

**Civic Action Plan**  
**Buffalo State College**  
**State University of New York**  
**Working Draft November, 2016**

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Creation and Charge of the Civic Action Plan Work Group</b>	<b>3</b>
Civic Action Plan Work Group Members	3
Defining Civic and Community Engagement	3
<b>Civic Action Plan Rationale</b>	<b>4</b>
Campus Compact Core Principles	4
Buffalo State Mission and History	5
<b>Institutional Baseline</b>	<b>6</b>
Background	6
Asset Mapping	6
<b>Outcomes and Priority Areas</b>	<b>8</b>
Priority Area #1 Develop a Shared Language and Culture	9
Developing a Shared Language	9
Expanding on Campus Culture as an Urban Engaged Institution	10
Priority Area #2 Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact	10
Priority Area #3 Enhance Faculty, Staff, and Student Voice and Support	11
Faculty Voice and Support	11
Staff and Administration Voice and Support	12
Student Voice and Support	13
Priority Area #4 Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement	13
Infrastructure and Organization	14
Communication	15
Curriculum	15
Data Collection and Analysis	16
<b>Accountability and Communication</b>	<b>16</b>

# Executive Summary

There presently exists a large and diverse number of civic and community engagement efforts at SUNY Buffalo State College. These efforts reflect the mission and strategic plan of the college. Our institution has been recognized regionally as SUNY's urban engaged campus and nationally as a leader in civic and community engagement through multiple awards, and through classification as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution. This document provides a roadmap for deepening and expanding our institution's civic and community engagement work.

Through collaborative research and dialogue, the Civic Action Plan Work Group developed this Civic Action Plan in coordination with the the office of Buffalo State College President, Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, in the Fall of 2016. This Civic Action Plan identifies four priority areas where we can strengthen our civic and community engagement efforts across campus and in our community, where we can improve and better communicate our work, and where we can expand and deepen the public purposes of the college. These priority areas are:

1. Develop a Shared Language and Culture
2. Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact
3. Enhance Supports for Faculty, Staff, and Students
4. Expand Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement

## Priority Area #1 Develop a Shared Language and Culture

There is a need to establish a shared language and a shared culture across the campus. This will give added coherence, depth, and purpose to our civic and community engagement efforts and will help to articulate a common intentions to the work that will help grow civic and community engagement.

## Priority Area #2 Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact

There is a need to strengthen the institution's contribution to the health and vitality of the Buffalo community. We must continue to deepen and broaden collaborations and reciprocity to harness the power of campus-community connections to improve both campus outcomes and community priorities.

## Priority Area #3 Enhance Faculty, Staff, and Student Voice and Support

There is a need to enhance faculty, staff, and student voice and support in realizing our civic and community engagement goals. To foster a climate that can encourage faculty, staff, and students to take on this work effectively, additional steps and supports must be developed to give all individuals the tools to be successful.

## Priority Area #4 Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement

There is a need to expand coordination of civic and community engagement efforts across the campus through the establishment of an Office of Civic and Community Engagement. The coordination of efforts will deepen internal and external communication and connections, expand potential impact of the work we do, support engagement efforts not currently overseen by existing offices such as community-based research, and deepen campus commitment.

# Creation and Charge of the Civic Action Plan Work Group

Buffalo State President, Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner signed the Campus Compact Thirtieth Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors in March 2016. As a core component of this statement, Dr. Conway-Turner committed to creating a campus Civic Action Plan within one year of signing the document, the purpose of which would be to deepen civic and community engagement and enhance the public purposes of SUNY Buffalo State.

On September 14, 2016 President Conway-Turner charged the Buffalo State Civic Action Plan Work Group with developing a Civic Action Plan for Buffalo State in alignment with our campus mission and strategic plan. As articulated by President Conway-Turner, the purpose of the Civic Action Plan is to forward Buffalo State's role as an urban engaged campus in the city of Buffalo and expand our civic and community engagement efforts in ways that advance citizenship and positive social change. Reflecting these commitments, the Civic Action Plan Work group held a series of meetings and conducted research in Fall 2016 in order to establish an institutional baseline of existing civic and community engagement efforts at Buffalo State and make recommendations for developing the Civic Action Plan. The Civic Action Plan is a five year plan. A timeline for implementation of the outcomes below will follow in the second draft.

## Civic Action Plan Work Group Members

**Co-Chair:** **Alexander Means**, Assistant Professor, Social & Psychological Foundations of Education  
**Co-Chair:** **Laura Hill Rao**, Coordinator, Volunteer and Service-Learning Center

**Darryl Carter**, Director, STEP Program

**Patrice Cathey**, Director, Liberty Partnership Program

**Lisa Fronckowiak**, Director, Disability Services

**Joy Guarino**, Associate Professor, Theater

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**Charles Kenyon**, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

**Paula Madrigal**, Assistant Director Prevention & Health Promotions

**Catherine Mazzotta**, Assistant Professor, Social Work

**Kathleen McNerney**, Assistant Professor, Speech-Language Pathology

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**Gary Welborn**, Associate Professor, Sociology

**Jeffrey Scharoun**, Complex Director, Residence Life Office

**Staff to the Committee:** **Melissa Slisz**, Staff Assistant, President's Office

## Defining Civic and Community Engagement

The Civic Action Plan Work Group proceeded based on two key conceptualizations of civic and community engagement:

**Civic engagement** is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement

encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

**Community engagement** describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (From Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification, 2015).

## Civic Action Plan Rationale

Buffalo State College is committed to becoming a leader both regionally and nationally in meaningful forms of civic and community engagement that clearly contribute to the public good and create global and active citizens that respect diversity and individual difference. This commitment reflects an already robust effort at the college to develop civically-minded programming, curriculum, teaching, research, and community service at the college. Examples include Buffalo State's Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, Community Academic Center, Professional Development Schools, Anne Frank Project, Great Lakes Center, Anchor Institution Dashboard Commitment, and the Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education. Buffalo State was recognized in 2015 through the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification, has been recognized eight times on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, and received a Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award in September 2016.

The 2016-2021 Buffalo State Strategic Plan identifies the college as SUNY's Urban Engaged Campus and emphasizes urban community engagement and diversity as core values to strengthen both the college and the surrounding community. The Plan articulates the goal of creating a Civic Action Plan for the college. The creation of a Buffalo State Civic Action Plan will build upon this foundation by making a set of recommendations to better integrate, expand, communicate, and coordinate our civic and community engagement efforts. These recommendations are designed to create a more purposeful structure and give added intentionality to engaged teaching, research, and service while acting to further the strategic and democratic mission of the college.

Our students already reap myriad benefits through exposure to a variety of high impact practices proven to increase retention and graduation rates. At the same time, civic engagement enables our students to be better prepared to be active and contributing members of their chosen profession, community, and the world. Students who share such a holistic, civic, and democratic vision may also be more inclined to make Buffalo State their first school of choice. Alongside recognizing and better communicating Buffalo State's existing civic and community engagement work, this Civic Action Plan aims to more clearly define the campus as an engaged institution through specific changes in institutional support, structure, and cultural shifts to deepen civic and community engagement.

## Campus Compact Core Principles

Campus Compact is a national coalition of nearly 1,100 colleges and universities aimed at advancing the civic and democratic purposes of higher education. The network has developed over the last thirty years, and currently has a national office as well as state offices throughout the country. Campus Compact provides guidelines and resources for developing substantive campus civic and community engagement programs with a stated mission to "build a world in which all students are prepared for lives of engaged citizenship, all campuses are engaged in strong partnerships

advancing community goals, and all of higher education is recognized as an essential building block of a just, equitable, and sustainable future.” Campus Compact has identified five core principles for fulfilling this mission and for creating an impactful Civic Action Plan. These five core principles are:

1. We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.
2. We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
3. We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
4. We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.
5. We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

## Buffalo State Mission and History

### *From the Buffalo State College Strategic Plan 2016–2021:*

Buffalo State College is the largest comprehensive college in the SUNY system, with a long history of providing outstanding undergraduate and graduate education. Established in 1871 as the Buffalo Normal School, Buffalo State has grown from an institution primarily dedicated to training teachers for Buffalo’s growing population to a large comprehensive college with programs in education, liberal arts and sciences, and professional studies.

Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive college committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our mission is to provide a meaningful and relevant education that empowers students to succeed and inspires a lifelong passion for learning. Buffalo State is dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment.

Our location within the city of Buffalo’s museum district and arts corridor is bordered by distinctive and emerging neighborhoods that enable students to participate in nationally recognized community engagement and service experiences in an urban setting. Buffalo State’s diverse student population, engaged and exceptional faculty, wide range of academic programs, and applied-learning opportunities create a unique community of scholars where lives are transformed.

### **Mission**

Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive college 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.

### **Vision**

Buffalo State College 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.

# Institutional Baseline

## Background

Members of the Civic Action Plan Work Group were chosen from across the Buffalo State campus in order to reflect a diversity of roles and perspectives from faculty, staff, and administration. At the initial meeting of the Work Group on September 14, 2016 members were divided into three subgroups to focus efforts in collecting baseline information and recommendations for community-engaged teaching, community-engaged scholarship, and community-engaged service across campus. As subcommittees began their research to establish our institutional baseline, the larger work group began to meet and have fruitful discussions to develop priority areas and goals for our civic action plan. This enabled the subcommittee groups to both share their findings with one another and to discuss potential recommendations that followed directly from our process of asset mapping. On October 7, 2016 members of the Work Group and other Buffalo State faculty and staff participated in a workshop with Campus Compact. This workshop provided a forum for discussion among our members with representatives from several other campuses in New York State that are in the process of developing their own plans including SUNY Geneseo, Erie Community College, Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher College, Hobart and William Smith College, and Nazareth College. This workshop was useful for our team in establishing that Buffalo State is already a clear regional higher education leader in civic and community engagement work. We were also able to expand the subgroup efforts by discussing strengths and challenges of existing efforts, and making recommendations for future outcomes. Subgroups provided progress reports at an October 12, 2016 Work Group meeting, and efforts to create the first draft began.

## Asset Mapping

As evidenced by existing reports, documents, and awards, Buffalo State already engages in extensive, deep, and meaningful civic and community engagement efforts. Existing documentation including the SUNY Applied Learning report, the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement application, a recent President's Community Service

Honor Roll application, the Anchor Dashboard Data Plan, the Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award application, and the Measuring Community Engagement at Buffalo State report served as critical tools to gather extensive information on existing civic and community engagement assets. Members of the Work Group identified a number of successful engagement efforts that reflect Buffalo State's commitment to the five core principles of Campus Compact. These civic and community engagement efforts exemplify the institution's commitment to the public purposes of higher education through reciprocal partnerships, meaningful examination of student preparation for active citizenship, and deep student learning. A number of core activities were identified by the Work Group. While they do not encompass the totality of our efforts, these core activities are some of the strongest and most visible examples of Buffalo State's civic and community engagement strengths and priorities. These include:

- **Volunteer and Service-Learning Center (VSLC):** Since 2004, 15,431 students have participated in 820 service-learning courses taught by 137 faculty members with 250 community organizations. Over 360,000 hours of service have been completed through academic service-learning, and 103 volunteer events and civically focused Alternative Break experiences have also engaged students directly with community organizations. Service-learning is faculty driven, with faculty members seeing the academic value in establishing partnerships to support student learning and meet community identified goals. In a recent community partner survey, 100% of respondents reported that service-learning impacted their organization in at least one positive way including increasing the number of services offered, increasing the number of clients served, or assisting in meeting the organization's mission.
- **Community Academic Center (CAC):** The Community Academic Center (CAC) is a collaborative effort between Buffalo State's Center for Excellence in Urban Education (CEURE) and Volunteer and Service-Learning Center (VSLC). The CAC is a site where children and families living in Buffalo's West Side neighborhood can participate in social and educational programs that foster and enhance lifelong learning. It provides a space where Buffalo State listens to and learns from children, youth, families, and community partners to better understand what is needed for children and youth to be fully engaged in learning, with an emphasis on providing programming to support our newly arrive immigrant and refugee neighbors. Since opening in 2011 the CAC has provided educational support to over 10,000 youth and families engaging 2,700 Buffalo State students and 28 Buffalo State faculty.
- **Professional Development Schools (PDS):** Since 1991, SUNY Buffalo State's award-winning PDS program has partnered with more than 45 schools locally, regionally, and internationally. Responding to demographic changes in our city and beyond, the Consortium has expanded its commitment to the development of children, teachers, and faculty as global citizens and to increasing the capacity of schools to improve educational outcomes.
- **Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education (CEURE):** The SUNY Buffalo State Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education was created by act of the New York State Legislature in 2000 to proactively meet the needs of urban and rural schools and their pupils. During its sixteen years of existence CEURE has consistently demonstrated ways to improve schools, support students socially and academically, and develop a core of teachers who are interested in and qualified to teach in some of the most challenging urban and rural settings. Current projects include: Anchor Institution Dashboard, Community Work Study positions, Community Schools Partnership, Elementary Literacy & Arts Program, Franklin Covey Leader in Me, I am College Bound, International #45 Afterschool Program, Lafayette High School, M&T Intensive Tutoring Initiative, Middle Early College High School, and West Side Promise Neighborhood.
- **Anne Frank Project (AFP):** The mission of the Anne Frank Project is to use storytelling as a vehicle for community building, conflict resolution, and identity exploration. Inspired by the wisdom of Anne Frank, AFP surfaces and shares stories stifled by oppression. To this end, AFP provides approximately 50 visits to local schools and organizations annually, and implemented 6 National Social Justice Festivals with over 18,000 attendees last year alone.
- **PreCollegiate Programs:** At the Pre-collegiate Academic Success Center (PASC), Buffalo State operates three preparatory programs for over 500 high school students from Buffalo and the WNY area who are from low income families or will be the first in their family to attend college. The programs -- Upward Bound, Liberty Partnerships

and the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) -- coordinate the delivery of academic and personal support services aimed at ensuring students complete high school fully prepared for admission to and success in college.

- **Small Business Development Center:** The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at SUNY Buffalo State provides management and technical assistance to start-up and existing small businesses throughout Erie County and the Niagara Frontier. The SBDC brings together the resources of SUNY Buffalo State, the private sector, and government agencies to counsel and train small businesses to resolve organizational, financial, marketing, technical, and other obstacles they may encounter. The SBDC provides expert one-to-one counseling, training, and instructional programs to help small businesses succeed.
- **Center for Health and Social Research West Side Youth Development:** The Center for Health and Social Research (CHSR) at Buffalo State College has been collaborating with numerous organizations on the West Side of Buffalo for the past several years on research and prevention projects focused on youth development topics such as violence, mental health, and drug abuse. Some of the most notable accomplishments have been the West Side Youth Development Coalition (WSYDC) and our recently awarded Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The WSYDC has over 170 stakeholders drawn from Buffalo State researchers, faculty, and staff, law enforcement, Buffalo Public Schools, the court system, the Erie County Health Department, and community-based organizations/sectors, businesses, and faith-based organizations in the neighborhood.
- **Anchor Institution Dashboard Learning Cohort:** The Anchor Dashboard Learning Cohort seeks to develop a “dashboard” framework that might help universities more accurately understand both the status of the surrounding community and institutional efforts to support community improvement, with an eye toward both better communicating impact and making strategic adjustments over time. Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the goal is to help universities adopt and implement an anchor mission that applies the university’s long-term, place-based economic power, in combination with human and intellectual resources, to better the welfare of surrounding communities over time, with a particular focus on communities of moderate and limited incomes.
- **Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM):** PRISM’s mission is to proactively identify, evaluate, and address invasive species priorities in western New York using a coordinated partnership of local professionals, organizations, and private citizens to improve, restore, and protect local aquatic and terrestrial resources. SUNY Buffalo State serves as the clearinghouse for all information pertaining to invasive species in Western New York. Students are provided with opportunities to apply academic knowledge in addressing invasive species issues locally and regionally.

Subgroup research, discussion, and large group report-outs identified that these and many other college activities clearly meet Campus Compact core principles 1, 2, 4, and 5 with fewer programs and activities overtly meeting principle 3, “We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically”. In reflecting on this, the Work Group’s priority areas and recommendations, elaborated below, emphasize an intentional focus on building upon and expanding on what we are already doing as an institution to meet the core principles of Campus Compact.

## Outcomes and Priority Areas

As articulated above, there presently exists a large and diverse number of civic and community engagement efforts at Buffalo State College. These efforts all variously reflect the five core principles of Campus Compact to more effectively develop mutually beneficial partnerships, educate an active and engaged citizenry, challenge social and economic inequalities, and orient Buffalo State as an anchor institution in our community. However, through collaborative research and dialogue, the Civic Action Plan Work Group was able to identify several areas where we can become stronger; where we can improve and better communicate our existing efforts; and where we can expand and deepen the public and

democratic purposes of the college. As such, the Work Group was able to identify and organize these ideas into four priority areas for improving and expanding our civic and community engagement efforts. These priority areas are:

1. Develop a Shared Language and Culture
2. Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact
3. Enhance Supports for Faculty, Staff, and Students
4. Expand Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement

After identifying these priority areas, the Work Group was then able to establish specific outcomes and goals for each area. In what follows, we discuss these priority areas and goals. We provide a rationale for each priority area and offer specific recommendations and outcomes for each. Importantly, the Work Group believes that each of these recommendations and outcomes are somewhat provisional. This is to say that the Work Group believes the implementation of the Civic Action Plan needs to be a catalyst to having inclusive democratic dialogue and deliberation about Buffalo State's role and responsibility in urban civic engagement.

*(Please note that each priority area will be expanded to note recommended timeline for implementation of specific goals after feedback is collected and revisions made to this first draft).*

## Priority Area #1 Develop a Shared Language and Culture

Through our discussions the Work Group came to realize that there is a need to establish a shared language and a shared culture across the campus. This will give added coherence, depth, and purpose to our civic and community engagement efforts and will help to articulate a common intentions to the work that will help grow civic and community engagement efforts including securing external funding through grants, endowments, and gifts. First, in terms of language, a common set of terms and definitions would be useful for orienting and better integrating civic and community engagement across the areas of teaching, research, and service. Second, in terms of culture, efforts are needed to infuse the values and principles of Campus Compact's five core principles into all aspects of campus life and give a sense of purpose and reciprocity among students, faculty, staff, and community partners. What follows are some specific recommendations associated with these two important and overlapping goals.

### *Developing a Shared Language*

Multiple terms are used simultaneously at Buffalo State and in the community that overlap and intertwine including civic engagement, community engagement, service-learning, community-based learning, community service, applied learning, high impact practices, anchor institution efforts, community-based research, and applied research, among others. The campus has approved definitions for much of this work through the SUNY Applied Learning Plan, however, it is understandably a challenge for Buffalo State faculty, staff, and students to discern the meaning of the various terms as well as their efficacy and relevance. By collectively determining common language for Buffalo State and effectively communicating overarching terms and priorities, the Work Group believes that we can enhance a sense of shared purpose, strengthen our commitment to creating a critical and empowering institutional culture, and better fulfill our mission to serve our students, community, and broader publics. The following specific recommendations will address the need for shared language:

- Review and adopt common civic and community engagement definitions and terminology, and educate faculty, staff, students, and community partners about the identified terms based on existing definitions in the SUNY

Applied Learning Plan, Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and AAC&U High Impact Practice resources.

- Reflect the agreed upon language in materials, documents, and presentations across campus from website pages to promotion & tenure documentation and annual reports.

### ***Expanding on Campus Culture as an Urban Engaged Institution***

We aim to build a dynamic culture at Buffalo State which includes graduating students with a deep intellectual foundation in the liberal arts alongside a sense of civic literacy, creating meaningful partnerships, and leveraging our resources to contribute to a more just, sustainable, and participatory democracy. There are, of course, numerous actors, identities, perspectives, and priorities across an institution like Buffalo State. We acknowledge and value this diversity and believe that it is a strength and an asset. In order to fully actualize the implementation of Buffalo State's strategic plan as well as this Civic Action Plan, it is important to bring as many voices to the table as possible and to clarify roles in order to make sure that our strategic goals and civic action commitments are effectively shaped, implemented, and communicated in a democratic fashion across our campus. We strive to generate a shared culture as an engaged institution, by which we mean an institution that embraces the ideals of the five core principles mentioned above. In order to deepen our campus culture as an engaged institution, the following action items are recommended:

- Expand on programs to educate the campus on community-based issues, equity, social justice, democracy, and reciprocity of partnerships through campus-wide events and activities such as a civic engagement speaker series, common readings, civic engagement book clubs, and lunch discussions.
- Identify and recognize that faculty, staff, and students are already doing community engagement projects that may not currently be recognized across the institution, and bring those individuals into a shared community engagement community.
- Identify and reach out to faculty, staff and students who have opportunities and potential for deep and meaningful community engagement efforts.
- Work with student organizations, clubs, fraternities, and sororities and their staff advisors and overseeing offices to expand on and co-create mutually respectful and reciprocal partnerships, particularly for non-WNY students in order to better understand the local community and their role as engaged citizens.
- Build community among civically engaged faculty members (including topics such as civic engagement in general education, assessment, connecting scholarship, community engaged research, and building reciprocal partnerships).
- Recognize and celebrate faculty, staff, student, and community partners' civic and community engagement efforts through campus-wide events such as annual civic engagement showcase that combines poster presentations and seminars or a special area for civic engagement at the existing research and creativity forum.
- Develop a multidisciplinary approach to addressing community issues through deep collaborative and reciprocal platform partnership(s) with a specific community and/or organization.
- Articulate community engagement priorities in faculty and staff hiring practices including search processes and employment offers.

## **Priority Area #2 Broaden Community Input and Deepen Community Impact**

As described above, the work group identified the third Campus Compact Core Commitment focused on the institution's contribution to the health and strength of our communities as our opportunity for greatest improvement. Individual projects and initiatives across the campus have strong reciprocity including the Professional Development Schools, Community Academic Center, Anne Frank Project, Alternative Break, and service-learning partnerships. More recent efforts through the Anchor Institution Dashboard Initiative are helping the college to define the impacts of the institution

on the broader community, and to measure the impacts that we can have on economic, social, environmental, educational, and political elements of a community. In order to expand our understanding of the public purposes of higher education, it is essential to see our community collaborators as experts of knowledge and practice. We must continue to deepen and broaden collaborations to harness the power of campus-community connections to improve both campus outcomes and community priorities. Specific recommendations in this area include:

- Develop opportunities to gain a better understanding of community need and explore opportunities to develop key platform partnerships that meet identified community needs and utilize existing strengths of faculty, staff, and students such as K-12 education and/or immigrant and refugee supports.
- Prioritize external funding requests to focus on implementation of programs and opportunities that meet these identified community needs.
- Develop understanding of existing community input (i.e. social work department advisory board, President's advisory board).
- Increase external advisory board representation (i.e. develop a residence life community advisory board, academic department community advisory boards, garner broader input into college planning processes).
- Enhance community involvement in appropriate search committees, real estate decisions, and other key committees.
- Engage partners in strategic planning discussions, and identify key platform partnerships and primary community issues with communities/organizations to strengthen impact.
- Strengthen campus policies and procedures to make partner's use of facilities easier and make campus more welcoming.
- Create a community partner fellowship program for community leaders to engage strategically in creating meaningful partnerships that impact community.
- Explore additional community-partner recognitions such as expanding opportunities for community partners to audit courses free of charge for hosting students/significant efforts of partnership through service-learning, high impact practice, or research participation.
- Expand professional development opportunities offered by faculty and staff for community partners who collaborate with Buffalo State.
- Deepen connections to leadership groups around Buffalo (ie: Leadership Buffalo; Young Non-Profit Professionals Network; B-Team; etc.).

## Priority Area #3 Enhance Faculty, Staff, and Student Voice and Support

As efforts to develop campus culture grow, and opportunities to be responsive to community need are established, the Civic Action Plan Work Group believes that more needs to also be done to enhance faculty, staff, and student voice and support in realizing our civic and community engagement goals. In order to fulfill the Campus Compact core principles, a broad base of faculty, staff, and students need to feel ownership and included in the civic mission of the college. To foster a climate that can encourage faculty, staff, and students to take on this work effectively, additional supports must be developed to give individuals the tools to be successful.

### *Faculty Voice and Support*

There are significant numbers of faculty and staff at Buffalo State who already embrace a civic mind set and who implement service-learning, community-based research, and other civic engagement efforts. Moreover, faculty at Buffalo State have a strong service responsibility and currently perform numerous high impact forms of service on campus, in the local community, nationally, and internationally. In the process of asset mapping and establishing our institutional baseline, the Civic Action Work Group identified a need to deepen support and recognition for faculty who are engaged in

these efforts. In order to allow for all students to have the opportunity for civic and community engagement experiences, additional faculty members need to be identified, and all faculty and staff need need broader supports and connections to expand and develop reciprocal partnerships that prepare students for lives of engaged citizenship. Specific Work Group recommendations include:

- Conduct an extensive review of existing promotion and tenure guidelines to develop an understanding of how community and civic engagement is recognized, and encourage revisions to guidelines as needed to incorporate appropriate recognition of the value of civic and community engaged teaching, scholarship, and service.
- While all faculty have a responsibility to engage in high impact service, efforts can also be made to re-align or establish monetary fellowships, incentives, or grants to faculty members directed to civic engagement. Identify a community-based research task force with stipends or course buyouts for participating faculty.
- Integrate support for community-based research through an existing office, where researchers and community members can dialogue and develop needed research questions and opportunities. Possibly locate this office within the community, for instance, in the Community Academic Center.
- Create an open access peer reviewed online multidisciplinary academic journal focused on public impact research.
- Expand on faculty recognition through the Celebration of Service and other events that provide awards for outstanding civic and community engagement work including an early career civic engagement award, a community-based research award, and recognition of efforts to support anchor institution initiatives.

### ***Staff and Administration Voice and Support***

There is also an important role for all Buffalo State staff and certainly administrators to play in deepening our civic and community engagement work. This involvement can directly be connected to staff responsible for programming and direct student supports, there are indirect opportunities for staff and administrators to foster the civic responsibility of our academic community. Recommendations include:

- Develop key roles for offices across campus to recognize the role each plays in developing student civic engagement throughout the student experience from application to graduation.
- Showcase existing civic engagement programs and utilize staff connected to these programs to expand and deepen training for professional staff and administrators to understand civic and community engagement as well as identify opportunities to integrate these efforts in their day to day work.
- Adjust professional staff performance plans and evaluations to recognize and encourage community and civic engagement in their work with students and broad professional lives.
- Develop hiring and administrative practices that foster principles critical to an urban engaged institution including hiring from the local community, and buying from local vendors.
- Deepen and expand programming coordinated by student life, residence life, health promotions, career development and other student service offices that explore and promote civic and community engagement.
- Create additional opportunities for staff to connect with campus civic engagement initiatives outside of day to day responsibilities including participating as Alternative Break trip advisors, civic engagement committee work, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Take Back the Night, and Bengals Dare to Care Day site coordinators.
- Work with unions to develop civic engagement opportunities through union involvement including potential direct community service opportunities for union members.
- Recognize the important contributions and welcome feedback from all campus staff including maintenance, food service workers, community safety officers, and others who are responsible for key services on our campus.

### ***Student Voice and Support***

Student interest, support, and implementation of community engagement efforts has always been strong at Buffalo State. Students respond positively to service-learning opportunities and engage deeply in community service and opportunities for community-engaged research. However, student voice in the development and implementation of civic and community engagement efforts have not always been well developed. In addition, students also require expanded support to more deeply integrate and reflect on the importance, value, and continuum of becoming active and engaged citizens. Along with this need for developmentally appropriate guidance and support, Buffalo State students are typically individuals who must work or receive financial assistance to attend college, and will therefore benefit from financial incentives and remunerations to be committed to the civic engagement mission of Buffalo State. The Work Group believes that students should leave Buffalo State with an expectation and understanding of how to be a civically engaged citizen, and recommends that all students will also have the opportunity to participate in this type of experience during their college career. Therefore, the Work Group recommends:

- An assessment should be done to map already existing student organizations across campus engaged in civic and community action work. A Student Civic Leadership Board could be established to strengthen student participation and coordination of student engagement activities, clubs, groups, and associations. This Leadership Board could also act as a conduit for incorporating student voices into deepening our commitments to the five core principles of the Campus Compact.
- Deepen opportunities for curricular civic and community engagement experiences as identified in the curriculum section below.
- Expand opportunities for co-curricular civic and community engagement experiences including creating themed on and off-campus civic housing opportunities, developing a student civic leadership program, expand community work study opportunities to include additional community-based sites, and growing the student-led Alternative Break program.
- Provide paid student civic leadership opportunities to support faculty and staff driven community and civic engagement through coordination and logistical support.
- Collect testimonials from current students and alumni about the value of the civic and community engagement work at Buffalo State to be used both for internal and external communication.
- Expand AmeriCorps opportunities and match AmeriCorps education awards for incoming students.
- Expand recognition of student engagement (including VSLC Certificate of Recognition for Community Engagement and Celebration of Service) to recognize achievement of highly engaged students.
- Identify donors and expand community and civic engagement scholarships to create a larger cohort of civically minded students.

## Priority Area #4 Coordination of Civic and Community Engagement

Perhaps the most important and consistent recommendation voiced in the Work Group conversations is to expand coordination efforts across the campus. The existence of more broadly coordinated efforts will deepen internal and external communication and connections, expand potential impact of the work, support engagement efforts not currently overseen by existing offices such as community-based research, and deepen campus commitment. Expanded coordination will assist with numerous functions including data collection and analysis, public awareness and promotion of civic and community engagement to internal and external constituencies, focusing student learning outcomes and curriculum on clearly identified community need, improving communication and eliminating redundancy, and deepening community impact. It is important to recognize that coordination efforts and infrastructures need to be developed and implemented through an inclusive and deliberative process that give structure to our work while also allowing plenty of space for creativity, input, collaboration, and experimentation. Buffalo State currently has a highly decentralized organization of civic and community engagement work. In many ways, this decentralization is a strength allowing for new forms of

collaboration and projects to emerge organically. We want to continue to encourage experimentation and new projects, while also forging a higher level of communication and coordination in our work.

Currently, the VSLC and pre-collegiate programs are situated in Student Affairs, while the remainder of the key civic and community engagement efforts report to the provost directly or to the relevant academic school within Academic Affairs. Efforts were made in 2012 to deepen the connection among these programs by appointing Dr. Gary Welborn as Coordinator of Community Engagement. Dr. Welborn facilitated regular meetings which served to increase communication across some of these areas as well as begin to set priorities and potential future goals. Due to health concerns, Dr. Welborn needed to step back from this role in 2015. In order to deepen our civic and community engagement efforts and to ensure the successful implementation of this plan, the Work Group makes the following recommendations for improving the coordination of our civic and community engagement efforts.

### ***Infrastructure and Organization***

Fulfilling the recommendations and goals outlined above in the first three priority areas will require developing infrastructure and organization to coordinate our efforts. Given the current budget climate, these efforts can be integrated in over time, as funding allows. This may not necessarily require new hires immediately, but will require some reorganization of existing efforts and reporting in order to best facilitate the necessary communication, assessment, promotion, and collaboration necessary for success. Specifically, the work group recommends:

- Creation of a Civic Action Implementation Committee charged with overseeing the enactment of the Civic Action Plan.
- Ensure cabinet level representation of community engagement priorities (other than the President and Provost) in order to foster an environment that consistently affirms the public purposes of higher education as discussion and decision occurs and provides immediate feedback from someone whose primary lens is focused on community and civic engagement.
- Create an Office of Civic and Community Engagement, responsible for promoting and coordinating college-wide civic and community engagement efforts. Given the current budget condition, this office might be created by using existing personnel from programs and offices which have already allocated staff and resources for civic and community engagement. For example, the office could be created by expanding the role of the Volunteer and Service Learning Center, organized under the AVP and Dean of Students. A more powerful approach that identifies civic engagement as a priority for the college is to locate the proposed office directly within the President's office. These are not exclusive choices; the initial phase of the Civic Action Plan might start with the VSLC, with a move to the President's office at a later phase, once the civic engagement strategy has been more fully advanced. Whichever approach is taken, the necessary resources will have to be determined and apportioned in order to ensure the success of the office and the implementation of this Civic Action Plan.
- Identify a faculty point of contact in each school to act as a resource for faculty (with a course buyout).
- Support community-engaged research, teaching, and outreach.
- Identify and support external funding requests to encourage and expand civic and community engagement.
- Expand workshops and opportunities for faculty to discuss community-based opportunities directly with community partners.
- Be responsible for ensuring the campus is meeting the requirements to maintain the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification including developing a plan to sustain and grow the efforts of the Community Academic Center.
- Work with the Faculty Development office to encourage campus and community dialogue through guest speakers and professional development opportunities.
- Create and lead an advisory board of community members and partners for civic engagement implementation

- Develop a group of community representatives who can participate in research design and implementation, be liaisons between the campus and community, and be available experts for community-engaged work.
- Develop effective policies for logistics of community engagement work including transporting students, faculty, and staff to support engagement efforts.

## ***Communication***

As noted above, Buffalo State has extensive, deep, and meaningful community and civic engagement efforts in place. The baseline initiatives described above have developed, flourished, and expanded over time, often parallel to one another. Taken together, these efforts have earned the campus significant awards and recognitions. It is the Work Group's perspective that understanding the depth of institutional commitment, even internally, has been slow in part because these efforts are rarely described or defined together as institutional engagement. A centralized office will be critical in expanding our internal and external understanding, recognition, and communication of this work. The Work Group believes that this will assist faculty, staff, and students to recognize the focus of civic and community engagement, as well as encourage the regional and national community to identify Buffalo State as SUNY's Engaged Institution. Specific recommendation for communication include:

- Focus and coordinate communication of civic and community engagement efforts on and off campus including expanding website, coordinating networking, and communicating with community partners.
- Centralize information to assist community partners in connecting to the campus and receive appropriate supports.
- Identify tools to gather information, data, and stories to effectively communicate civic and community engagement efforts.
- Collect testimonials from current students and alumni about the value of the civic and community engagement work at Buffalo State to be used both for internal and external communication.
- Focus Daily Bulletin efforts, college website and other efforts to expand awareness of civic and community engagement efforts including the Community Academic Center, Anne Frank Project and WNY PRISM to let students, faculty, staff, and community members learn about opportunities for involvement, research, and connection.

## ***Curriculum***

In order to further our institutional commitments to developing civic literacy and critical citizenship capacities it is important to provide students with opportunities for civic-minded courses as well as direct hands on service-learning experiences in our community. As evidenced by the extensive faculty commitment to socially engaged teaching and also service-learning at Buffalo State, significant curriculum opportunities already exist at Buffalo State. Academic departments and programs, including elementary education and reading and hospitality and tourism have made intentional efforts to provide students with applied learning and service-learning in required courses therefore ensuring that all students in that major have a hands on community-based curricular experience. As noted in the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, Buffalo State aims to create an engaged campus community that fosters the democratic habits and dispositions of civic responsibility in our students. Perhaps the best curricular opportunity to reach that goal is to integrate civically minded community-engagement experiences for students into classes. The service-learning oversight committee has long recommended that all Buffalo State students should have the opportunity to participate in a service-learning experience prior to graduation, and with a few adjustments, this recommendation can meet both civic and community engagement student learning goals. The Work Group therefore recommends:

- Curriculum mapping needs to be undertaken in order to categorize and communicate to the public, faculty advisors, and students courses that have a strong civic and community engagement focus.
- Develop civic learning outcomes for students which can be met through curricular learning experiences.
- Work with Provost, Deans, departments, and faculty to implement service-learning, community-based research opportunities and other high impact urban engagement experiences that meet defined student civic learning outcomes.
- Expand civic engagement learning communities, identify community engaged learning experiences in the majors, expand service-learning experiences, and work with the High-Impact Practice Committee to identify appropriate opportunities to develop civic and community engagement experiences in general education.
- Explore opportunities to integrate civic and community engagement experiences in all majors, and/or in general education with the goal of providing all Buffalo State students with an urban engagement experience.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

There are numerous purposes for effective civic and community engagement data collection including documenting impacts of experiences on student academic achievement, retention and graduation, community impacts, and contributing to research needs in this area. In addition, existing reports, nominations, and applications require effective and accurate data including the Campus Compact annual survey, President’s Community Service Honor Roll, and Anchor Institution Dashboard. Processes need to be formalized for collecting and analyzing data to demonstrate impacts, contribute to the public good, and bring greater awareness of Buffalo State’s contribution. The work group recommends:

- Work with Data Governance Committee to utilize existing campus tools such as Banner to identify, automate and aggregate information that needs to be collected on curricular and co-curricular engagement experiences.
- Institutionalize assessment of community impacts across all areas of collaboration, and gather feedback from partnerships regarding experiences, impacts, and ways to improve collaborations which include narratives, images, and quantitative data to clearly communicate impact to a broad audience.
- Expand Buffalo State’s Impact Report to include more specific civic and community engagement activities.
- Revise annual reports for faculty and professional staff to gather data on partnerships and impacts.
- Adjust student organization reporting to collect community partnerships data from USG recognized groups.
- Develop assessment tools to evaluate broad civic and community engagement efforts including student civic learning outcomes, development of skills that lead to student success, and expand current tracking to ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in a civic and community engagement experience.

## **Accountability and Communication**

In order to effectively monitor the implementation of the Civic Action Plan, strategies and procedures will need to be developed to measure and communicate progress. The Work Group makes the following recommendations:

- The Civic Action Plan Implementation Committee should develop an annual report that specifies progress on the implementation of the Civic Action Plan. The report should also provide highlights and draw attention to significant campus accomplishments. Annual reports will be made public and posted. Goals and objectives will be reviewed and updated annually.

- The recommended Office of Civic and Community Engagement will need to expand the collection of feedback from community partners to reflect the broader goals articulated in this plan through the community advisory board as well as through other channels such as through research and expansion of existing surveys.
- Opportunities also need to be developed in order to elicit feedback from students concerning availability and quality of civic and community-based learning, service, and research opportunities at the college.
- Awards, recognition, and media coverage of our civic and community engagement efforts need to be aggregated online and effectively communicated across campus and to the community.
- As a national and regional leader in civic and community engagement, Buffalo State should actively seek to become a resource to other institutions of higher education that wish to develop their efforts.
- Where possible Buffalo State faculty, staff, and students should be encouraged and supported to participate and give presentation at conferences and workshops to further communicate our civic and community engagement research, service, and teaching.