forward. Under the CDB is a Steering Committee which includes all co-chairs or chairs of the sub-committees. These sub-committees include the Instructional Facilities Sub-committee, Space Allocation Sub-committee, Signage and Installation Sub-committee, Beautification Sub-committee, and Housing and Dining Sub-committee. Each committee reviews a different aspect of the built environment including ideas and policies developed within the committee or brought forth by campus constituents. This new structure allows for transparency and decision making with representatives from across campus and connection to the strategic priorities of the campus.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

New York State and SUNY have been focused on sustainable facilities for decades. In the past, the university was focused on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, the standard by which facilities were measured. Our campus currently has six Silver LEED certified buildings, four Gold LEED certified, and one pending. Four other buildings are designed to LEED standards but not certified. In addition to following and documenting the LEED standards, the certification process involves significant fees. Considering current fiscal constraints and more stringent sustainable requirements from SUNY and the State of New York, the university decided not to pursue LEED certification moving forward and instead focus on achieving more stringent energy and sustainable requirements from SUNY and the State of New York (S6.C6 SUNY Construction Fund Directive 1B-2; S6.C6 New York State Executive Order 22; S6.C6 New York State Executive Order 88; S6.C6 New York State Executive Order 88 Guidelines; S6.C6 SUNY Response to New York State Executive Order 88; S6.C6 New York State Executive Order 166).

From an instructional space perspective, our Classroom Technology team is leading the efforts in defining requirements and cost analysis for transitioning high value classroom spaces for multi-modal/Hyflex instruction. Additionally, Information Technology (IT) is collecting cost requirements for the enhancement of remote desktop capabilities, including the implementation of Virtual Desktop (VDI). From a broader campus perspective, IT is currently implementing an Enterprise Architecture strategy which will review all existing campus technologies to identify cost saving opportunities including the review of classroom resources and requirements for its effective application in instruction. As part of this strategy, IT will look for opportunities to reallocate and remove or reduce existing classroom and lab technology resulting in significant cost savings from both a support and maintenance perspectives. Part of this enterprise architecture strategy will be to perform assessments of end user needs and instructional requirements. Moving forward, the intent is to perform an enterprise-wide assessment of all campus technologies to visualize, communicate, and drive our digital transformation efforts while influencing how those spaces and elements might evolve over time.

INTERNAL CONTROLS AND AUDITING

[S6.C7] Independent audits are performed annually between August and October on the Buffalo State College Foundation, Buffalo State College Foundation Housing Corporation, and the Buffalo State College Foundation Alumni Association, Inc. The auditors, chosen each year via a Request for Proposal to select a vendor, provide a management letter which is addressed by campus administration and reviewed and approved by the Foundation boards. This information is also shared with SUNY System Administration.

SUNY'S SYSTEM-WIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The SUNY System's University-wide Policies & Procedures provide structure, consistency, and numerous benefits to its campuses. These regulations guide work within SUNY and ensure uniformity while mitigating risk. At the highest level, our main revenue generating component is tuition. New York State legislative process determines SUNY tuition rates and increases. Over the last few years, there have been no approved increases in tuition and major fees. This greatly factors into our financial health and sustainability.

Regarding generating revenue with space use, the New York State Revocable Permit for facility use is often viewed by external entities as restrictive, unduly complex, and high-risk for the contracting party. Unfortunately, this can result in loss of prospective partners, collaborations, and related revenue. Additionally, permits for use of state space for extended terms of thirty days or more or valued at or above \$25,000 require approval by the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) and New York State Attorney General (AG). This can lead to untenable delays. Similarly, Revenue contracts have a \$25,000 threshold before OSC and AG review is required.



Once fees for space use are established at a campus through a complex and highly scrutinized process, it is difficult to make adjustments. For example, if a not-for-profit entity has been a longtime donor to the campus and requests ad hoc use of space for meetings, the campus may wish to provide in-kind use or a discounted rate. However, the existing process does not afford any flexibility to adjust rental rates. Further, the required document set is risk blind. This causes low-dollar, low-risk endeavors to be as cumbersome to coordinate as higher revenue, higher risk undertakings. Having a complex process for otherwise simple uses of space is a deterrent to legitimate use. Complexity encourages non-compliance, which increases risk and loss of revenue. Finally, a great amount of staff effort is expended toward compliance rather than creative revenue generation, and unfunded negotiated salary increases are a recurring challenge.

ASSESSING PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

[S6.C8] Consistent with *Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 10*, the University links planning and resource allocation to the mission and Strategic Plan, communicates transparently about the budget, and uses assessment data in planning and budgeting. For example, data from surveys such as NSSE, and the PACUR support continuous planning in such areas as enrollment and budgeting. The president and members of Cabinet provide budget and Strategic Plan updates to the campus. They and others regularly monitor performance indicators linked to Buffalo State's mission-driven strategic plan and priorities as referenced in the Strategic Resource Planning Process.

FINDINGS

- The campus has a Strategic Resource Planning Process in place to provide a framework for Buffalo State to review its financial capacity, align its resources to support its priorities, and assess potential areas for new investment. The process aligns current and future financial, human, and physical resources with the needs and goals of our institution, consistent with our academic priorities. The annual planning process at Buffalo State engages the campus community in a comprehensive process that considers a full range of key campus activities.
- The campus has the infrastructure for planning, resources, and institutional improvement with planning and assessment procedures conducted at regular intervals that are aligned with the University's mission and Strategic Plan goals.
- The campus has a Facilities Master Plan for capital improvements and investments in the campus across academic, support, and campus life facilities that identifies opportunities for the campus to develop unused spaces and to redevelop existing spaces.
- Buffalo State uses an institution-wide enterprise risk management framework and a proactive approach towards risks and emergencies, which recognizes and assesses all types of risks to the institution including strategic risks, financial risks, operational risks, compliance risks, and reputational risks.
- Buffalo State has established mechanisms for independent audits with results of the audits shared with the SUNY System Administration.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- There is an opportunity for the university to assess the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation tied to the new strategic plan.



STANDARD 7: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

This section describes how SUNY Buffalo State meets all criteria pertaining to Standard 7 criteria and sub-criteria and *Requirement of Affiliation 13*.

GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

[S7.C1] SUNY Buffalo State is one of 13 comprehensive university colleges in the State University of New York system. Governance and leadership at Buffalo State are guided by the State University Board of Trustees (BOT) and include the Buffalo State College Council, President Conway-Turner, vice presidents and other senior administrators, faculty and staff, United Students Government (USG) and the Graduate Students Association (GSA). Detailed information about each constituency group is provided below in this chapter. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) model for shared governance is followed on campus and at the state level, and as with all SUNY campuses, some structures in place for government and administration of the institution are determined at the campus level while others are dictated by the relationship with SUNY (S7.C1 SUNY Board of Trustees; S7.C1 American Association of University Professors AAUP - Shared Governance).

[S7.C2a] At the state level, Buffalo State serves the public interest as a member of the SUNY system, the largest comprehensive university system in the United States with 64 campuses including university centers, university colleges, technology colleges, and community colleges. The SUNY Chancellor is appointed by the Governor of the State of New York and by an 18-member BOT. The BOT is an independent, legally constituted body with the authority to appoint college presidents within the system and oversee fiscal and educational policy. Within SUNY, the importance of shared governance in decision making and policy development is recognized, and members of the faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards, and students participate. The University Faculty Senate (UFS) membership includes the Chancellor of the University, two University representatives, and a representative from each of the 33 state-operated campuses. The UFS addresses educational policies for the SUNY system and provides campuses with relevant material regarding budget, program revision, and presidential searches. UFS Bylaws are published in the Faculty Handbook (S7.C2a SUNY University Faculty Senate Governance Handbook).

[S7.C2d] Operation of colleges and universities in New York falls under the New York State Education Law, the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, and the Regents Rules. All SUNY campuses must abide by policies and procedures in documents such as the Policies of the Board of Trustees, the By-Laws of the Board of Trustees, and the library of University-wide Policies and Procedures. (S7.C2d SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees; S7.C2d SUNY By-Laws of the Board of Trustees; S7.C2d SUNY University-Wide Policies and Procedures).

SUNY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE COUNCIL

[S7.C2a, C2d, and C2f] The SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) has oversight of Buffalo State operations including the manner in which the university fulfills its mission. This includes processes related to academic programming, budget allocation, and personnel policies. The BOT also appoints and evaluates presidents within the SUNY system. SUNY provides details regarding BOT policies and administration, and amends policies to reflect changes in collective bargaining agreements (S7.C2d SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees).

[S7.C1] Although SUNY BOT holds governance authority over all institutions within the system, each campus has its own governing body, or College Council, appointed by the Governor. The role of the College Council is primarily to advise campus presidents. Council members' duties are outlined in the Handbook of the Association of Council Members and College Trustees of the State University of New York and in New York State Education Law. Each state-operated institution is required to be supervised locally by a council consisting of 10 members, nine of whom are appointed by the governor and one of whom is elected by and from among the students of the institution. Members of the College Council are appointed by the governor and serve a seven-year term, while the student representative is elected for a one-year term. Currently, Buffalo State's Council is comprised of six members and one student representative as the university awaits additional appointments from the Governor (S7.C1, C2g SUNY Association of Council Members and College Trustees ACT Handbook, pp. 2-4; S7.C2 SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees, pp. 17-19).



Buffalo State’s College Council convenes regular meetings at least four times annually, and agendas for these meetings are public records. Local councils exercise a number of powers including the following:

- Recommending candidates to head the institution to the State University trustees for appointment by the trustees.
- Reviewing all major plans of the head of the institution for its more effective operation and making respective recommendations as it deems appropriate. Such plans shall be submitted for approval by the State University trustees, together with the recommendations of the council with respect thereto. State University trustees shall determine what constitute major plans, which are generally defined to include plans for the appraisal or improvement of the faculty and other personnel, expansion or restriction of student admissions, appraisal or improvement of academic programs and of standards for the earning of degrees, expansion of institutional plants, and appraisal or improvement of student activities and housing.
- Making regulations governing the care, custody, and management of lands, grounds, buildings, and equipment.
- Reviewing institutional budgets.
- Fostering the development of advisory citizens committees to render assistance as the council may request and appointing the members of such citizens committees. Citizens committee members shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for the expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties.
- Naming buildings and grounds.
- Making regulations governing the conduct and behavior of students.
- Prescribing and exercising supervision over student housing and safety.
- Making an annual report to the State University trustees on or before September 1 of each year and reporting to them from time to time on any matter it believes requires their attention.
- Performing such other powers and duties as may be authorized or required by the State University trustees by general rules or special directives.
- Making and establishing, and occasionally altering and amending, such regulations pertaining to the affairs of its institution, not inconsistent with law or the rules of the State University trustees, as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out effectively the foregoing powers and duties.

The Buffalo State’s College Council recently approved the university’s 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan and will soon be conducting a search for the next Buffalo State president following the recent announcement of Dr. Conway-Turner’s retirement at the end of the current academic year (S7.C1 College Council; S7.C1 Strategic Plan 2022-2026).

[S7.C2c and C2e] Oversight of Buffalo State’s financial plans, health, and viability falls under the responsibility of SUNY administration and Buffalo State’s College Council. The College Council does not attend to day-to-day operations of the campus. Rather, Council members attend to matters such as reviewing the university’s large-scale plans, campus developments, and status of the budget. The university budget is approved at the SUNY administration level. Although SUNY administration does not control budget allocations, they do ensure that the campus has appropriate plans to address shortfalls or overages of cash, operating deficit, or surplus. As is the case with other SUNY campuses, Buffalo State is currently in a sensitive financial situation due to declining enrollments and negotiated salary increases that are not financially supported by the State of New York. Open and productive interactions between SUNY, the College Council, and the campus are now especially important as we work to address the university’s budget situation.

[S7.C2b, C2g, C2h and C2i] In addition to the nine appointed and one student College Council members, the full Council includes ten ex-officio members including the president and the President’s Cabinet (Figure 7.1). The current College Council has two vacancies; however, this has not negatively affected effective operation of the College Council in carrying out its responsibilities as the Council has a collegial and productive relationship with President Conway-Turner. Buffalo State’s replacements for vacant Council seats will be selected by New York’s governor; those appointments are pending.

In addition to the list of current Council members, the College Council website provides a list of standing committees, meeting agendas, minutes, and podcasts. Links to annual reports as well as other College Council documents such as budget requests, executive summaries presented to the Council by the president, and Facilities Master Plans are available to the public.



| VOTING MEMBERS | NON-VOTING MEMBERS |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Linda A. Dobmeier, '71, Chair | President Conway-Turner |
| Melissa Brinson | James Mayrose, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs |
| Allen F. "Pete" Grum | James Finnerty, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Buffalo State Foundation |
| Mylous A. Hairston, '86 | Laura J. Barnum, Vice President for Finance and Management |
| Charles J. Naughton, '86 | Timothy W. Gordon, Vice President for Student Affairs |
| Cindy L. Odom, '96 | Lisa T. Morrison-Fronckowiak, Interim Chief Diversity Officer |
| Robert M. Zak | Randyll P. Bowen, '99, Vice President for Enrollment Management |
| Daniel May, Student Representative | Brian C. Cronk, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences |
| Vacant | Carol A. DeNysschen, Dean of the School of the Professions |
| Vacant | Wendy A. Paterson, '75 Dean of the School of Education |

Figure 7.1 Composition of Buffalo State College Council. Source: Buffalo State College Council

Current members of the Buffalo State College Council are accomplished business and community leaders who are well qualified to serve, and include four members who are graduates of Buffalo State. Members are invited to and regularly attend major campus events such as convocation, commencement, the President's State of the College Address, and the annual scholarship gala. The data available on the council website indicate that regular meetings are being held and are properly announced, and agendas and minutes are made available to the public. Moreover, the list of documents presented and discussed at council meetings, as well as the details provided in the council's annual reports, demonstrate that the council is meeting its obligations as prescribed by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Specifically, the College Council regularly reviews data and provides recommendations relating to enrollment, graduation and retention rates, academic profiles of students, accreditation, budget requests and projections, and facilities improvement and master plans.

With respect to internal management and assessment of its operations, the College Council provides new members with orientation materials to outline procedures and responsibilities as well as best practices in SUNY board governance as outlined in the ACT Handbook. ACT provides resources to College Council members at annual conferences, newsletters, updates, and monthly reports.

CAMPUS PRESIDENT (CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER)

[S7.C2f and C3a] Buffalo State has engaged in one presidential search since 2013 with the installation of our current president, Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner. As President Conway-Turner has recently announced her retirement, the university began the process of a presidential search during fall 2022. Buffalo State's president is appointed by the SUNY Chancellor through an established search process. Consistent with *Requirement of Affiliation 13*, the president is an ex-officio member of the College Council, but may not serve on the SUNY Board of Trustees. SUNY policy requires an evaluation of campus presidents. The University Faculty Senate Governance Handbook cites "Guidelines for Presidential Reviews and Evaluations at State-Operated campuses" which describes a typical review cycle at three years for a new president and five years thereafter (S7.C2f SUNY Policies and Procedures - Presidential Search, Guidelines for Conducting; S7.C2f SUNY University Faculty Senate Governance Handbook, pp. 82-83).

[S7.C3b] President Conway-Turner was appointed as the ninth president of SUNY Buffalo State in 2014. She has the academic and administrative qualifications and experience to carry out her responsibilities. Before coming to Buffalo State, President Conway-Turner served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Hood College in Frederick, MD (2010-2014) and as provost and vice president for academic affairs at SUNY Geneseo (2004-2009). With a Ph.D. in social psychology, she is the author of numerous articles, chapters, books, and book reviews. President Conway-Turner's personal journey is also consistent with the mission of Buffalo State, as it mirrors that of many of her students, past and present. As a first-generation



college student, President Conway-Turner appreciates the process of education and embraces its transformative aspects. She listens to the ever-changing needs of her students and attempts to implement and monitor new programs and processes to help students become successful, contributing members of society (S7.C3b President Conway-Turner Biography; S7.C3b President Conway-Turner Curriculum Vitae).

[S7.C3c] According to Article IX, Title A of the Policies of the Board of Trustees, the President of the university has the authority and responsibility to “administer the college for which he or she serves, and shall promote its development and effectiveness.” The President also “supervise(s) the members of the professional and non-academic staff” and “shall prepare and recommend the annual budget requests of the university and shall report and make recommendations to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and the College Council concerning the operation, plans, and development of the university” (S7.C2 SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees, pp. 17-19)

BUFFALO STATE’S ADMINISTRATION

[S7.C3d, C4a and C4b] As directed by SUNY BOT policy, campus presidents are expected to assemble a cabinet to serve as an “advisory and consultative body.” The President’s Cabinet at Buffalo State consists of five Vice Presidents, the Interim Chief Diversity Officer, and President’s Chief of Staff. The President’s staff and administration teams are highly qualified and sufficient in number to support campus activities. The campus organizational chart is presented by administrative divisions (S7.C3d, S7.C4a and b Organizational Chart).

The President meets with Cabinet on a weekly basis. It is frequently the case that other members of the campus community are invited to participate in Cabinet discussions.

[S7.C4e] All Vice Presidents have regular contact with their direct reports and provide updates to the campus community in various venues, most notably at College Senate meetings that take place once per month during the academic year to provide reports and respond to constituent questions as appropriate. College Senate committees are composed of faculty and staff, and most also have at least one student member. The committee chairs sit on the senate executive committee and meet with senior administrators monthly. Each committee also has a presidential appointee as a liaison to senior administrators.

Buffalo State has a significant number of other committees, task force groups, and advisory councils that include students, administration, faculty, and staff membership. Some examples are the President’s Equity and Diversity Council, Enrollment and Resource Planning Task Force, President’s Institutional Innovation Advisory Council, President’s Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention, and the Institutional Planning Advisory Committee.

Buffalo State’s senior administrators expertly and quickly addressed issues during the bulk of the pandemic during very trying times. Although required to operate under SUNY’s decisions, administrators had a plan in place that was initiated as smoothly as possible under the circumstances. There also was timely and compassionate communication from President Conway-Turner about transitioning to remote instruction, testing requirements, and eventually returning to in-person operations. The pandemic was difficult and challenging for everyone, but the success of the campus getting through it is largely due to the time, dedication, and preparation of the administration as well as their communication with faculty, staff, and students.

Buffalo State administrators also responded to faculty and staff who were deeply concerned about the university’s financial position and requested more transparent and frequent updates from senior administrators. The result was a series of listening sessions that took place in spring 2022 as well as opportunities to participate in regular updates from Finance and Management.

[S7.C4c and C4d] Members of the administration have the credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the university and their functional roles. In addition to their experience and skills, members of the administration also have the time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties. Buffalo State has a knowledgeable and responsive IT Help system in place to support new technology and information systems, and administrators keep up to date on new technology and best practices in their areas. Although time may be an issue, everyone on campus is doing ‘more with less’ and the administration is able to meet required deadlines.

[S7.C4f] Buffalo State established a 360-review process for Cabinet-level and mid-level administrators through the Office of Professional Development in 2015. These reviews have been delayed with the recent departure of the Director of Leadership and Organizational Development, a key individual who was responsible for the structure and conduct of the 360 reviews.



FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT GOVERNANCE

FACULTY

[S7.C5] In 2020, the College Senate passed a resolution that resulted in the development of task force charged to provide a report on the state of shared governance on campus. What followed was the implementation of the ad hoc Senate Shared Governance Committee (SGC) charged with the implementation of the task-force recommendations. In addition to the SGC, shared governance takes place in the College Senate.

The Buffalo State College Senate was established in the Bylaws of the College Faculty as the official agency through which the faculty, staff and students engage in the governance of the university. Its authority is documented in its Bylaws in the Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS III:01:00). The Senate itself has a set of standing rules to govern the conduct of operations. The College Senate is intended to serve as:

- a. a forum in which representatives of faculty, staff, students, and administration interact;
- b. the agent of the college community that holds the administration, through the Office of the President, accountable for actions taken and decisions made;
- c. an advocate for that system of governance that has been agreed to by the various constituencies of the college and approved in the College Faculty Bylaws by the eligible voting faculty, the president, the College Council, the chancellor, and the SUNY Board of Trustees; and
- d. the organizational structure through which faculty, staff, students, and administrators are involved in issues of concern to the college.

The College Senate, the principal deliberative and advisory body of the college, is composed of eight standing committees: Academic Plan, Budget and Staff Allocation, Bylaws and Elections, Curriculum, Faculty and Staff Welfare, Instruction and Research, Standards for Students, and Student Welfare. The Senate's effectiveness is demonstrated by the results of its constituent committee recommendations and the ensuing institutional actions. For example, the Senate has led deliberations on strategic planning, organizational restructuring, curriculum review and innovation, leadership development, resource allocation, campus climate, and governance. Committee membership is limited to 15 members, ensuring that all schools and professional staff units are represented in approximately equal proportions. The Senate composition makes it one of the unique governing bodies in the SUNY System.

The College Senate at Buffalo State is composed of the president of the university (nonvoting), the provost of the university (nonvoting), vice president of finance and management, seven at-large members of the faculty and professional staff, six members of the professional staff, six members from the School of Education, six members from the School of the Professions, twelve members from the School of Arts and Sciences, one member from the library faculty, one member from the support staff, twelve students, and two nonvoting members appointed by the president. It is also connected to the SUNY University Faculty Senate through two University Faculty senators who report on ongoing activities of that body.

[S7.C1] Campus units such as schools and departments, United University Professions (UUP), the College Council, and United Students Government, all have well-defined spheres of influence and authority and particular ways of interacting with the College Senate. In addition to the organizations discussed, the function of shared governance is seen with each school, department, and interdisciplinary unit in the form of committees that consult with administration on such issues as advisement, affirmative action, athletics, campus life, faculty development, graduate studies, international students, minorities, and quality of work and life concerns.

Actions taken at Senate meetings are advisory to the president of the university, who is responsible for setting institutional policy.

STAFF

The Professional Staff Caucus (PSC) is the official assembly of the professional staff at Buffalo State whose purpose is to unite those designated as "professional employees" as defined by the Policies of the Board of Trustees for the State of New York. PSC provides a forum for discussion of issues relevant to professionals on campus. Members of the professional staff are elected or appointed to serve on various university-wide committees and organizations such as the College Senate and its committees and various Presidential committees.



STUDENTS

The United Students Government (USG) at Buffalo State represents the interests of the students and encourages their active participation in the campus community. USG sponsors activities funded by the mandatory student activity fee. USG oversees a budget of more than \$1 million for student-funded organizations on campus, conducts referendums and polls regarding student opinions on relevant matters, and develops USG-sponsored recreational, social, and cultural activities for the student body. USG activities enrich the student experience through celebrating the arts, athletics, academics, diversity, and varied student interests. A few examples of the 29 organizations supported through USG are Adelante Estudiantes Latinos, Black Active Minds, Caribbean Students Organization, Casting Hall Productions, International Student Organization, men's and women's rugby, BSC-TV, Biology Club, and Math Club. Although students are active in USG, positions of students on other the College Senate often go unfilled, decreasing the student voice on this university-wide body.

[S7.C5] SUNY and university policies on assessment of governance and leadership can be discerned from related procedural documents. These procedural documents typically include statements about the importance of such assessment for strengthening the roles of leaders, improving the health of the institution, and promoting professional development.

EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

SUNY Guidelines for Evaluation of Campus Presidents requires the full involvement of SUNY's Chancellor. As part of on-going evaluations, the Chancellor holds extended meetings with the University President to discuss campus and SUNY-wide issues and to allow the Chancellor to share their views of the service of the President. These Guidelines call for the Chancellor to prepare for these meetings by engaging in ongoing communication with campus councils, faculty, students and other constituencies (S7.C5 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI.09.00 - Guidelines for the Evaluation of Campus Presidents).

EVALUATION OF SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS

Administrative Review and Development Program (ARDP) outlines the procedure for periodic review of administrators. ARDP was developed by a committee of ten including the Director of Leadership and Organizational Development, six divisional representatives, and three representatives selected by the College Senate. In April 2005, a resolution in support of faculty evaluation of administrators was passed by the SUNY University Faculty Senate. The resolution advocated for independent faculty evaluation of senior campus administrators as "an important faculty prerogative." Furthermore, in 2021, the UFS called on campuses to institute a 360 Review of Campus Administrators. The Buffalo State College Senate also endorsed this resolution (S7.C5 SUNY University Faculty Senate Governance Handbook, p. 77; S7.C5 SUNY Faculty Senate 360 Review Resolution). Currently, Cabinet-level members are reviewed on an annual basis.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC DEANS

The evaluation of academic deans is the responsibility of the vice president for academic affairs and the president. The review policy specifically includes a role for Schools and School Bylaws in the review process (S7.C5 Directory of Policy Statements DOPS VI.10.00 - Guidelines for the Evaluation of Campus Deans).

EVALUATION OF THE COLLEGE SENATE

The College Senate has a democratic structure and depends on regular elections and term-limits as the ultimate assessment of effectiveness as evaluated by voting constituencies.

EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES AND TASKFORCE

Committees and task force groups are critical to campus governance. Campus committees have formal charges that specify their responsibilities. The College Senate has several standing committees which are defined by College Faculty Bylaws as well as ad hoc committees and task forces. Administrative committees are also established by the president, administrators, academic deans, and academic schools. Committee overload and initiative fatigue has been noted by faculty and staff, especially during the pandemic when faculty and staff faced additional challenges. Upon the request of the College Senate, the president charged a committee mapping project. The project is complete, and results have been disseminated to selected constituencies on campus. The full campus community awaits the results of the project.



EVALUATION OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

As noted, policies, procedures, and structures exist for faculty, staff, and students to take part in shared governance. These structures include the College Senate, Professional Staff Caucus, United Students Government, Graduate Student Association, and the organized unions.

The 2020 Buffalo State College Taskforce on College Shared Governance recently assessed the effectiveness of campus shared governance. The task force surveyed satisfaction in the University's shared governance among faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The survey analyzed opinions on the effectiveness of shared governance across organizational levels of governance, constituent group participation, specific governance issues, structure of shared governance, and characteristics of shared governance at the university. The task force analyzed the results of the survey in the context of recent events. The task force report was approved in principle by the College Senate in November 2020. An Ad-Hoc Committee on Planning and Shared Governance Practices was convened to address the recommendations of the task force report. Notably, one of the desired deliverables from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Planning and Shared Governance Practices is a shared governance assessment plan. Therefore, it can be expected that Buffalo State will have a shared governance assessment plan within the next few years.

FINDINGS

- Buffalo State's governing body, College Council, has an appropriate role in oversight at the university; the president and administrators are qualified for their positions and follow established procedures regarding roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
- Organizational structures are documented and clearly define reporting relationships.
- Student governance has clearly outlined policies and procedures; representatives participate in university-level committee structures.

AREAS FOR INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

- In an effort to increase transparency, it would be beneficial to make Buffalo State's and SUNY's guidelines for assessing the performance of cabinet-level administrators available to the campus community.
- There is an opportunity to improve upon communication of task force and committee recommendations campus wide.
- It would benefit the university to consider the creation of a Faculty Senate to add to the existing governance structure.
- Although selection of College Council members is not under the control of the campus, it would benefit the university to have a full complement of members, particularly as a presidential search is underway.





APPENDIX I: MAPPING REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION

| REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION | DEMONSTRATES COMPLIANCE THROUGH |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Authorization to operate | Compliance Review |
| 2. Institution is operational | Compliance Review |
| 3. Graduating one class before accreditation (for new institutions) | NA |
| 4. Communicate with the Commission in English | Compliance Review |
| 5. Complies with government laws and regulations | Compliance Review |
| 6. Complies with Commission policies | Compliance Review |
| 7. Has a mission statement and goals | Standard 1 |
| 8. Systematically evaluates programs | Standards 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| 9. Learning programs have rigor, coherence, assessment | Standards 3, 5 |
| 10. Planning integrates goals and assessment | Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| 11. Documented financial resources and financial plans | Standard 6 |
| 14. Make information available to Commission | Compliance Review |
| 15. Core of faculty to assure continuity of educational programs | Standard 3 |

APPENDIX II: ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| AAB | Assessment Advisory Board | CCEMP | Campus Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan |
| AAUP | American Association of University Professors | CDB | Campus Development Board |
| ACE | Academic Center for Excellence | CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| AFP | Ann Frank Project | CEP | Critique and Evaluation Period |
| AG | Attorney General | CGE | Center for Global Engagement |
| AP | Advanced Placement | CLEP | College Level Examinations |
| APC | Academic Plan Committee | COIL | Collaborative Online International Learning |
| AMS | Accountability Management System (Taskstream) | CPC | College Planning Council |
| ARDP | Administrative Review and Development Program | CPE | College Proficiency Examinations |
| BEAT | Bengal Experience and Transition Team | CSAT | Charter School for Applied Technology |
| BOT | Board of Trustees | CSCC | College Senate Curriculum Committee |
| BSC | Buffalo State College | CSEA | Civil Service Employees Union |
| BSEAS | Buffalo State Education Assessment System | CSI | College Student Inventory |
| BSP | Bengal Success Portal | CSJ | Center for Social Justice |
| CAEP | Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation | DASNY | Dormitory Authority of the State of New York |
| CAP | College Access Program | DOE | US Department of Education |
| CAPE | Career and Professional Education Center | DOPS | Directory of Policy Statements |
| CAPS | Campus Application Portal for Scholarships | DSIM | Digital Supplemental Instruction Modules |
| CAS | Council for the Advancement of Standards | EOP | Educational Opportunity Program |
| CCE | Civic and Community Engagement Office | ERPT | Enrollment and Resource Planning Taskforce |



APPENDIX II: ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

| | | | |
|--------|---|--------|---|
| EURO | Early Undergraduate Research Opportunity | OUR | Office of Undergraduate Research |
| FAFSA | Free Application for Federal Student Aid | PACS | Pre-Award and Compliance System |
| FAO | Financial Aid Office | PACUR | President's Advisory Council for Undergraduate Retention |
| FITT | Fostering Innovation in Teaching with Technology | PEPDS | Performance Evaluation and Professional Development System |
| GEATFC | General Education Ad-Hoc Task Force on Curriculum | PIF | Performance Improvement Funding |
| GER | General Education Requirements | PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| GLC | Great Lakes Center | PRODiG | Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion and Growth |
| GSA | Graduate Students Association | PSC | Professional Staff Caucus |
| HEOA | Higher Education Opportunity Act | ROAR | Recognizing Opportunity Achieving Results |
| HEED | Higher Education Excellence in Diversity | SAMC | Science and Mathematics Complex |
| ICS | Incident Command System | SCCS | Student Conduct and Community Standards |
| IDDL | Instructional Design and Distance Learning | SCOC | Spending Constraints Oversight Committee |
| IDEA | Inclusion Diversity Equity Awareness | SCOT | Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats |
| IE | Office of Institutional Effectiveness | SEM | Strategic Enrollment Management |
| IEP | Institutional Effectiveness and Planning | SGC | Shared Governance Committee |
| IF | Intellectual Foundations | SIFOC | Senate Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee |
| IF14 | Intellectual Foundations 2014 | SIP | Strengthening Institutions Program |
| IGPE | International Graduate Programs for Educators | SLE | Student Leadership and Engagement |
| IAC | Institutional Innovation Advisory Committee | SLO | Student Learning Outcomes |
| ILO | Institutional Learning Outcomes | SMI | Social Mobility Index |
| IPAC | Institutional Planning and Advisory Committee | SoTL | Scholarship of Teaching and Learning |
| IT | Information Technology | SOE | School of Education |
| JCOPE | New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics | SOP | School of the Professions |
| JEDI | Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | SOS | Student Opinion Survey |
| LEED | Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design | SRCC | Student Research and Creativity Conference |
| LLC | Living Learning Community | SRPP | Strategic Resource Planning Process |
| LOE | Letter of Expectation | SUCF | State University Construction Fund |
| MECHS | Middle Early College High School | SUNY | State University of New York |
| MSCHE | Middle States Commission on Higher Education | SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| NCAA | National Collegiate Athletic Association | TABS | Transfer Articulation Buffalo State |
| NSSE | National Survey of Student Engagement | TAP | Tuition Assistance Program |
| NYSED | New York State Education Department | TEU | Teacher Education Unit |
| OED | Office of Equity and Diversity | TLC | Teaching and Learning Center |
| OAC | Oversight and Assessment Committees | UFS | University Faculty Senate |
| OIR | Office of Institutional Research | USG | United Students Government |
| OMC | Office of Marketing and Communication | UUP | United University Professions |
| OSC | Office of the State Comptroller | WNYSLC | Western New York Service-Learning Coalition |
| OSCQR | Open SUNY Course Quality Review | | |
| OSEP | Online Summer Engagement Program | | |



ADDENDUM: THE ONGOING IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SUNY BUFFALO STATE

During the self-study process Buffalo State navigated the unprecedented challenges faced by all educational institutions during the pandemic. Since our self-study process was initiated near the start of the pandemic and during remote operations, we provide analysis of key elements of our planning and responses to the pandemic to explain the actions taken by the university to remain steadfast in its continuity of operations. We cannot overstate how profoundly the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our people: our students, faculty, staff, campus stakeholders as well as Buffalo, Western New York and the metropolitan areas our students come from. While the impact of the pandemic on our campus and people continues to be felt, this addendum highlights the resilience of our students, faculty, staff and leadership as we navigated this emergency and continue to deal with its effects.

With guidance and guidelines from the New York Governor's Office and SUNY administration, Buffalo State began planning our response to the COVID-19 pandemic well before our transition to remote operations in Spring 2020. What began as an international travel advisory and an email overview of the virus from the president in January 2020, the events quickly escalated to SUNY and Buffalo State recalling all study abroad students back to New York state for the students' health and safety in February. At the same time, our Instructional Design and Distance Learning team quickly began planning for a potential pivot to remote operations by increasing servers and capacities and purchasing additional software licenses. Working with SUNY administration, our campus leaders took decisive steps to protect the health and safety of the campus community, accommodate the transition to remote learning, confirm telecommuting arrangements for employees, and reduce on-campus services to the essentials.

On March 11, 2020, in keeping with SUNY mandates, classes for the following week were canceled (the week before our spring recess). At Buffalo State, students' spring break was extended to two weeks and all students who lived in residence halls were encouraged to return home. Many of our students would go home to New York City and Westchester County, which at the time was the epicenter of COVID-19 infections. Our residence halls remained open to accommodate students with special circumstances such as those who did not have other safe living and dining arrangements and in family housing.

During this two-week pause, Buffalo State quickly pivoted to providing instruction, student services, and faculty and staff support virtually to support the student experience. All faculty teaching in-person courses were tasked with shifting their courses to 100% remote instruction. Buffalo State programs and offices quickly responded to the need for shifting pedagogical supports for faculty and staff. Online and open sessions were offered to ensure that all full- and part-time faculty could receive the necessary training to continue instructional delivery online. Our faculty worked diligently to prepare their courses for remote instruction to ensure course objectives were met and that courses were accessible to our learners.

In this short period, faculty were asked to include at least the following in each Blackboard course: updated course syllabus, faculty contact information, virtual office hours, course materials, assignments, attendance, and explanations of any changes to the course prior to remote instruction. Department chairpersons and deans were tasked with ensuring that instruction met these standards. Centralized resources to support remote teaching were developed and widely utilized including the Teaching and Learning Center's Academic Continuity "Keep Teaching" website. In addition to the structured campus supports, departments and programs offered faculty-to-faculty peer support to meet course objectives and create engaging courses. Our campus staff rallied to support faculty, students and administrators and share important information as changes were implemented. Faculty and staff voluntarily participated in an astonishing number of workshops and training sessions to successfully transition their courses and departments to online remote learning. This transition was possible because of the extraordinary efforts of faculty, staff, students, and administrators alike.

At the same time, student support services also shifted from primarily in-person supports to online from Spring 2020-summer 2021. Tutoring, advising, student accessibility support, and other student services offered sessions and meetings online to continue to support students during the pandemic. In Fall 2021, the majority of services resumed in-person support when the campus returned to primarily in-person learning, but continued to give online options



to students. These changes have continued even as we have returned to normal operations. For example, Tutoring offers options for both in-person and online tutoring, Academic Advising offers a virtual chat option, and Student Accessibility Services offers both in-person and virtual walk-in hours.

As students pivoted to remote learning, a “Keep Learning” website was developed as a method to respond to student concerns regarding successfully navigating the shift to remote learning, as well as directing technology-based and course inquiries to the correct departments and/or personnel. This website included learning resources and mental health supports as well as resources for emergencies students may face because of the pandemic. This website was updated as supports were developed and the campus adapted to the pandemic impacts.

Keeping everyone safe and healthy has been a priority throughout the pandemic. Considerable effort has been invested into publishing a comprehensive compendium of information about COVID-19 and regularly updating it. Early in our campus response, Buffalo State created a Coronavirus Information website that included all announcements to campus stakeholders, updates on operations, safety measures and COVID-19 testing, resources available, as well as COVID dashboards for the campus, the city, SUNY, and New York. Keeping everyone safe and healthy continued to be a priority when we returned to limited campus operations in Fall 2020. Any person who came to campus was required to participate in weekly COVID testing, and surveillance testing was overwhelmingly staffed by student, faculty and staff volunteers in the 2020-2021 school year. We were able to return to complete in-person operations in Fall 2021 after the COVID-19 vaccine was developed. All students were required to be completely vaccinated and faculty and staff were encouraged to be vaccinated or complete weekly surveillance testing. Everyone who came to campus was asked to complete a daily symptom tracker, to wear a face mask in all common areas, and to isolate themselves if they showed any symptoms. As a campus we were not able to prevent all infections, but to our credit, our positive test rate was always lower than our state and community rate. This was only accomplished by the combined efforts of everyone at Buffalo State.

This self-study details student supports in the pandemic, particularly in terms of academic and holistic and mental health in Standard 4; those aids have continued and evolved as students’ need have. Our students faced many of the common challenges as their peers at other institutions in the United States with the shift to remote learning. However, we also want to highlight the ways our students experienced challenges as people in marginalized and underserved communities. When we switched to remote operations in Spring 2020, many of our students also took on full-time jobs as “essential” employees when New York’s “Stay at Home” orders forced many adults out of the workplace. As young, healthy adults, our students quickly became the grocery store, pharmacy, food service and home health workers needed for cities—and our society more generally—to continue operating throughout the pandemic. While working 40+ hour weeks in high-risk jobs, sometimes as the primary source of income for their households, our students continued their commitment to learning and earning their degrees. In fact, results from Buffalo State first-year and senior students who responded to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in spring 2020 showed the extent to which our students were engaging in work and family responsibilities. Compared to both comparison groups, our students reported spending significantly more time working for pay off campus, providing care for dependents, and engaging in community service or volunteer work.

Our students have experienced other barriers and challenges peers at other institutions may not have faced. We quickly learned that our students did not have equal access to technology in terms of computers or internet access. Some students had personal computers and unlimited wi-fi access, others shared a computer with other household members, and some students had no access to computers or reliable internet service. To continue their studies, some students completed all coursework—readings, essays, tests and evaluations—from their smart phones. Our students also found themselves overseeing the education of their younger family members, ensuring that their K-12 siblings attended their online courses, sometimes at the expense of attending their own classes or completing their own assignments. Others have had to defer their own goals to prioritize their families’ needs.

Perhaps most devastating, many of our students have direct and personal experience with the differential impact of COVID-19 on communities of color.



Our students come from the hardest-hit communities, and they have experienced trauma and loss that peers at other institutions may not have. At the same time, the recent racist events across the U.S. have amplified the calls to address racial injustice, inequity and violence. Our students have been particularly impacted by these events. Throughout all of these challenges, our students persevered. Our mental health services and outreach have increased as we have navigated the pandemic and all the stressors and trauma that have come with it. As discussed in Standards 3 and 4, we have provided a variety of supports and services to accomplish learning outcomes and foster our students' intellectual and social development. Through our Counseling Center, food pantry and emergency funds among other services, we continue to develop ways to build on our students' resilience and foster academic success.

Outside of campus, Buffalo State is a lead partner in the West Side Promise Neighborhood (WSPN), a community-driven network which quickly identified food security as a key issue for Buffalo residents at the start of the pandemic. Faculty, staff, and students joined community members on a food security council. It quickly became evident to the council that there were no food pantries in the 14207 zip code adjacent to campus and other extensive food security concerns existed for Buffalo residents. As a result of the food security council, two new food pantries were developed, and thousands of meals and food were distributed to the community. Although this direct engagement has always been an important way for civic and community responsiveness, as an urban-engaged institution, we continue our commitment to our neighbors and their success.

The COVID pandemic has created serious challenges for Buffalo State and its people, and exacerbated some issues we already faced. However, our response has shown our commitment to our campus, our students, our community and to each other. The pandemic has also afforded us the opportunity to evaluate our delivery of an affordable quality student experience with an emphasis on promoting diversity, opportunity, and inclusion across our campus and community. Although the impacts of the COVID pandemic will continue, our resilience has prepared us to update our plans that protect our community and advance our mission. As we look to the future as a university, we are poised to continue our work as SUNY's urban-engaged anchor institution that serves a majority minority institution in the culturally rich and diverse city of Buffalo.





BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York