

**Meeting Notes --- Civic Action Plan
Buffalo State College – Cleveland Hall 518 (Conference Room)
Wednesday, December 7th, 2016**

Attendees:

Laura Hill Rao, Volunteer & Service-Learning Coordinator (VSLC)
Alex Means, Social & Psychological Foundations
Andrea Nikischer, Adult Education
Charles Kenyon, Dean of Students
Catherine Mazzotta, Social Work
Paula Madrigal, Weigel Health Center
Joy Guarino, Associate Professor, Theater
Kathleen McNerney, Speech-Language Pathology
Lisa T. Morrison-Fronckowiak, Disability Services
Gary Welborn, Associate Professor, Sociology, and Faculty Coordinator for Service-Learning
Peter Yacobucci, Political Science
Jeffrey Scharoun, Residence Life
Patrice Cathey, Liberty Partnership Program
Darryl Carter, STEP Program
Pilar Nelson, President's Office

1:05pm – Welcome by Laura Hill Rao

The committee introduced themselves and welcomed new member **Peter Yacobucci**.

Alex Means - recounted feedback from open forum and a meeting with President Conway-Turner, who is supportive and excited about the Civic Action Plan.

Laura Hill Rao summarized the feedback that was given from the campus and the President on the Civic Action Plan in THREE MAIN CATEGORIES:

- **Information and Data:** The open forum and committee work revealed that there is incomplete understanding (even from individuals directly connected to civic and community engagement work) about the extent of efforts, as well what can and should be considered various forms of civic and community engagement at Buffalo State. This speaks to the importance of the first recommendation of language and culture in the plan.
- **Funding:** Has been the focus of numerous conversations. CE should be prioritized in external requests, and as was pointed out by a faculty member at the open forum is an investment in our reputation and community profile. Since there is a hiring freeze, it has been recommended to utilize graduate students and undergraduate students to expand efforts.
- **Structure and Organization:** Reorganization has also been widely discussed at meetings. Consensus seems to be building that academic affairs is best for community engagement because the implementation of civic and community engagement largely falls on faculty, and is directly connected

to student learning. Pros and cons were discussed to creating more centralization and to remaining decentralized were discussed. The committee's recommendation about this will be important to informing decisions as the administration is looking at numerous ways to streamline and be more cost effective

President Conway-Turner has recommended the committee present a second draft to the College Senate early in the spring semester.

The committee then walked through draft of the civic action plan with the committee to discuss and review recommendations that were made and changes that can be made.

Review and Feedback of RECOMMENDATIONS:

It was suggested that the draft can be reformatted to be more specific of plans --- especially in regards to the **"Table of Contents"** --- the sub-headings can be tweaked so that people can find what they are looking for and focus on particular interests.

Joy Guarino proposed that an appendix be added which can address concerns and suggestions made by individuals within the campus and the community; it can also provide resources that can help people understand where the information within the plan is derived from. The committee agreed.

It was asked if anyone else was left out in the **"Institutional Baseline"** section under *Asset Mapping* as it was conveyed as problematic that certain individuals/centers were not mentioned last meeting. Additions were discussed.

RECOMMENDATION: "Add more information to the purpose of the Civic Action Plan".

Joy Guarino expressed that the committee could not focus on every detail. Therefore, we should move forward. The committee agreed to add a sentence or two to the language of the purpose for the Civic Action Plan.

- It was suggested that the committee add to the justification of civic engagement within the plan.
- It was suggested that the offices and partners that the civic engagement office will be working with be review for rephrasing.

RECOMMENDATION: In the section of "Outcomes and Priority Areas" for *Priority Area #1: Develop a Shared Language and Culture*, it was recommended that this section discuss the climate of the institution and add both culture and climate to the section.

- It was suggested by a committee member that climate was implied and additional language was not necessary. The committee agreed.

RECOMMENDATION: In a section of *Priority Area #1* (on page 10) -- entitled, "Expanding on Campus Culture as an Urban Engaged Institution", it was recommended to include global and international engagement.

The committee agreed.

- **Andrea Nikischer** mentioned online students should be mentioned in the section. The committee agreed.

The question of an **assessment** that will assist in determining if the plan will succeed was proposed within the feedback that was given by the campus and community. **Charles Kenyon** suggested that the implementation group will be responsible for assessment. The committee agreed that assessment is important and should be added in the final plan. There was some discussion again reiterating the important point that this committee was appointed to conduct a planning process, and that the plan was a blueprint of recommendations, and can be updated and changed as it is implemented.

RECOMMENDATION: In the section of “Outcomes and Priority Areas” for *Priority Area #2: Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact* the fourth bullet discusses the possibility of having community advisory boards for campus programs. It was recommended to change this to include community input. The committee agreed.

RECOMMENDATION: In the section of “Outcomes and Priority Areas” for *Priority Area #3: Enhance Faculty, Staff, and Student Voice and Support* it was mentioned that paid internships as an area of support and community based internships should be added.

- **Andrea Nikischer** mentioned the importance of indicating ways to involve online students in community engagement in the section. The committee agreed.
- **Peter Yacobucci** mentioned that there was a typo on page 12, which was noted by the committee. The draft will be review again to correct any other grammatical errors.

Laura Hill Rao revised the second and third bullet in the section of “Outcomes and Priority Areas” for *Priority Area #4: Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement* and provided the committee a copy of the changes that were made. The committee then review the updated section of *Priority Area #4*.

- **Alex Means** suggested that the language existing in the first two bullets of the *Infrastructure and Organization* section, should not be change.
- **Laura Hill Rao** responded to that the current draft uses language that implies a new office should be created, which was not what the committee was recommending. **Peter Yacobucci** suggested that the term “reposition” be used instead of “expanding” as a suggestion in resolving the issue.
- **Lisa Morrison-Fronckowiak** suggested that the second bullet in the *Infrastructure and Organization* section be restructure.
- **Charles Kenyon** mentioned that the committee should keep in mind that their recommendations can influence decisions that are made in regard to reorganization matters and efforts.
- **Joy Guarino** mentioned that the committee should emphasize that the plan is a five-year plan, which means that there is time for the plan to evolve which should avoid VSLC becoming overwhelmed with the topics/issues revolving around civic and community engagement.
- **Gary Welborn** mentioned that he thinks the word “expand’ should stay due to the fact that the VSLC has to be expanded for real progress to take place. – Progress requires additional people.

- **Joy Guarino** suggested rewording within the third bullet of the *Infrastructure and Organization* section to reflect gradual change versus immediate change.
- **Andrea Nikischer** reminded the committee that the issue is larger than the budget. --- The wording should reflect that more administration is not the answer but adding more full-time faculty is not the answer either.
- **Alex Means** mentioned he discussed with President Conway-Turner that one way to add more labor without increasing administration efforts is through the utilization of graduate assistants.
- **Lisa Morrison-Fronckowiak** expressed that it should not be written that Laura Hill Rao and the VSLC be solely responsible for coordinating the community engagement office and matters. The plan should discuss what we value at Buffalo State. Therefore, if only Laura Hill Rao and the VSLC is responsible for civic engagement office/matters it does not send a strong message that we truly value civic and community engagement. **Catherine Mazzotta** agreed; and mentioned that the civic engagement office as a priority comes with implementing resources. However, the committee should not get too specific in determining who the responsibility will fall on.
- **Charles Kenyon** mentioned that the original language leaves the responsibility of civic engagement open. -- In terms of allocation, resources should come from other areas/centers on campus so we are not letting faculty/staff go. The wording should be rephrase to convey options and numbers for resources that could help establish the civic engagement office.
- **Joy Guarino** conveyed that there may be concerns regardless of what decision is made by the committee. The bottom line is, “we want a civic engagement office which requires VSLC to expand. --- Now we have to identify the important pieces”.

Additional Notes:

The committee agreed that they are comfortable with a strong recommendation without the cabinet section.

Charles Kenyon mentioned that reporting to the Provost or President should be specific ---and he emphasized a campus wide level of focus.

Laura Hill Rao ensured that the language is inclusive to recognize the important role of Student Affairs professionals after concern of the language suggesting otherwise arose during the meeting.

Charles Kenyon conveyed that the plan can be strengthened by indicating resources that can be reallocated and forming a commitment of resources as a strategy.

***The meeting went over the scheduled time, therefore, it was cut short. ***

2:52pm – Meeting adjourned

Follow-up and Reminders

- Further review and revisions of the draft of the Civic Action plan is needed.
- The committee did not get to establish a timeline during meeting; therefore, it has to be done next meeting.

- Laura Hill Rao will start with a recommendation of a timeline then get back to the committee.
- It was proposed that the second draft of the Civic Action Plan should be released to the campus by February 2nd, 2017.