

*Building Institutional Capacity
For Diversity*



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

The Equity and Campus Diversity 2017-2021 Strategic Plan

Introduction

American higher education has experienced significant changes since its inception, particularly with respect to the diversity of the student body and employees. Today's educational institutions function as beacons of hope for groups of people such as women and ethnic minorities, often marginalized or excluded from participation in societal institutions. Therefore, access and equitable treatment have become central themes in the mission statements of our nation's colleges and universities.

Ensuring accessible and equitable admissions and employment processes are central to the mission of SUNY-Buffalo State. Buffalo State has a long and rich history of embracing diversity, fostering an inclusive environment and celebrating differences. Diversity is an integral component of Buffalo State's curricular and co-curricular offerings. Some examples include community partnerships through service learning programs, the Global Book Project, and the Community Academic Center and collaborative educational partnerships with countries like Zambia, Rwanda, Brazil, Chili and China. In addition, Buffalo State hosts nationally recognized programs like the Anne Frank Project and the National Coalition Building Institute.

This vast array of diversity initiatives is but one way in which Buffalo State demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive environment. More critical to our mission is ensuring diversity is aligned with and integrated into every aspect of the institution's strategic plan.

This iteration of the Equity and Campus Diversity Strategic Plan has intentionally chosen a four-year lifecycle such that it temporally aligns with Buffalo State's Strategic Plan to expire in 2021. Salient sections of the [Buffalo State College Strategic Plan](#) that guide and inform this plan are as follows:

Goal 1: Provide an Excellent Education Inside and Outside the Classroom

Goal 2: Continue to Create an Engaged Community

NOTE: We fully recognize and acknowledge that the term diversity may have multiple connotations and definitions in society and across agencies, as well as across the United States and the world. SUNY – Buffalo State and The Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan adhere to the State University of New York (SUNY) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy definition of diversity. Thus, in this document diversity is broadly defined to include race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, age, socioeconomic status, status as a veteran, status as an individual with a disability, students undergoing transition (such as transfer, stop-out, international student acclimation), and first-generation students. (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, Adopted by SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015).

A Framework for Capacity



Figure 1 "A Framework for Capacity"

The Dimensions of Building Institutional Capacity for Diversity at Buffalo State

Diversity must be linked to the mission and culture of our campus, and more importantly, tied to the overall institutional strategic plan. Utilizing a **Framework for Capacity**¹, the PCECD's Strategic Plan and model for Building Institutional Capacity for Diversity comprises four dimensions: 1) Access and Success, 2) Campus Community and Climate, 3) Academics, Scholarship and Engaged Learning, and 4) Institutional Effectiveness and Commitment. This framework should be conceptualized as a matrix of integrated initiatives designed to achieve and

¹ "A Framework for Capacity," *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making it Work*. 2nd edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

promote institutional excellence infused with evidence of diversity and inclusion. Figure 1 "A Framework for Capacity" For planning and implementation purposes, information needs to be collected and analyzed, and programs and policies need to be modified or developed to address deficiencies. The dimensions create a framework that helps the institution monitor the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure that they remain integrated, intentional, and central to the core mission of the college.

The goals, objectives, strategies, and indicators outlined are intended to guide the actions of appropriate university units, including senior management areas, schools, departments, and programs in the delivery of initiatives, policies, and practices that advance diversity and inclusion. To coincide with the timeframe associated with the Buffalo State Strategic Plan, initiatives outlined in this framework include the current year (2017) to 2021. Beginning in April 2018, the implementation of this framework and creation of indicators for each of the four dimensions will result in an annual report to the college president that will include accomplishments, deficiencies, and plans for adjustments of efforts.

Indicators included in this plan draw on existing datasets wherever possible, especially those reports submitted to state or federal authorities that use standardized definitions and may allow cross-institutional comparisons. Institutional and national surveys of faculty, staff, and students provide important information for monitoring progress, guiding continuous improvement, and benchmarking against others when possible. Many units on campus participated in collecting and analyzing the data cited below, including Academic Affairs, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Enrollment Management, Equity and Campus Diversity, Graduate School, Human Resources Management, International and Exchange Programs, Institutional Research, Provost's Office, Student Affairs, as well as others.

Access and Success

Measures examine whether students from historically underrepresented and diverse populations, as defined in the SUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy are thriving at Buffalo State. Important outcomes include whether students are graduating, maintaining continuous enrollment, and persisting toward degree completion. This would include students in all undergraduate and graduate programs.

Goal 1: Establish baseline data and subsequently work to increase the recruitment, retention and completion of diverse student populations.

Strategy:

1. Ensure that each academic department and/or school devise and implement a plan to increase the recruitment, retention and completion of diverse student populations by spring 2019.

Indicator:

1. Annual review of diversity recruitment plans and completion reports at department, school and/or divisional levels.

Academic Scholarship and Engaged Learning

Measures how diversity is infused into all aspects of the Buffalo State academic experience of students, faculty, and staff.

Goal 1: Ensure that diversity is purposefully and meaningfully infused throughout the general education curriculum.

Strategies:

1. Create or identify a rubric, scale or guide to identify and measure diversity infused courses, and maintain a continued connection to conversations on revamping the general education requirements.

Indicators:

1. A method of measuring the efficacy of diversity infused courses will be disseminated to appropriate committee charged with identifying/ designating such curriculum.

Goal 2: Help faculty and staff develop capacities to become 21st century educators and to work with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Strategies:

1. Implement on-line and in-person professional development opportunities designed to improve competencies for working with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
2. Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to transform existing courses or create new courses that achieve diversity-related goals.
3. Promote recognition and instruction of work that extends beyond the traditional canon.

Indicators:

1. Create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to develop knowledge and competencies to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds as evidenced by headcount of faculty trained.
2. Initiate method to track the numbers of faculty and staff participating in diversity training opportunities to establish a baseline.
3. Formal recognition of teaching and service activity related to diversity in the evaluation of faculty and staff as evidenced by annual reporting, recognition from the Chief Diversity Officer, Vice President, or designee.

Institutional Commitment

Integral to this dimension is increasing diversity hires, to include those in leadership positions. It also would include measures to review and examine initiatives to retain and promote diverse hires, to include women and members of historically underrepresented populations. Indicative of the commitment is the inclusion of diversity in our processes, policies and strategic plan, as well as an evaluation of internal and external perceptions as to how the commitment is demonstrated and supported. While posting positions, it is vital for the institution to highlight its goal to increase the representation of women and underrepresented populations in all positions, including opportunities for promotion and professional development for faculty, administrators, staff, and graduate assistants.

Goal 1: Facilitate recruitment and retention of full-time and adjunct faculty, staff, and senior leadership from diverse backgrounds

Strategies:

1. Analyze information from employees through a survey, focus group, or other methods and use in conjunction with data from exit interviews to identify factors or themes with attrition.

Indicators:

1. Increase in number (headcount) and proportion (percentage) of diverse application and hire demographics for faculty, staff, and senior level positions.
2. The knowledge of faculty, administrators and staff involved in search efforts of current affirmative action guidelines designed to facilitate hiring of a more diverse group of college employees, particularly those involved in the hiring search process.

3. Number of participants in search-related workshops (i.e., Bias Workshops).

Campus Community and Climate

Goal 1: Increase the cultural competency of campus community.

Strategies:

1. Under the guidance of the President's Council on Equity and Campus Diversity, establish a campus climate assessment development team that will identify an independent consultant to administer a campus climate survey.

Indicator:

1. Action plan presented to campus community based on data and recommendations from the campus climate survey responses/results.

Goal 2: Provide community engagement opportunities for Buffalo State students, faculty and staff that highlight Buffalo State's position as a diverse urban engaged institution.

Strategies:

1. Work with community partners and the office for Civic and Community Engagement to identify engagement experiences that align with campus diversity goals.

Indicator:

1. A diversity dashboard will be created by spring 2019 providing easy access to a listing of campus diversity related opportunities and initiatives.