

Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI)

Initial Idea and Priority Framework for Campus and Community Input: Draft 1



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Contents

Subcommittee Charge2

Social Justice Subcommittee Structure2

Social Justice Learning Institute Recommendation Drafting Process4

Workgroup Initial Idea and Priority Framework for Input4

Definition, Mission, Vision, and Goals4

Infrastructure6

Curriculum, Research, Co-curricular Campus and Community Programming8

Community Partnerships9

Asset Mapping / External and Internal Communications9

Subcommittee Charge

SUNY Buffalo State College has a long history of educational access and equity. From its founding in 1871 to its expanded, diverse enrollment in 2021, Buffalo State has demonstrated a commitment to social justice. In line with its 150 years of fostering equity and change, the college aims to continue and expand efforts for generations of students to come.

Through teaching, service, and community collaborations, Buffalo State is a community of lifelong learners who recognize that education is a key solution to solving some of society’s most persistent problems. As a campus, we are dedicated to learning, discussing, and advancing Buffalo State’s role and responsibility to continue to address community priorities that affect social and economic mobility, justice, and success for all.

The Social Justice Subcommittee of the President's Council on Equity and Campus Diversity has been charged by the Provost and Chief Diversity Officer/Chief of Staff with making recommendations to create the foundation for a Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) at Buffalo State to be launched in fall 2021.

Social Justice Subcommittee Structure

The Social Justice Subcommittee first convened in January 2021, and immediately developed five workgroups comprised of faculty, staff, and students. Workgroup leadership and membership:

	Infrastructure	Definition, Mission, Vision, and Goals	Curriculum, Research, Co-curricular Campus and Community Programming	Asset Mapping/ External and Internal Communications	Community Partnerships
Facilitator	Carol DeNysschen, Chair and Professor, Health, Nutrition, and Dietetics Department	Amy Wilson, Chair and Associate Professor, Higher Education Administration Department	James Golden, Assistant Professor, Social Work Department	Mark Norris, Associate Director of Web Administration and Editor, Marketing and Communications Office	Terri Massenberg, Complex Director, Residence Life Office
Project Manager	Kristin Fields, Director, Continuing Professional Studies	John Cabra, Professor, International Center for Studies in Creativity	Judith Harris, Lecturer, Exceptional Education Department	Agnieszka Zak-Moskal, Title III Activity Director, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Office	Peter DeJesus Jr., Assistant Women’s Basketball Coach
Student Co-Facilitator	Solomon Joseph,	Deandre Campbell, Senior,	Shenese Patterson, Senior,	Laura Brown, Graduate, Higher Education &	Jhada Hutchinson, Senior,

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	Graduate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Program	Sociology Program	Sociology Program	Student Affairs Program	Individualized Studies Program
Members	Eric “Luke” Krieg, Professor, Sociology Department	Marcus Watson, Assistant Professor, Individualized Studies	Alice Pennisi, Associate Professor, Art and Design Department	John Mack, Assistant Clinical Manager, Weigel Wellness Center	Frances Gage, Associate Professor, Art and Design Department
	Kerry Brogan, Instructional Support Technician, Information Technology Services	Joshua Scarbrough, Complex Director, Residence Life Office	Drew Kahn, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, Theater Department; Director, Anne Frank Project	Michael Heflin, Assistant Dean of Inclusion and Equity, Dean of Students Office	Jason Knight, Associate Professor, Geography and Planning Department
	Melissa Holland, Director of International Education, Global Engagement	Sherrie Bernat, Nurse Practitioner, Weigel Wellness Center	Maria Brzykcy, Office Assistant 1 (Keyboarding), Admissions Office		Tristin Salter, Academic Coordinator, Continuing Professional Studies
	Vida Vanchan, Associate Professor, Geography and Planning Department		Lisa Marie Anselmi, Associate Professor & Chair, Anthropology Department		Naila Ansari, Assistant Professor, Theater Department
Co-Chairs & Project Manager	Co-chair: Yanick Jenkins, Director, Educational Opportunity Program Co-chair: Laura Hill Rao, Director, Civic and Community Engagement Office Project Manager: Jonathan Hulbert, Director of Leadership and Organizational Development, Professional Development Center				

Social Justice Learning Institute Recommendation Drafting Process

Student, staff, faculty, and community partner feedback is an essential part of the recommendation drafting process. Workgroups drafted the initial ideas and priorities below in February-March 2021 as a framework for discussion and input as the recommendations are drafted.

The subcommittee aims to ensure the Social Justice Learning Institute’s purpose, programs, and initiatives meet identified campus and community priorities and that the work conducted is community centered and driven.

Please [register](#) and join us at two Social Justice Learning Institute open forums:

Monday, April 19, 3:00-5:00 p.m. or Tuesday, April 20, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Attendance is not required for the entire session; drop in to provide input at any point during the scheduled sessions. If you cannot attend during those times, please provide [written feedback before Wednesday, April 21](#).

Opportunities for community partner input are being solicited on an ongoing basis during Social Justice Subcommittee meetings and by the Community Partner working group. Faculty, staff, and student feedback will also continue to be collected through targeted surveys to ensure recommendations for specific content areas are informed by a deepened understanding of subpopulation needs.

A second draft of ideas will be shared in May 2021, with additional opportunities for input and feedback. The subcommittee will submit final recommendations that incorporate community partner and campus community feedback. These will be presented in fall 2021 by the Provost and Chief Diversity Officer/Chief of Staff.

Workgroup Initial Idea and Priority Framework for Input

Definition, Mission, Vision, and Goals	
Workgroup Description	Beginning with the draft definition, mission, vision, and goals, this workgroup is finalizing these important tools to help assure all committee work is completed through a social justice lens. The workgroup is also articulating the social justice definition for Buffalo State with full campus input, leading to the framework as the institute is conceptualized and built.
Focus Area Ideas and Priorities Draft:	<p>Social Justice Definition The undeniable human right to dignity, equity, and full participation in society.</p> <p>Mission of the Social Justice Learning Institute The Social Justice Learning Institute will deliberately and intentionally acknowledge and deconstruct historical and current injustices and empower individuals to transform policies, systems, and institutions, to be equitable and accessible. Buffalo State College will accomplish this through education, research, and community engagement.</p>

Vision for the Social Justice Learning Institute

The institute will develop social justice change agents who will boldly transform the campus, the community, and the world.

GOAL 1: ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LIBERATION FOCUSED RESEARCH*Objectives*

- Establish internal forums featuring social justice research
- Assess and develop social justice institute research agenda and projects
- Expansion of scholarship through publications, presentations, and conferences
- Develop campus grant for social justice-focused research.
- Promote and incentivize research across academic disciplines, communities, and constituent groups

GOAL 2: DEVELOP A SOCIAL JUSTICE-CENTERED CURRICULUM*Objectives*

- Provide critical public education and programming
- Expand upon the general education curriculum to require a social justice-focused course
- Develop a graduate/professional social justice curriculum
- Develop social justice student scholars
- Develop a student fellowship
- Cultivate a collection of related texts and literature in the library

GOAL 3: CULTIVATE AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE*Objectives*

- Offer training on becoming social justice partners and change agents
- Initiate a student club with a mission of social justice, advocacy, and activism
- Develop partnerships with community organizations, agencies, and other local institutions
- Develop internships and externships
- Engage alumni through education and advocacy efforts

GOAL 4: ACHIEVE RECOGNITION AND VISIBILITY FOR THE SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING INSTITUTE'S EFFORTS*Objectives*

- Build awareness of Buffalo State's successes and programs
- Develop a strong presence throughout Buffalo and beyond
- Strengthen alumni relationships
- Marketing support, public relations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for awards and recognition for this type of work <p>GOAL 5: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p><i>Objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure a permanent annual operating budget • Identify revenue opportunities • Develop an advisory board • Establish an endowment for the institute, position, or unit • Tie to departmental evaluations/performance programs • Create opportunities for suggestions and feedback from various constituents • Provide consideration for the SJLI within the college’s strategic plan • Create awards and scholarships that support the larger goals of SJLI for individuals or organizations who are transforming their communities
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Infrastructure	
Workgroup Description	This workgroup is focusing on the structure of the Social Justice Learning Institute—recommendations on physical space, budget, funding opportunities, staff, and where it sits in the organizational structure of the college. Short and long-term considerations are encouraged.
Focus Area Ideas and Priorities Draft:	<p>Physical Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What spaces are available on campus • Location should not be in a less traveled or outer area of the campus • Accessibility with faculty fellows and support staff • Open to students - experiential • Events, learning areas (ease of use) - could be revenue generating • Host an annual conference, i.e. conference room • Parking • Space enough to evolve • Student club/space <p>Annual Operating Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing/personnel • Marketing and development • Ability to schedule events • Equipment/furniture and maintenance; supplies • Maintaining a website with donor page • Stipends for faculty fellows • Guest speakers • Travel budget/professional development budget • Student related expenses (research stipends, conferences, workshops) • Computer lab and/or shared lab with another department • Research/resource area (virtual as well)/student works, lobby, academic home

- Funding for diverse student organizations
- Funding for racially diverse faculty searches
- Training for all staff and faculty; especially for search committees
- Specialized services for students of color within departments
- Awards/acknowledgement for faculty that spend time supporting students of color

Revenue/Endowment

- Workshops open to corporations, community (training and events)
- Institutional Advancement - alumni
- Certifications- integrating the college with the community, faculty led adult education courses/workshops; digital credentials; professional development
- Naming opportunities by corporations or organizations
- Resource center (virtual as well) for the community
- Career center
- After school programs for K-12
- Ways to alleviate disproportionate debt for students of color
- Collection of registration fees for conferences

Staffing

- Operations manager/admin assistant with operational experience
- Faculty affiliates
- Resource specialist for the research/resource area
- Training/trainers
- Curriculum writer/developer
- Grant writer/PI/donation manager
- Program coordinator: what is being offered, manage students, regulate curriculum, schedule courses
- Advertising for staff/faculty – reach out to diverse pools.

Advisory Board

- Prioritize racial representation
- Representation from academics, students, community, alumni
- Resource center for the community
- Civic & Community Engagement office
- How did the Africana Studies program evolve
- Internal group of advisors (campus) as well
- Global engagement representation
- Anne Frank Project
- Ensure collaboration with partners, not competition

Institutional Structure

- Reports to the Provost and Chief Diversity Officer
- Have community-centric programs fall under umbrella of SJLI, versus being affiliated with individual units on campus-more cohesive marketing and financial benefits
- Cross-marketing of programs through the SJLI
- Across the board ongoing training (depth and breadth)

Curriculum, Research, Co-curricular Campus and Community Programming

Workgroup Description:	This workgroup has been primarily concerned with identifying opportunities to (a) integrate existing social justice curricular offerings into the general education curriculum, and (b) expand social justice course offerings, content, and campus resources/activities, along with (c) professional development and co-curricular programming reflective of the college’s commitment to a culture of social justice.
Focus Area Ideas and Priorities Draft:	<p>Pending feedback from a survey of faculty regarding the infusing social justice into the Buffalo State curriculum, the committee makes the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise IF curriculum to include a distinct category of required courses focused on social justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify existing courses that include SLOs focused on social justice ○ Develop courses explicitly focused on social justice ○ Create an academic culture in which we are not only teaching about social justice, but also teaching from a social justice perspective • Require a social justice “experience” for every student, each semester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Experience” should include a range of classroom-based course options and co-curricular activities • Create professional development programming to assist faculty with revisions to existing courses and development of new courses, along with building pedagogical acumen related to teaching about social justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a program in the spirit of the “Master Educator” program, in which faculty can volunteer to attend regularly scheduled professional development programs and work closely with a social justice mentor ○ Cultivate relationships with constituent groups in WNY to provide feedback • Develop social justice-related micro-credential opportunities for students • Establish SJLI as a campus hub for professional development, student engagement, and community outreach

Community Partnerships	
Workgroup Description	The community partnerships workgroup is focus on understanding current social justice work in the community, and how the Buffalo State Social Justice Learning Institute can collaborate and support that work. The group also focused on identifying current community partners and potential new partners that are actively working on social justice issues.
Focus Area Ideas and Priorities Draft:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the development of the Social Justice Learning Institute in the community. Specifically, ensure partners have input into the development of the Institute around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scope of Work ○ Partnership Opportunities ○ Resources available ○ Short- and long-term goals of the Institute • Ensure an accurate list of existing community partnerships that have a social justice focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify new potential partnerships • Document local community efforts, organizations, and trainings that address and support social justice • Base efforts on research, national efforts, and best practices identified • Identify areas of expanded community partner collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey faculty, staff and students to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities for collaboration • Current involvement in community organizations • Explore collaborative opportunities for becoming social justice partners and change agents

Asset Mapping / External and Internal Communications	
Focus Area Description Draft:	<p>This workgroup is gathering information about Buffalo State’s current social justice assets, efforts, programs, and strategies and establishing a framework for effective communication about the college’s social justice work, internally and externally.</p> <p>Across the institution, how do we demonstrate our social justice work and impact? What should be considered, short and long-term, to effectively communicate about Buffalo State’s work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, learn, and document current work being done in social justice • Build awareness of Buffalo State’s work by developing a strong presence throughout Buffalo and beyond • Develop strategies for including and informing alumni

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate opportunities to utilize website, social media, and other communication strategies to advance our social justice mission • Advance a communication plan for the Social Justice Learning Institute <p>Refined Focus Area Group Goals for Initial Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover what Buffalo State is doing and saying about social justice. • Determine the best way to tell our multifaceted audiences what Buffalo State is doing and saying about social justice. • Inform our audiences (alumni-, campus-, local-, and higher education-communities) about Buffalo State’s social justice initiatives using the tools we have; leveraging the tools others have.
<p>Focus Area Ideas and Priorities Draft:</p>	<p>SJ Comms Team Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canvas student and faculty/staff populations to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of current Buffalo State SJ campus activities • Awareness of current Buffalo State SJ activities • Preferred communication methods 2. Collect student responses/testimonials to the question “What does social justice mean to me?” <p>SJ Comms Team Recommendation Action Plans</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SJ surveys Students: https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_55pEg61ctOLswXI Faculty/staff: https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3C8N6PwH9EPMxFA <p>Timeframe</p> <p>Launch survey Monday, April 12</p> <p>Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student surveys will be distributed via student email, signage at pool testing sites, resident assistants, and social media channels • Faculty/staff surveys will be distributed via the <i>Daily Bulletin</i> and SJ subcommittee • Both surveys will be shared at open forums and be included on the SJ website.

2. SJ Questionnaire

- Students:

https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8oU1z5x0o5IyJpQ?Q_CHL

Timeframe/Distribution

Questionnaire was released to Men of Merit Leadership Conference student attendees (April 9) and will be released to student community via student email, Resident Assistants, and social media channels (TBA).