



BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL



University Council Meeting February 4, 2025 MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person

Chair Linda Dobmeier

Mr. Kevin Horrigan

Ms. Patricia Farrell

Mr. Robert Zak

Mr. Gary Siddall

Ms. Michelle Cox (student representative)

Virtually

Mr. Allen (Pete) Grum

Excused:

Mr. Mo Sumbundu

Faculty and Staff Present (in person):

Interim President Bonita R. Durand

Provost Amitra Wall

Vice President for Institutional Advancement, James Finnerty

Vice President for Enrollment Management, Randyll Bowen

Interim Vice President for Management and Operations, Lisa Krieger

Interim Vice President for Finance and Controller, James Thor

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Wayne Brumfield

Chief Diversity Officer, Lisa Morrison-Fronckowiak

College Senate Chair and Head of Information Commons, E.H. Butler Library, Ken Fujiuchi

UUP Chapter President and Professor, Economics and Finance, Fred Floss

Executive Director of Admissions, Dave Loreto

Interim Director, Student Leadership and Engagement, Josue Rosario-Caliz

Chief Campus Counsel for Western New York, Kristin Klein Wheaton

Associate Director for Admissions, Dean Reinhart

Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Kelly Frothingham
Secretary to the University Council and President's Chief of Staff, LeVar N. Burke
Administrative Assistant 2, President's Office, Kristine Kaminsky

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dobmeier called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. A quorum was established.

ACTION ITEM

Chair Dobmeier called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2024, meeting. Mr. Robert Zak asked that the name of the Buffalo State voting site be changed from "voter registration site" to "voting site," to reflect the full utilization.

Mr. Robert Zak moved that the minutes be approved with modifications. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gary Siddall.

The motion to approve the minutes with modifications was carried by unanimous vote.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Dobmeier began by expressing her thanks to the administration, faculty, staff and students for making Buffalo State University a vibrant, innovative and nurturing community. She stated that she is filled with optimism for the future of the University. Our resilience, creativity and determination has been proven repeatedly. The Chair stated that the collective effort of our community will ensure a quality education for our students to become leaders.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Interim President Durand pointed out that Buffalo State is currently heavily embedded in the recruitment cycle for Fall 2025, and that part of her report time will be ceded to the Executive Director for Admissions to give an overview of this process.

Late last year, a team of Buffalo State University's leadership attended the Middle States Higher Education Conference in Pennsylvania. It was mentioned that Middle States is our accrediting body. Middle States previously had a seven-year cycle. They have changed their process and will be in communication with Buffalo State more frequently. Buffalo State University is measured by seven standards and passed the accreditation visit. Additional information will be requested by Middle States in the form of a Supplemental Information Report (SIR).

Interim President Durand pointed out that the Middle States conference was helpful. The attendees were as follows: Provost Amitra Wall, Chief Diversity Officer Lisa Morrison-Fronckowiak, Vice President for

Enrollment Management, Randyll Bowen, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Wayne Brumfield, Chief of Staff and Accreditation Liaison Officer, LeVar Burke, and Interim President, Bonita Durand. It was mentioned that there was a wide variety of workshops, and the team would collaborate the night before to find out who was attending which session.

The team received good ideas and direction on addressing some of the issues that the campus is facing. They also received validation on actions that the campus is already taking.

Six different events called “collaborative conversations” will be held with UUP and local UUP President, Fred Floss. The Middle States presentation will be one of these events. Each event will be 90 minutes to two hours long. Topics are to include:

1. Middle States
2. De-escalation
3. Critical conversations
4. Workplace ethics/sticks and stones

Other groups on campus are encouraged to participate. Some of the initiatives that the Interim President would like to cover are campus climate, culture and morale.

It was mentioned that on February 3rd, 2025, there was a tabletop exercise on Law Enforcement Intervention on campus.

SUNY Legal counsel and local counsel are monitoring all executive orders and directives to discern how these affect the university, staff and students. At this point, there is no direct impact. SUNY Legal counsel advises that we continue to uphold our mission; do the work that educates our students and serves our community. It was pointed out that we have to be ready to pivot if anything affects how Buffalo State University operates.

If there are any incidents, the campus is instructed to call University Police. They are the law enforcement agency of record for our campus. Any other law enforcement that arrives on campus will contact University Police. University Police is prepared with their standing orders on how to control different situations.

An FAQ and scripted language are being prepared in order to provide accurate information. The General Counsel is cautioning the University to avoid providing information on which we are not an authority. Telling faculty and staff what they should do is outside of Buffalo State’s expertise.

It was announced that Vice President Randyll Bowen will be leaving Buffalo State University to work at Gannon University in Erie, PA. Interim President Durand thanked Vice President Bowen for his work and service at Buffalo State.

A call campaign was implemented in January, between the fall and spring semesters. A list of eligible, unregistered students was dispersed to their program advisors and called, texted and emailed over a period of ten days.

Through this experiment, a lot of information was gathered. Traditionally, Buffalo State students register late. It was mentioned that when Buffalo State rolls up their sleeves and works together, a lot gets done. Advisors investigated whether students were having problems with the FAFSA, loans, or if there was an academic issue. If so, they were sent to the corresponding department to receive help for the issue. The final results have not been calculated yet, but there was a significant increase in persistence. Associate Deans, advisors, people in the ACE, Honors, and EOP departments worked with Institutional Research to update our files.

Executive Director of Admissions, David Loreto gave an overview on activities completed over the past year to aid in recruitment and retention (see attached.)

It was mentioned that a lot of the challenges with the FAFSA from last year were fixed. This year the FAFSA was available on December 1. Last year, it wasn't available until April.

Buffalo State partners with Buffalo Public Schools and Say Yes every week throughout the spring semester. A list of accepted students is sent from Buffalo Public Schools to the Say Yes program to find out who is Say Yes eligible. The Executive Director of Admissions works with the Say Yes coordinator, Stanley Simmons, so that they can work with the students. The Say Yes coordinator reminds students when their deadlines are and to ensure that they understand all of the opportunities that they are entitled to.

Say Yes has a robust dual enrollment program with early middle college which brings high school students onto the Buffalo State campus as soon as ninth grade. It is a relationship education model where the students are put into smaller groups to encourage relationships between them.

After discussion, the following points arose:

- Say Yes helps students to fill out their FAFSA.

- Buffalo State's Financial Aid department makes sure to help the students apply for all that they are eligible for.
- The Foundation has been tremendously supportive of students through book scholarships, the Back on Track scholarship, and GRIT which is based on circumstance, personality, and needs.
- Buffalo State does a lot of intrusive, hand-on advisement.

There is a 30% increase in applicants which is attributed to our increased visibility in the community, especially in wrap around service. Buffalo State University uses intentional communication.

Interim President Durand is still having breakfast meetings with the Buffalo Public Schools superintendent and the ECC President. This supports the pipeline of students from Buffalo Public Schools to ECC to Buffalo State.

It was pointed out our applications have surpassed pre - COVID numbers.

It was mentioned that meetings with feeder schools are scheduled well in advance. There is robust communication with students who have expressed an interest in Buffalo State so they can attend the visitation.

If a school had three or more students who have paid a deposit on their tuition and they were not a part of the Admissions Office's previous school visit schedule, they will be added to the next one.

It was discussed that the Governor has mentioned free community college attendance. The target audience for this is at a certain age range and may need some college to finish a degree. Buffalo State University benefits from receiving transfer students, because they are already normed to being in higher education. Buffalo State University is the most logical place for students to transfer to.

Report concluded.

COMMITTEES

- **President's Community Advisory Committee (Bonita R. Durand, Interim President)**
No report
- **Naming of Buildings and Grounds (Robert Zak, Chair)**
No report
- **Facilities (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**
No report
- **Government Relations (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**

- See attached
- **Nominations & Presidential Advisory Committee (Linda Dobmeier, Chair)**
No report
- **Budget (Robert Zak, Chair)**
See attached
- **Student Life (Charles Naughton, Chair)**
No report
- **Strategic Initiatives (Robert Zak, Chair)**
See attached

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- State of the University Address will be held on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 12:15 p.m., in Rockwell Hall, Performing Arts Center.
- Gift Gathering will be on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at the Alumni Center.
- Bengala will be on Saturday, April 5, 2025, in E.H. Butler Library. It will have the same format as last year.
- The [Bengal Day of Giving](#) is on Thursday, March 13, 2025.
- Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Wayne Brumfield reported that the population of the residence halls has increased 135 students over last year. Students who have not moved in yet are being contacted to make sure that they have all they need to do so.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chair called for a motion to move into Executive Session: In accordance with section 105.a and f. of the New York State Open Meetings Law. Mr. Robert Zak moved that the Council enter executive session. Ms. Patricia Farrell seconded the motion. Interim President Durand was asked to remain.

The Chair called for a motion to move out of Executive Session. Mr. Kevin Horrigan moved that the Council move out of Executive Session. Ms. Patricia Farrell seconded the motion.

The Council came out of Executive Session at 4:45 p.m.

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Dobmeier called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gary Siddall moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Patricia Farrell seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote. The

meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Genita R. Durand".

For Secretary LeVar Burke

LeVar N. Burke, JD, MPA
Secretary to the University Council

University Council

Admissions Update

David Loreto

Executive Director of Admissions

www.buffalostate.edu

Application Trends

	Apps						
Metric	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	YOY	YOY %
First-Year							
EOP Freshman	1,053	864	1,318	1,830	2,501	671	36.7%
General Freshm...	8,352	8,594	11,545	13,069	18,078	5,009	38.3%
International Fr...	261	313	450	767	808	41	5.3%
Total	9,666	9,771	13,313	15,666	21,387	5,721	36.5%
Transfer							
EOP Transfer	32	28	48	42	76	34	81%
General Transfer	329	363	501	695	663	-32	-4.6%
International Tr...	9	14	28	91	75	-16	-17.6%
Total	370	405	577	828	814	-14	-1.7%
Grand Total	10,036	10,176	13,890	16,494	22,201	5,707	34.6%

Off Campus Recruitment Events

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024				Fall 2024	
Region	Events	% of visits	% of enrollment	Events	% of visits
Erie	166	30.9%	38%	139	35.6
Western*	75	13.9%	6%	64	16.4
New York City	124	23.0%	27%	71	18.2
Long Island	55	10.2%	5%	32	8.2
Genesee	50	9.3%	7%	48	12.3
Mid-Hudson	23	4.3%	5%	9	2.3
Out of State	23	4.3%	4%	4	1
Central	21	3.9%	5%	22	5.6
Northeast	1	0.2%	3%	1	0.26
Northern	0	0.0%	1%	0	0
Total	538	100%	100%	390	100

Off Campus Recruitment Events

Feeder school strategy:

- All Erie county schools
- All WNY with 1 or more deposits
- Any school with 3 or more deposits
- Schools with deposits and no visit

Types of events include

- Consortium visits with other WNY schools
- College fairs
- Individual school visits
- Panel presentations
- Class presentations
- Meetings with school counselors
- OpinForm (host site) but also attended all SUNY programs

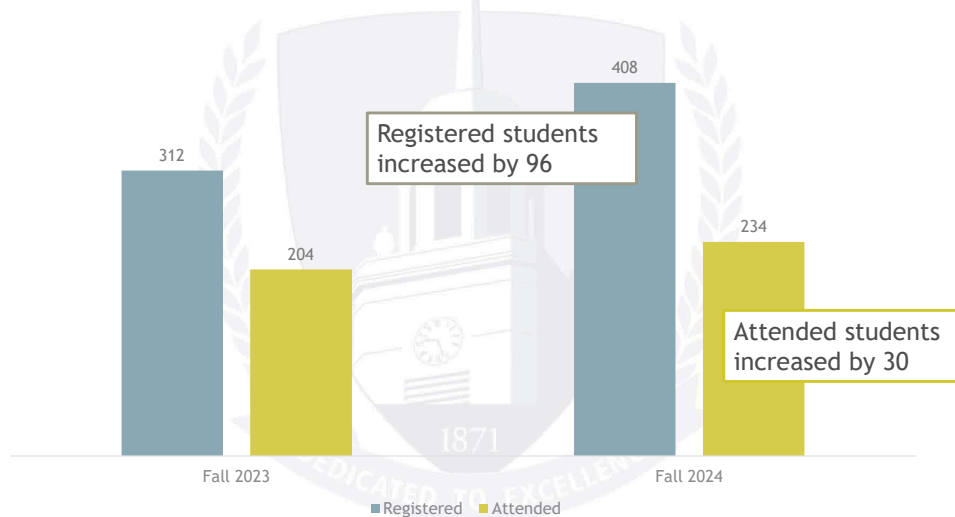
Off-Campus Recruitment Fall Summary

Row Labels	# of Events	% of Total	Attendees	Apps	Admits	Deposits	% apply
Erie	139	35.64%	733	270	198	57	37%
NYC Boroughs	71	18.21%	2334	574	340	4	25%
Western	64	16.41%	209	62	44	7	30%
Genesee	48	12.31%	142	37	22	3	26%
Long Island	32	8.21%	335	188	134	6	56%
Central	22	5.64%	204	36	26	0	18%
Mid-Hudson	9	2.31%	91	32	23	0	35%
Unknown	4	1.03%	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast	1	0.26%	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	390	100.00%	4048	1199	787	77	30%

Buffalo City School District

- Direct Admission Pilot Program
- Virtual Information Session in January
- Hosting Major for a Day program in March
- FAFSA completion event in April
- EOP missing items School Counselor Reports
- SAY Yes data sharing
- Collaboration with academic departments

Fall 2024 Campus Visit Report



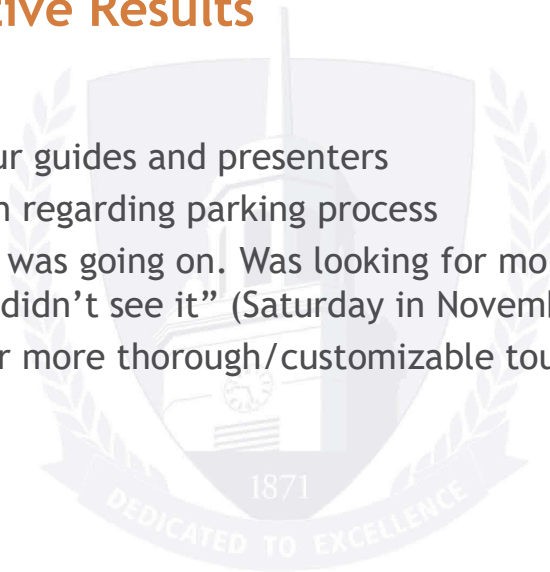
Quantitative Results

Area	% Satisfied/Very Satisfied
Communication	97.6
Parking	89
Presenter	90.2
Tour Guide	95.1
Tour	92.7
Residence Hall	96.5 Same or better
Overall Rating	89 positive impact

Qualitative Results

Themes

- Great tour guides and presenters
- Confusion regarding parking process
- “Nothing was going on. Was looking for more student live, but didn’t see it” (Saturday in November)
- Desire for more thorough/customizable tours



BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL BUDGET COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF JANUARY 28, 2025 MEETING

Attendees (via video conference):

- Committee members Linda Dobmeier, Gary Siddall and Bob Zak
- Buffalo State University (“BSU”) staff members Kelly D’Aloisio and Jim Thor

Meeting summary:

The meeting began with Jim Thor reviewing an exhibit summarizing progress on projected annualized savings from BSU’s hiring freeze, including those positions made vacant through the Voluntary Separation Program (“VSP”), net of expected replacement hires through payroll # 20 in January 2025. Jim noted that BSU’s attrition target of 100, including the VSP, has been achieved resulting in a projected \$6.2 million in annualized savings, up \$1.3 million from the projected savings through November 2024. BSU staff is considering using the residual funding provided by the BSU Foundation that has not already been spent on incentives to encourage accelerated retirements by qualifying employees for a VSP-lite program in the near future.

Jim then reviewed an enrollment plan for 2025-2028 that was developed by BSU’s enrollment management team and reviewed and agreed to by SUNY. The projected enrollment plan, which included tuition revenue projections, has enrollment returning to base year (2022) levels by 2028. He and Kelly noted that the yield from application and retention are key factors in achieving the enrollment targets, which appear modest but will nevertheless be a challenge. The enrollment model assumes a level retention of 63% and flat tuition rates through 2028.

Lastly, the Committee reviewed a summary as of December 31, 2024 of BSU’s Financial Sustainability Plan (“FSP”) which forecasts the elimination of BSU’s \$16.5 million structural deficit (as of FY 22/23) by the end of FY 27/28. Jim reviewed the assumptions behind the major components of the FSP: (1) the reduction of personnel expense, including an aggressive attrition target of 100 FTE’s per year, (2) the impact of salary increases, including those required by collective bargaining agreements, (3) revenue from increased enrollment and dormitory occupancy (and (4) non-personnel expense reductions, including certain scholarship grants. Dormitory revenue is expected to increase by approximately \$1 million per year in the FSP. The FSP also provides for strategic investments in BSU of \$1.8 million per year.

The Committee members asked a number of questions of Jim and Kelly throughout the meeting to help assess the degree of conservatism or optimism inherent in the projections and supporting assumptions. The Committee agreed that continued focus on personnel expense and enrollment enhancement was necessary for the FSP to be achieved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Zak

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
TO THE BUFFALO STATE COUNCIL
January 2025**

The Governmental Relations Committee met Friday, November 15, 2024, at 8:30 am to discuss the status of state and federal advocacy and to briefly outline a plan for the coming year. Attending the meeting were Chairman Linda Dobmeier and Council members Mo Sumbundu and Kevin Horrigan.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dobmeier at 8:30 am. The meeting began with a brief discussion of the results of the recent state and federal elections. With the upcoming change in federal administration, the federal landscape will need to be closely monitored for opportunities and challenges.

After the election overview, there was a review of the extension of the campus's designated developer agreement (DDA) with the City of Buffalo for the Dart St property currently being used as the City Impound Lot. Now that the DDA has been approved by the Common Council, environmental review and potential uses will be explored.

The discussion turned to the SUNY budget request and the upcoming state legislative session. There was a brief, high-level discussion of the upcoming state budget process and advocacy for campus priorities. We continue to work with faculty in the School of Education to finalize an MOU with the NYS Department of Education for funding for bilingual education programming at Buffalo State through the Clinically Rich Intensive Teacher Institute program. We are also evaluating the status of legislative or regulatory action that will enable our engineering technology students to achieve licensing parity. We are working with a coalition of other institutions on the issue.

Next steps involve reviewing the upcoming SUNY proposed budget including any special items and budget requests that may be added and possibly advocating for inclusion in the budget adopted by the legislature. In addition to budget priorities, we continue to identify legislation that could aid the campus including expedited program review, regulatory relief, etc.

Submitted by Linda Dobmeier, Chair

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 3, 2024, MEETING

Attendees:

- Committee members Linda Dobmeier and Mo Sumbundu via video conference; Bob Zak in person in room 519, Cleveland Hall
- Buffalo State University (“BSU”) staff members Randy Bowen, LeVar Burke and Amitra Wall in person

Meeting summary:

The meeting began with Amitra Wall summarizing the results of conversations she had across the campus community in 2024 since being appointed interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. She then reviewed Academic Affairs’ priorities for 2024/25, noting how they align with BSU’s Strategic Plan and SUNY’s strategy pillars:

- Restructure Academic Depts and Units to better reflect the current patterns of enrollment and the current programs in highest demand
- Review academic and general education programs to eliminate duplication of courses with similar Student Learning Outcomes and content
- Match the number of undergraduate and graduate programs to enrollment trends and student market demands.
- Investigate best practices for Tutoring Services and Student Support
- Develop academic measures to help students on probation
- Enable existing faculty to teach in areas not strictly confined to their primary specialties

The School of Professions and the School of Education will be merged by fall 2026. Amitra noted that some campus community members were skeptical of any restructuring of the Academic Departments and Units, which she felt could be addressed by keeping Departments autonomous within the two-unit framework. She noted that combining the School of Education and the School of the Professions is estimated to save \$293,000 annually. Four Task Force committees: SOE-SOP Implementation; Academic Affairs Department Merger & Curriculum Synergies; Student Success; and Process Improvement will commence in spring 2025. She then presented a plan to separate Academic Affairs Support Offices’ responsibilities between her position and the Interim Associate VP for Graduate Studies, Research, & Special Programs.

Randy Bowen then presented an Enrollment Management update. As reported in a separately distributed Fall 2024 Enrollment Summary, total enrollment was down 4.2% from Fall 2023. The primary reason for the decrease was the increase in admission standards, which reduced the freshman class by 16%. He noted that retention improved to 57.7% (up 3 percentage points) in Fall 2024 on a variety of metrics, particularly when students are connected to BSU

through a scholarship and/or support program. He reviewed current and upcoming student support initiatives that provide a holistic approach for students. He commented on the Spring 2025 implementation of Navigate 360, which will use predictive analytics to identify at-risk students, and the use of a third party provider to review grant and scholarship programs to determine the best use of leveraging financial aid to recruit the Fall 2025 class. Lastly, he noted efforts with the Buffalo Public Schools: an Instant Admissions Program with SUNY, a focus on the Educational Opportunity Program for Fall 2025, and the provision of FAFSA completion assistance using AmeriCorps.

The Committee agreed that efforts to improve retention and increase the size of the freshman class in future years are required to turn around the trend of declining enrollment.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Zak