

**Civic Action Plan**  
**Buffalo State College- State University of New York**  
**March 2017**

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# Executive Summary

Buffalo State College is presently a leader in civic and community engagement. Buffalo State is the only comprehensive college in the SUNY system located in a city and it takes its role as citizen and partner seriously. As a result of its deep and broad civic engagement efforts, Buffalo State has recently earned [Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement](#) in 2015, was awarded the [Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award in 2016](#), and has been appointed to the [President's Community Service Honor Roll](#) eight times. 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 office of Buffalo State College President, Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017. 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. Developing a Shared Language and Culture;
2. Broadening Community Input and Deepening Community Impact;
3. Enhancing Supports for Faculty, Staff, and Students;
4. Coordinating Civic and Community Engagement

## **Priority Area #1: Developing 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 intention to the work that will help grow civic and community engagement.

## **Priority Area #2: Broadening Community Input and Deepening 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 broaden collaborations and reciprocity that will harness the power of campus-community connections and improve both campus outcomes and community priorities.

## **Priority Area #3: Enhancing 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: Coordinating 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 such as community-based research not currently overseen by existing offices, and strengthen campus commitment.

# Creation and Charge of the Civic Action Plan Work Group

Buffalo State College President Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner signed the [Campus Compact Thirtieth Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors](#) in March 2016. Campus Compact represents a commitment to reinvigorate the public and democratic purposes of higher education in relation to teaching, service, research, and institutional decision-making. 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 Buffalo State College.

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, a roadmap for future civic and community engagement efforts. The Civic Action Plan is a five-year plan sensitive to the current budget climate and can be seen as a living document that will grow and develop with implementation.

## 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, Student Accessibility 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

**Don Patterson**, Director, Upward Bound Program

**Gary Welborn**, Associate Professor, Sociology

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

**Peter Yacobucci**, Associate Professor, Political Science

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

# Defining Civic and Community Engagement

There is significant evidence demonstrating the benefits of civic and community engagement for students, faculty, communities, society, and institutions. 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 active global citizens who respect diversity and individual difference. This commitment reflects an already robust effort at the college to develop civic-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](#), [Monroe Fordham Regional History 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, received a Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award in September 2016, and has been placed eight times on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

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 furthering the strategic and democratic mission of the college.

SUNY has recently committed to providing all students with access to an applied learning opportunity, and as a result, Buffalo State has a particularly robust and strong applied learning initiative. Our students also reap myriad benefits through exposure to a variety of high impact practices proven to increase retention and graduation rates. An analysis of data connecting service-learning and student retention at Buffalo State was recently conducted, for example. Over 54,000

student records were analyzed between spring 2014 and fall 2016, and a 9.3% higher rate of return from one semester to the next was found for students enrolled in designated service-learning classes. At the same time, civic engagement better prepares our students to become 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. There are currently multiple ways that community engagement pedagogy is integrated into the culture at Buffalo State including judicial processes and restorative justice practices on campus. 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 that 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 College 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 College 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 College 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 College 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 both to 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 from numerous academic departments with 250 community organizations. Over 360,000 hours of service have been completed through academic service-learning and 103 volunteer events from programs across campus 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 one or more positive ways, 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 arrived 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, Buffalo State College'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 developing children, teachers, and faculty as global citizens and increasing the capacity of schools to improve educational outcomes.
- [Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education \(CEURE\)](#): The Buffalo State College 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 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 has provided approximately 50 visits to local schools and organizations annually, and implemented six 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 to ensure that students complete high school fully prepared for admission to and success in college.
- **[Small Business Development Center](#)**: The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at 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 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-on-one counseling, training, and instructional programs to help small businesses succeed.
- **[Institute for Community Health Promotion\(ICHP\)/Center for Health and Social Research\(CHSR\)/West Side Youth Development Coalition \(WSYDC\)](#)**: One of the core programs of the Buffalo State ICHP is the Center for Health and Social Research (CHSR), which has been collaborating with numerous organizations on the West Side of Buffalo and organizations throughout Erie County for almost 20 years on applied health research, planning, and intervention projects. A major focus of CHSR is the West Side Youth Development Coalition (WSYDC), which has over 200 affiliated stakeholders. Some notable WSYDC accomplishments have been media campaigns to support positive parenting, community event sponsorships, and direct training events for youth and families.
- **[Monroe Fordham Regional History Center](#)**: The mission of the center is to promote understanding of regional history and foster its inclusion into local school curricula, and to make historical resources accessible to students, scholars, and community groups. This mission is sustained through collaboration with community groups and other local archival resources to actively preserve and disseminate historically significant documents of persons and institutions that contributed to Western New York history.
- **[Anchor Institution Dashboard Learning Cohort](#)**: The Anchor Institution Dashboard Learning Cohort (AIDLC) seeks to develop a “dashboard” framework that is intended to 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 AIDLC aims 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. 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 to local and regional invasive species issues.

This list, of course, does not encompass the full range of community and civic engagement activities at Buffalo State. Our 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 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:

1. Developing a Shared Language and Culture
2. Broadening Community Input and Deepening Community Impact
3. Enhancing Supports for Faculty, Staff, and Students
4. Expanding 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 is somewhat provisional. In other words, the Work Group believes the implementation of the Civic Action Plan needs to be a catalyst for having inclusive democratic dialogue and deliberation about Buffalo State’s role and responsibility in urban civic engagement. Such deliberation and inclusivity carries over into five-year timeline of implementation as well. We have delineated a broad timeline for our recommendations with the understanding that some of the recommendations will be achieved quickly and others will require ongoing efforts. Thus, the timeline, like the plan itself, is intended to be a roadmap for implementation and not a fixed blueprint.

### **Priority Area #1: Developing 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 intention 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

### **Years 1-2**

- 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 and tenure documentation and annual reports.

## **Expanding On-Campus Culture as an Urban-Engaged Institution**

We aim to build a dynamic culture at Buffalo State that 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 from the local to the global. 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 implement 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 guarantee that our strategic goals and civic action commitments are effectively shaped, applied, 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 a locally and globally engaged institution, the following action items are recommended:

### **Years 1-2**

- Meet with offices and programs across campus to gather information and share Civic Action Plan goals;
- 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;
- Develop a multidisciplinary approach to addressing community issues through deep collaborative and reciprocal platform partnership(s) with a specific community and/or organization through curricular and co-curricular opportunities;
- 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.

### **Years 3-5**

- Identify and reach out to faculty, staff, and students who have opportunities and potential for deep and meaningful community engagement efforts;

- Build community among civically engaged faculty and staff 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 an annual civic engagement showcase that combines poster presentations and seminars or a special area for civic engagement at the existing research and creativity forum;
- Articulate community engagement priorities in faculty and staff hiring practices, including search processes and employment offers.

## **Priority Area #2: Broadening Community Input and Deepening 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 measure the impacts that we can have on economic, social, environmental, educational, and political elements of a community. In order to expand our realization 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

### **Years 1-2**

- Developing opportunities to gain a better understanding of community need and exploring 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;
- Prioritizing external funding requests to focus on implementation of programs and opportunities that meet these identified community needs;
- Developing an understanding of existing community input (e.g., departmental advisory boards, President's advisory board);
- Creating a Community Advisory Board aimed at deepening community input into campus civic and community engagement efforts;
- Supporting Anchor Institution initiatives including deepening economic development; health, safety, and environment; and education in partnership with efforts in the local community.

### **Years 3-5**

- Increasing opportunities for community partners to provide feedback, input, expertise, and advice on college processes, appropriate search committees, real estate decisions, and other key areas;
- Strengthening campus policies and procedures to make partners' use of facilities easier and make the campus more welcoming;
- Creating a community partner fellowship program for community leaders to engage strategically in creating meaningful partnerships that impact community;
- Exploring additional community-partner recognitions, such as expanding opportunities for community partners to audit courses free of charge, or hosting students' significant efforts of partnership through service-learning, high impact practice, or research participation;

- Expanding professional development opportunities offered by faculty and staff for community partners who collaborate with Buffalo State;
- Deepening connections to leadership groups around Buffalo (e.g., Partnership for the Public Good, Promise Neighborhood Emerging Leaders, PUSH Buffalo, Leadership Buffalo, Young Non-Profit Professionals Network, B-Team, etc.).

## **Priority Area #3: Enhancing 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 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 may need to feel ownership while being 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 and deeply reflect on how civic and community engagement impacts self and community, 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. We recognize the importance of both faculty and staff involvement in civic and community engagement, and understand that the opportunities to connect individuals to the work are different, so the group was intentional about creating separate sections here and below to recognize the differing needs of faculty and staff. Faculty at Buffalo State have a strong service responsibility and currently perform numerous forms of service in local, national, and international communities. 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 broader supports, community, and connections to expand and develop reciprocal partnerships that prepare students for lives of engaged citizenship. Specific Work Group recommendations include

#### **Years 1-2**

- Expanding connections and building community among faculty already engaged in civic and community engagement efforts including outreach, partnerships, service-learning, and community-based research;
- Integrating support for community-based research through an existing office, where researchers and community members can dialogue and develop needed research questions and opportunities;
- Re-aligning or establishing monetary fellowships, incentives, or grants to faculty members directed to civic engagement;
- Identifying a community-based research task force with stipends or course buyouts for participating faculty;
- Ensuring that internal and external funding processes and opportunities related to civic and community engagement are prioritized, well supported, transparent, and clearly communicated to faculty;
- Assisting in providing faculty with publishing and presentation opportunities related to community-based research.

#### **Years 3-5**

- Creating an open access peer-reviewed online multidisciplinary academic journal focused on public impact research;

- Expanding 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;
- Conducting 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.

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

There is also a critical role for all Buffalo State staff and certainly administrators to play in deepening our civic and community engagement work. Many of these individuals are also deeply involved in their local, national, and international communities. The Civic Action Work Group recognizes these efforts exist across campus in various staff roles and responsibilities, and identified a need to also deepen support and recognition for these efforts while encouraging new staff member involvement. This involvement can directly be connected to staff responsible for programming and direct student supports and indirect opportunities for staff and administrators to foster the civic responsibility of our academic community. Recommendations include

### **Years 1-2**

- Identifying and recognizing civic and community engagement activities already being done by staff across campus, and providing opportunities to build community and deepen connections;
- Developing key roles for offices across campus to recognize the role each plays in encouraging student civic engagement throughout the student experience from application to graduation;
- Showcasing existing civic engagement programs and utilizing 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;
- Deepening and expanding programming coordinated by Student Life, Residence Life, Health Promotions, Career Development, and other student service offices that explore and promote civic and community engagement;
- Providing mini-grants and/or monetary fellowships for staff and departmental efforts, training, and programming aligned with civic and community engagement goals;
- Creating additional opportunities for staff to connect with campus civic engagement initiatives outside of day-to-day responsibilities, including participating in Alternative Break trips, civic engagement committee work, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Take Back the Night, and Bengals Dare to Care Day.

### **Years 3-5**

- Adjusting professional staff performance plans and evaluations to recognize and encourage community and civic engagement in their work with students and broad professional lives;
- Developing hiring and administrative practices that foster principles critical to an urban-engaged institution including hiring from the local community and buying from local vendors;
- Working with unions to develop civic engagement opportunities through union involvement, including potential direct community service opportunities for union members;
- Recognizing the important contributions and welcoming 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 have 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 that encourage them to commit 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 have the opportunity to participate in this type of experience during their college career. Therefore, the Work Group recommends

### **Years 1-2**

- Completing assessment to map already existing student organizations across campus that are 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.
- Deepening opportunities for curricular civic and community engagement experiences as identified in the curriculum section below for students on campus as well as for students engaged in distance learning;
- Providing credit bearing, paid, and unpaid student civic leadership opportunities to support faculty- and staff-driven community and civic engagement through coordination and logistical support;
- Collecting 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.

### **Years 3-5**

- Expanding 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, expanding community work-study opportunities to include additional community-based sites, growing the student-led Alternative Break program, and identifying funding to develop paid community-based internship opportunities;
- Expanding AmeriCorps opportunities and matching AmeriCorps education awards for incoming students;
- Expanding recognition of student engagement (including VSLC Certificate of Recognition for Community Engagement and Celebration of Service) to recognize achievement of highly engaged students;
- Identifying donors and expanding community and civic engagement scholarships to create a larger cohort of civically minded students;
- Working with the undergraduate research office to encourage and support undergraduate research that responds to community-driven research questions.

## **Priority Area #4: Coordinating 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 gives 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, but 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 over time, as funding allows. This will require some reorganization of existing efforts and reporting in order to best facilitate the necessary communication, assessment, promotion, and collaboration necessary for success.

In order to complete this plan and meet the identified goals, the committee has taken great care in discussing the expansion of infrastructure and organization. In order to deepen and expand civic and community engagement efforts in meaningful and efficient ways, the group is recommending that an existing office be charged with coordinating campus-wide civic and community engagement efforts and connecting programs. The group is sensitive, however, to concerns of creating additional administrative layers and hierarchical approaches.

Two key overarching recommendations for institutional coordination are as follows:

1. Create a Civic Action Implementation Committee charged with overseeing the enactment of the Civic Action Plan and identify key stakeholders to create an opportunity for successful implementation;
2. Establish an Office of Civic and Community Engagement by renaming and reorganizing the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center to encompass broader civic and community engagement efforts.
  - As the VSLC office currently has respect and partnerships established across many sectors of the community and engages with faculty across all disciplines, expanding the VSLC will build on a structure that has already proven highly successful while ensuring that student engagement remain at the core of civic and community engagement efforts.
  - This new Office of Civic and Community Engagement will have responsibilities across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, but given that many of the civic engagement efforts are academic and/or institution-wide in nature, the work group recommends that this office report directly to the provost or even to the president. This structural change will eliminate layers of reporting and help to ensure successful implementation of the plan. This change will also be sensitive to the current budget condition by using existing personnel from programs and offices that have already allocated staff and resources for civic and community engagement. The necessary resources will have to be determined and apportioned across various aspects of civic and community engagement efforts including existing Centers and programs and support for community-engaged research in order to ensure the successful implementation of this Civic Action Plan.
  - A faculty/staff member from this Office of Civic and Community Engagement should also be included in relevant cabinet-level discussions of community engagement priorities 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. The role and impact of this office should be effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure success, and revisions made as necessary to ensure effectiveness.

Additionally, the work group recommends

### **Years 1-2**

- Creating and leading an advisory board of community members and partners for civic engagement implementation;
- Identifying a faculty point of contact in each school to act as a coordinator and resource for faculty (with a course buyout);
- Identifying graduate and undergraduate student civic leadership positions to support community-engaged programs, research, teaching, partnerships, and outreach;
- Identifying and supporting external funding requests to encourage and expand civic and community engagement;
- Expanding workshops and opportunities for faculty and staff to discuss community-based opportunities directly with community partners;
- Developing a group of community representatives who can participate in research design and implementation, act as liaisons between the campus and community, and serve as available experts for community-engaged work.

### **Years 3-5**

- Taking responsibility to ensure 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;
- Working with the Professional Development Office to encourage campus and community dialogue through guest speakers and professional development opportunities;
- Developing 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 recommendations for communication include

### **Years 1-2**

- Creating a centralized web presence for civic and community engagement as a resource and communication tool;
- Focusing and coordinating communication of civic and community engagement efforts on and off campus, including expanding website, coordinating networking, and communicating with community partners;
- Centralizing information to assist community partners in connecting to the campus and garnering appropriate supports.

### **Years 3-5**



- Identifying tools to gather information, data, and stories to effectively communicate civic and community engagement efforts;
- Collecting 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;
- Focusing Daily Bulletin, college website, and other efforts to expand awareness of civic and community engagement, 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. Goals and recommendations found throughout this plan to support faculty, staff, students, and community partners to integrate curricular civic and community engagement experiences will ensure student civic learning goals are met. The Work Group recommends:

### **Years 1-2**

- Curriculum mapping to categorize and communicate to the public, faculty advisors, and students. courses that have a strong civic and community engagement focus;
- Developing civic learning outcomes for students that can be met through curricular learning experiences;
- Working 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.

### **Years 3-5**

- Expanding civic engagement learning communities, identifying community-engaged learning experiences in the majors, expanding service-learning experiences, and working with the High-Impact Practice Committee to identify appropriate opportunities to develop civic and community engagement experiences in general education;
- Exploring 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;
- Developing and expanding opportunities for online and international civic and community engagement opportunities.

## **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 to Buffalo State's contribution. The work group recommends

### **Years 1-2**

- Working 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;
- Institutionalizing assessment of community impacts across all areas of collaboration, developing assessments, and encouraging research to determine the impacts of civic and community engagement efforts on the community and on students. Data may involve quantitative and qualitative assessment of partnerships, individual experiences, community impacts, and strategies for improving collaborations which include narratives, images, and data to clearly communicate impact to a broad audience.
- Expanding Buffalo State's Impact Report to include more specific civic and community engagement activities.

### **Years 3-5**

- Revising annual reports for faculty and professional staff to gather data on partnerships and assist faculty and staff in developing opportunities to assess impacts on the community and on students;
- Adjusting student organizations' reporting to collect community partnerships data from USG recognized groups;
- Developing and expanding assessment planning and tools to evaluate broad civic and community engagement efforts, including student civic learning outcomes and development of skills that lead to student success. In addition, expanding current tracking can 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:

### **Years 1-2**

- 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 (e.g., research and expansion of existing surveys).

### **Years 3-5**

- Opportunities also need to be developed in order to elicit feedback and testimonials 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 in and give presentations at conferences and workshops to further communicate our civic and community engagement research, service, and teaching.

