

*Building Institutional Capacity
for Diversity*



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

*The Equity and Campus Diversity
2015-2017 Strategic Plan*

Introduction

American higher education has experienced significant changes since its inception, particularly with respect to the diversity of the student body and employees. Today's educational institutions function as beacons of hope for groups of people such as women and ethnic minorities, often marginalized or excluded from participation in societal institutions. Therefore, access and equitable treatment have become central themes in the mission statements of our nation's colleges and universities.

Ensuring accessible and equitable admissions and employment processes are central to the mission of SUNY-Buffalo State. Buffalo State has a long and rich history of embracing diversity, fostering an inclusive environment and celebrating differences. Diversity is an integral component of Buffalo State's curricular and co-curricular offerings. Some examples include community partnerships through service learning programs, the Global Book Project, and the Community Academic Center and collaborative educational partnerships with countries like Zambia, Rwanda, Brazil, Chili and China. In addition, Buffalo State hosts nationally recognized programs like the Anne Frank Project and the National Coalition Building Institute.

This vast array of diversity initiatives is but one way Buffalo State demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive environment. More critical to our mission is ensuring diversity is aligned with and integrated into every aspect of the institution's strategic plan.

NOTE: We fully recognize and acknowledge that the term diversity may have multiple connotations and definitions in society and across agencies, as well as across the United States and the world. SUNY – Buffalo State and The Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan adhere to the State University of New York (SUNY) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy definition of diversity. Thus, in this document diversity is broadly defined to include race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, age, socioeconomic status, status as a veteran, status as an individual with a disability, students undergoing transition (such as transfer, stop-out, international student acclimation), and first-generation students. (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, Adopted by SUNY Board of Trustees September 10, 2015).

The Dimensions for Building Institutional Capacity for Diversity at Buffalo State

Diversity must be linked to the mission and culture of our campus, and more importantly, tied to the overall institutional strategic plan. The PCECD's Strategic Plan and model for Building Institutional Capacity for Diversity comprises four dimensions: 1) Access and Success, 2) Campus Community and Climate, 3) Academics, Scholarship and Engaged Learning, and 4) Institutional Effectiveness and Commitment. This framework should be conceptualized as a matrix of integrated initiatives designed to achieve and promote institutional excellence infused with evidence of diversity and inclusion. For planning and implementation purposes, information needs to be collected and analyzed, and programs and policies need to be modified or developed to address deficiencies. The dimensions create a framework that helps the institution monitor the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure that they remain integrated, intentional, and central to the core mission of the college.

The goals, objectives, strategies, and indicators outlined are intended to guide the actions of appropriate university units, including senior management areas, schools, departments, and programs in the delivery of initiatives, policies, and practices that advance diversity and inclusion. To coincide with the timeframe associated with the Buffalo State Strategic Plan, initiatives outlined in this framework include the current year (2015) to 2017. Beginning in April 2016, the implementation of this framework and creation of indicators for each of the four dimensions will result in an annual report to the college president that will include accomplishments, deficiencies, and plans for adjustments of efforts.

Indicators included in this plan draw on existing datasets wherever possible, especially those reports submitted to state or federal authorities that use standardized definitions and may allow cross-institutional comparisons. Institutional and national surveys of faculty, staff, and students provide important information for monitoring progress, guiding continuous improvement, and benchmarking against others when possible. Many units on campus participated in collecting and analyzing the data cited below, including Academic Affairs, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Enrollment Management, Equity and Campus Diversity, Graduate School, Human Resources Management, International and Exchange Programs, Institutional Research, Provost's Office, Student Affairs, as well as others.

A Framework for Capacity



Access and Success

Measures examine whether students from historically underrepresented and diverse populations, as defined in the SUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy are thriving at Buffalo State. Measures could also include rates of tenure and promotion for faculty from diverse populations and participation and professional development opportunities for staff. Important outcomes include whether students are graduating, maintaining continuous enrollment, and persisting toward degree completion and whether faculty and staff are hired and advancing in their careers. This would include students in ALL undergraduate, graduate and professional programs.

Goal: Achieve a more diverse and inclusive student body, faculty and staff

Objective 1: To achieve increased enrollments of undergraduate students from diverse populations

Strategies:

1. Implement pipeline initiatives with the potential to make Buffalo State the institution of choice for high-achieving high school graduates from diverse populations
2. Assess, and where needed, enhance existing pipeline initiatives with the potential to make Buffalo State the institution of choice for high-school students from diverse populations
3. Identify and remove barriers for international student enrollment
4. More fully engage international and domestic alumni in appropriate marketing and student recruitment programs

Indicators:

1. Number of pipeline program initiative participants who enroll at Buffalo State
2. Yield for admitted freshmen and transfer students from diverse populations

Objective 2: To increase the success and retention of students from diverse populations.

Strategies:

1. Identify specific barriers to the academic progress and achievement of students from diverse populations
2. Enhance advising system for all students with special attention given to students from diverse populations
3. Ensure broad participation of first generation and students from lower social-economic backgrounds in undergraduate research and experiential learning opportunities
4. Assess the effectiveness of one or more pipeline or undergraduate academic support programs each year to ensure that efforts and outcomes are aligned with goals, and opportunities for continuous improvement are identified
5. Embrace concepts of universal course design as an approach to the design of products and environments, including instruction, that takes into consideration diversity of

students

Indicators:

1. First to second year retention rates of students from diverse populations
2. The six-year graduation rates of students from diverse populations
3. Comparison of the academic progress and success of students from diverse populations who participate in selected academic support programs with students with similar entry profiles who do not participate
4. The number of first-time, full-time undergraduates or transfer students from diverse populations participating in special programs such as College Honors, National Student Exchange, and Study Abroad

Objective 3: To identify current participation rates to establish baseline and subsequently work to increase the recruitment and retention of a diverse graduate student body

Strategies:

1. Continue recruiting a diverse graduate student population with the goal of making Buffalo State the destination of choice for graduate students from diverse populations
2. Continue expanding and developing graduate education programs
3. Assess the effectiveness of key graduate student recruitment or retention initiatives

Indicators:

1. Number of graduate students from diverse populations who applied for and were admitted to graduate school
2. Time-to-degree and graduation rates of graduate students from diverse populations
3. The number of graduate degrees awarded to graduate students from diverse populations

Objective 4: To achieve a more diverse faculty, professional staff and classified employee population

Strategies:

1. Establish baseline of faculty and professional staff from diverse populations
2. Implement outreach and recruitment strategies to increase faculty and professional staff applicants and hires on campus from diverse populations
3. Implement faculty, professional staff, and classified employee entrance and exit surveys, and use the results to identify issues and opportunities for continuous improvement toward the retention of faculty and staff from diverse populations
4. Create leadership development and career path programs for faculty, professional staff and classified employees from diverse populations (with special attention given to women faculty and professional staff) to enhance their leadership abilities and opportunities

Indicators:

1. Number and proportion of faculty and professional staff from diverse populations by job categories

2. New hires from diverse populations, including women faculty and professional staff, by job categories
3. Voluntary departure rates of faculty and professional staff from diverse populations (or turnover rates as defined by the State for staff) by job categories
4. Number and proportion of faculty and professional staff from diverse populations who achieve tenure and promotion by cohort

Campus Community and Climate

Measures may include the type and quality of interaction amongst groups (to include faculty and students affairs relations), the quality of experience and engagement on campus, and employee and student satisfaction. This also would examine perceptions of the institution.

***Goal:** Create and sustain an inclusive environment in which all college populations are embraced, respected, and encouraged to grow to their full potential through a committed campus-wide initiative of intentional action and program implementation*

Objective 1: Enhance civility among and between faculty, staff, students and visitors to the campus

Strategies:

1. Create a Civility Compact or Faculty and Staff Creed based on the student “Compact for a Civil and Caring Community”
2. Promote the Civility Compact through campus-wide initiative with a ceremony for all current employees to pledge the compact and incorporate it into the new hire process

Indicators

1. Increased collegial atmosphere
2. Increased cooperation among and between faculty and staff across campus
3. Increased student satisfaction with interactions with college personnel
4. Decreased incidents of filed job actions via HRM and ECDO

Objective 2: Increase the cultural competence of the campus community

Strategies:

1. Infuse diversity education and experiences into the broader campus culture
2. Provide educative events, workshops, and experiences for faculty, staff, and students that
 - a. Promote and celebrate inclusion
 - b. Demonstrate potential to reduce discriminatory behavior
 - c. Increase understanding of diversity and interaction in a diverse arena
 - d. Teach productive ways of resolving conflict, and
 - e. Teach multi culturally competent workplace/interpersonal skills

Indicators:

1. Instances of discrimination or reports of discrimination complaints that arise to the level of a policy violation

2. Student/staff/faculty experience satisfaction with the cultural competence of the campus community
3. Perception of individuals who are working toward permanent appointment and tenure
4. Student retention attributed to satisfaction of diversity related issues

Objective 3: Improve the overall campus climate and receptivity of diversity

Strategies:

1. Administer a carefully selected Campus Climate Survey to students, faculty, professional staff and classified staff to establish a benchmark of prevailing attitudes and perceptions on campus as they pertain to diversity. The Campus Climate Survey would then be used intentionally and purposefully to monitor, evaluate, and improve resulting areas of concern

Indicators

1. Initiatives, programs, strategies developed and implemented to address areas of concern
2. Subsequent Campus Climate Surveys show improvements in general and within areas of concern

Academics, Scholarship and Engaged Learning

Measures include availability of courses, experiential learning opportunities, student learning, and depth of available faculty related to diversity.

***Goal:** Infuse diversity into all aspects of the Buffalo State academic experience of students, faculty, and staff*

Objective 1: Infuse diversity into the curriculum and other learning opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels as a means of increasing critical and flexible thinking skills, use of multiple perspectives, global awareness, cross-cultural competency, and related 21st century skills

Strategies:

1. Promote the integration of diversity into courses throughout the curriculum and co-curricular activities
2. Ensure the effectiveness of courses that are specifically focused on diversity
3. Increase support, visibility, and resources for academic programs focused on diversity (e.g., African and African American Studies, Women and Gender Studies)

Indicators:

1. Professional development and incentive programs to increase the integration of diversity across curricular and co-curricular activities (i.e., number of programs by Faculty Development, NCBI, etc.)
2. Assessments and actions taken on the results of the assessment of diversity designated courses by the Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee
3. Participation of students in academic programs related to diversity
4. Resources allocated to academic programs focused on diversity

Objective 2: Recognize and promote the examination of diversity in faculty, staff, and student scholarship and creativity

Strategies:

1. Encourage, value, and provide support for research and creativity on issues related to diversity
2. Promote awareness and consideration of the role of diversity in scholarship and creativity across academic disciplines

Indicators:

1. Formal recognition of scholarly and creative activity related to diversity in the evaluation of faculty and staff
2. Professional development opportunities, incentives, and resources for faculty, staff, and students to pursue scholarly and creative activity related to diversity

Objective 3: Promote student participation in engaged learning as a means of deepening understanding of diversity and increasing equality in student achievement and outcomes

Strategies:

1. Increase students' exposure to people, ideas, and practices different from their own through hands on opportunities, both in and out of the classroom
2. Increase participation in research, creativity, and engaged learning among students from diverse populations

Indicators:

1. Consideration of diversity as a component of experiential and service learning activities to prepare students for the 21st century global world environment
2. Faculty and staff efforts to inform and engage students from diverse populations in research, creativity and engaged learning activities
3. Student awareness of the process to become involved in research, creativity and engaged learning activities
4. Student participation in research creativity and engaged learning experiences among students from diverse populations

Objective 4: Help faculty and staff develop competencies and capacities to become 21st century educators and to work with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and experiences

Strategies:

1. Implement on-line and in-person professional development opportunities designed to improve competencies for working with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and experiences
2. Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to transform existing courses or create new courses that achieve diversity-related goals
3. Promote recognition and instruction of work that extends beyond the traditional canon

Indicators:

1. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to develop knowledge and competencies to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds
2. Faculty and staff participation in training and professional development programs related to diversity
3. Formal recognition of teaching and service activity related to diversity in the evaluation of faculty and staff

Institutional Effectiveness and Commitment

Integral to this dimension is increasing diversity hires, to include those in leadership positions. It also would include measures to review and examine initiatives to retain and promote diverse hires, to include women and members of historically underrepresented populations. Indicative of the commitment is the inclusion of diversity in our processes, policies and strategic plan, as well as an evaluation of internal and external perceptions as to how the commitment is demonstrated and supported. While posting positions, it is vital for the institution to highlight its goal to increase the representation of women and underrepresented populations in all positions, including opportunities for promotion and professional development for faculty, administrators, staff, and graduate assistants.

Goal: To have diversity become infused within established practices of the institution to include hiring, promotion and implementation policy.

Objective 1: Ensure that recruitment and hiring practices include significant, effective outreach to women and traditionally underrepresented and diverse populations

Strategies:

1. Gain institutional funding to expand postings via electronic media in local and national venues targeted at specific underrepresented and diverse populations (e.g. women in higher education)
2. Create a concrete framework for communication with the campus community to promote the importance of diversity recruitment and hiring
3. Under the guidance of the chief diversity officer, develop and strategically implement a training program for faculty, administrators and staff members who will serve on search committees

Indicators:

1. Number and proportion diverse application demographics for faculty, staff, and administrator positions
2. The knowledge of faculty, administrator and staff involved in search efforts of current affirmative action guidelines designed to facilitate hiring of a more diverse group of college employees, particularly those involved in the hiring search process
3. Number of participants in search-related workshops (i.e., Bias Workshops)

Objective 2: To facilitate the retention of faculty, administrators, and staff from diverse populations by empowering them to be exemplary employees, conduct research and produce

high quality scholarship, and participate in service activities through system support and professional development opportunities

Strategies:

1. Utilize a mechanism to measure retention rates of faculty, administrators and staff from diverse populations
2. Establish and maintain a high quality employee mentoring program to support institutional employees across all departments and from diverse backgrounds
3. Systematically monitor personnel decisions to eliminate unintentional bias and isolation, creating opportunities for all faculty, administrators, and staff
4. Gather and analyze information from employees through individual conversations, focus groups, administrators, department chairs and deans, and provide exit interviews with employees who are leaving Buffalo State to identify factors and themes associated with attrition

Indicators:

1. Effectiveness of campus employee mentoring programs designed to support institutional employees from diverse populations
2. Employee retention rates, retention efforts, and professional development opportunities of faculty, administrators and staff from diverse populations

Objective 3: Implement campus climate survey to assess the perception of the campus community and its commitment, as it relates to diversity on campus and work place satisfaction

Strategies:

1. Under the guidance of the President's Council on Equity and Campus Diversity, establish a campus climate assessment development team that will identify an independent consultant to administer a campus climate survey
2. Campus climate assessment will be used to identify pressing concerns and encourage a sharp focus on community engagement experiences, as it relates to campus diversity
3. Develop an institutional diversity policy/mission that drives the accomplishment of the college mission, strategic plan, diversity framework, and the recommendations drawn from the ongoing climate analysis
4. Consolidate and make the campus climate results readily available to the campus community

Indicators:

1. Professional development programs and the institutional policies and procedures that address issues related to the diversity of students, faculty, administrators, and staff
2. Action plan presented to campus community based on data and recommendations from the campus climate survey responses/results
3. Data related to action plan implementation and recommended outcomes