

DRAFT OF THE ACADEMIC PLAN
4/12/10

FIVE-YEAR FOCUS:
IMPROVE BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE’S REPUTATION
FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) benchmarks of effective educational practices have been chosen to form the framework for the initiatives in the Academic Plan. NSSE, developed with support from PEW Charitable Trusts, was designed to measure student engagement in their college experience and is built around five clusters linked to successful college outcomes. These benchmark areas are:

- level of academic challenge
- active and collaborative learning
- student-faculty interaction
- enriching educational experiences
- supportive campus environment

Using the NSSE structure provides an opportunity for Buffalo State to benchmark institutional results against national data. A summary of results of Buffalo State seniors in the most recent (2008) administration of NSSE for those clusters follows:

Category	BSC Seniors	NSSE (top 50%)	NSSE (top 10%)
Level of academic challenge	53.5	59.9	63.3
Active & collaborative learning	49.7	55.4	59.7
Student-faculty interaction	41.4	49.3	55.3
Enriching educational experiences	37.0	47.3	54.3
Supportive campus environment	53.7	63.5	66.7

STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS FOR ACHIEVING GOAL

1. RAISE THE LEVEL OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Buffalo State’s score in the “level of academic challenge” NSSE benchmark area will rise from 53.5 to at least 59.9, or to a score that earns Buffalo State a place in the current upper 50 percent of NSSE institutions.
- Participation of Buffalo State students in regional and national competitions and in academic societies will increase.
- Student perception of academic challenge will increase.

1.1 Be purposeful about conveying academic expectations and demands to students.

- Centralize new student and freshman orientation activities around the concept of high expectations. Stress extant guidelines related to the amount of time spent studying outside of class for every hour spent inside the classroom.
 - Communicate learning outcomes and expectations more fully. Include learning outcomes and objectives on syllabi and course web pages.
 - Strengthen expectations for student performance, support students in achieving those expectations, and make expectations common across courses, levels (freshman, sophomore, etc) and disciplines.
 - Identify expectations for student writing at the freshman, through senior levels and require more writing from students in all majors, and publish exemplar papers and reports where applicable.
 - Review articulation agreements with community colleges to ensure that transferred courses cover relevant material at appropriate levels.
 - Review course sequences in major curricula to strengthen rigor and student learning. Where appropriate increase course objectives to address skills and outcome targets.
 - Within majors establish faculty work-groups of those teaching the same course to determine standards for reading, writing, and academic rigor.
- 1.2 Develop a culture of supporting—through attendance, promotion and coordination—campus-wide events that celebrate intellectual activities.
- Each semester or year, have a highlighted Faculty Lecture and/or a Distinguished Alumni Lecture.
 - Create a program of themed events that synthesize a variety of program areas. For example, have a “What if BSC Read the Same Book,” use readings from the book in BSC 101 classes and other relevant IF courses. Invite the author of the book to give a lecture to the college.
 - Support the Anne Frank Project as a major campus-wide, intellectual event, kicking off the academic year.
- 1.3 Expand the linkages between professional scholarship, research and creative activity to classroom activity.
- Bring scholarship/creative activity of our disciplines and the methods of this scholarship/creative activity into our classrooms.
 - Link classroom activities to the visits of scholars, artists and speakers when they present on our campus.
- 1.4 Coordinate efforts to expand knowledge and use of common pedagogical practices and apply best practices regarding teaching across campus.
- Produce documentation for faculty, students and staff outlining pedagogical terminology commonly employed in IF and by NSSE and expand the use of this terminology consistently across campus.

- Engage in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary discussions of best teaching and pedagogy practices currently being employed to improve understanding of how these techniques are being implemented in the various disciplines.
- Apply best practices for teaching and pedagogy in our classrooms and inform students about these practices.

2. INCREASE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE, INQUIRY-BASED AND COLLABORATIVE FORMS OF LEARNING

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Buffalo State's score for the "active and collaborative learning" NSSE benchmark area will rise from 49.7 to at least 55.4, or to a score that earns Buffalo State a place in the current upper 50 percent of NSSE institutions.
- Student and faculty involvement in interdisciplinary, service, action-based and inquiry-based learning will increase.
- Seniors reporting internships on the NSSE will increase.

2.1 Be purposeful about addressing categories in NSSE's active and collaborative learning section

- Departments should explore ways to increase in-class presentations for all their students.
- Departments should explore ways in which faculty can program into their classes structured ways for students to discuss ideas outside of class.
- Assign a peer leader to every BSC 101 course.
- Promote the use of community-based assignments and projects throughout the curriculum.

2.2 Expand programs involving service, action-based and inquiry-based learning.

- Strengthen the academic community's involvement in public engagement by defining what forms of engagement serve academic goals and supporting their expansion.
- Establish incentives for departments to engage in these types of education.
- Reinstate the Faculty Advisory Board for Internships (FABI) as an oversight body for these workplace/community experiences: revise the existing internship course to establish college-wide standards based on best practices and review all existing internship/ field experience courses for agreement with revised course proposal and new DOPS policy.

2.3 Enhance and expand faculty and staff development to assure quality in new modes of teaching and learning.

- Support faculty and staff training that focuses on active and collaborative pedagogies.
- Expand support for the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- Develop on-line resources for faculty to learn about active and collaborative pedagogies.
 - Establish and/or institutionalize structures such as faculty learning communities, teaching circles, reciprocal peer observations or interest groups focused on developing skills in fostering active and collaborative learning.
3. PROMOTE STUDENT, FACULTY AND STAFF INTERACTION TO ENHANCE LEARNING AND TO SUPPORT STUDENT PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Buffalo State’s score in the “student-faculty interaction” NSSE benchmark area will rise from 41.4 to at least 49.3, or to a score that earns Buffalo State a place in the current upper 50 percent of NESSE institutions.
 - Student surveys (SUNY SOS, NSSE, ACT Advising) will indicate that advisement of all students in every program has improved.
 - The number of full-time faculty engaged in research with undergraduate students will increase.
 - The number of student-faculty interactions in mentored research/creative activity and with student organizations will increase.
- 3.1 Redefine, coordinate and strengthen advisement.
- Establish campus wide expectations for advisement
 - Disseminate examples of best practices for a range of advisement alternatives.
 - Provide faculty and professional development in advising to augment the skills of faculty and staff
 - Require departments to update advisement plans.
 - Finish development of on-line degree roadmaps for all majors and minors.
- 3.2 Explore and expand structured ways for students to engage with each other and with faculty outside of class.
- Expand study-groups organized by instructors until they become a vital and ongoing aspect of student experience.
 - Form student clubs around majors and/or departments where they currently do not exist.
 - Expand the Residence Hall faculty-fellows program.
 - Actively seek student involvement on departmental committees.
 - Encourage increased participation of faculty in mentoring research and creative activity.
 - Encourage prompt feedback and out-of-class discussions about assignments.
4. ENRICH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES BY INCREASING COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECTING CO-CURRICULAR AND CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Buffalo State's score for the "enriching educational experiences" NSSE benchmark area will rise from 37 to at least 47.3, or to a score that earns Buffalo State a place in the current upper 50 percent of NSSE institutions.
- An increase will occur in the number of students who have had an international experience before graduation.
- The number of students (in/out) in national exchange programs will increase.
- Members of the campus community with National Coalition Building Institute or other diversity training will increase.
- Learning outcomes for globalization and diversity will be articulated/clarified and work to infuse them throughout the curriculum will begin.
- The number of student-faculty interactions in learning communities will increase.
- Programs with capstone/culminating learning experiences will increase.

4.1 Emphasize the values of global citizenship throughout the curriculum.

- Expand participation in programs for study-abroad and other international experiences.
- Provide support for faculty to develop and/or expand international collaborations and expand outreach to students regarding these experiences.
- Expand participation in programs for national student exchange.
- Articulate and approve learning outcomes for global citizenship and explore ways to infuse them throughout the curriculum.

4.2 Emphasize the values of diversity throughout the curriculum.

- Create, resource, and reward curricular and co-curricular programs for students, faculty, and staff that promote understanding and interaction across races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, religions, and perspectives.
- Assess current diversity courses for congruence with diversity learning outcomes; expand awareness of diversity learning outcomes; explore ways to infuse them in each department.
- Provide training to faculty to ensure their ability to discuss diversity—racism, classism, etc.

4.3 Improve institutional capacity to deliver enriching educational experiences.

- Implement interdisciplinary themes and pedagogical approach such as the City as Curriculum in order to encourage out of class learning and resource the program and the faculty adequately in order to assure success.
- Develop institutional planning structures that facilitate faculty and student affairs collaboration on the design of transformative co-curricular experiences.
- Create a co-curricular transcript to document student participation in campus life.
- Establish more learning communities both within and beyond the first year and establish more learning communities around themes.

- Advance capstone experiences in all programs that currently do not have them.

5. PROVIDE A SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT THAT ENABLES STUDENTS TO THRIVE ACADEMICALLY AND SOCIALLY.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Buffalo State’s score in the “supportive campus environment” NSSE benchmark area will rise from 53.7 to 63.5, or to a score that earns Buffalo State a place in the current upper 50 percent of NSSE institutions.
- Student use of support services will increase.
- The percentage of students, faculty and staff reporting awareness and acceptance of the community standards under Buffalo State’s “Compact for a Civil and Caring Academic Community” will increase annually.

5.1 Expand academic support services to help students achieve expectations placed upon them.

- Increase the availability of academic support services.
- Use formative assessment to require participation by certain students in particular types of support services.
- Identify where students can acquire the technological skills necessary for academic success and supply training (Microsoft Office, internet research, etc)

5.2 Expand the awareness of our campus compact in programs, offices, departments and classrooms.

- Continue to use the Compact in first-year orientation.
- Encourage instructors to publicize the Compact in classrooms.
- Encourage directors and chairs to publicize and advocate for the Compact in their areas.
- Have all departments across campus institute evaluation components to monitor progress toward excellence in service to students.

6. EMPLOY ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY TO GUIDE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Report with be given about BSC 101 and Intellectual Foundations.
- Assessment plans for centers, non-instructional units, and graduate programs will be in place.

6.1 Engage in a comprehensive review of the Intellectual Foundations.

- Review and determine effectiveness of BSC 101.
- Engage in comprehensive review of IF to determine effectiveness of delivery and adherence to original intention.

- Establish faculty work-groups within each IF category to determine standards for reading, writing, and academic rigor.
- Assure learning outcomes are supported and known by faculty who teach courses.
- Study courses taught in IF to explore whether syllabi match course proposals and IF learning outcomes.
- Continue to develop assessment of general education.

6.2 Implement processes for evaluating the effectiveness of all academic operations.

- Commence five-year review cycles for “Centers.”
- Commence five-year review cycles for non-instructional units.
- Commence assessment of graduate programs.

7. PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE CAMPUS SUPPORT SYSTEMS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR FACULTY AND STAFF.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Every department will have definitions of and expectations for scholarship articulated and circulated.
- Workloads conducive to those expectations will be implemented.
- Report about public scholarship will be competed, discussed and voted on by College Senate.
- Clarify expectations for scholarship, research and creative activities in all departments across campus.
- Assure workload conducive to the production of scholarship and creative activities.
- Explore including public scholarship in the BSC campus definition of valuable scholarship.

8. CONTINUE TO BUILD BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE MARKET

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Summer programs, online instruction, and evening/weekend programs will expand.

8.1 Increase revenue production.

- Expand summer programs.
- Expand online offerings.
- Expand evening and weekend degree programs with emphasis on new markets, expanding services, and offering quality programs.

Academic Plan **Ongoing goals and commitments**

Academic reputation and quality

- Improve the perception of the institution's academic reputation with potential students, alumni, and community and business leaders.
- Make progress toward the institutional goal of receiving and maintaining 100 percent accreditation of eligible programs will continue.
- Support ongoing professional development for faculty, staff, chairs, and campus leaders.
- Support sabbaticals to enhance scholarly pursuits

Expand the number of students actively engaged in scholarship and creativity activity.

- Resource the Office of Undergraduate Research in ways that empower successful expansion.
- Support student—undergraduate and graduate—participation in professional conferences.

Enhance graduate education.

- Benchmark number of graduate assistantships and stipends for graduate assistants with other SUNY comprehensives.
- Find ways to use graduate assistantships as recruitment tools.
- Explore ways to reward faculty for work done off-load such as advising master's theses and projects and work done for multidisciplinary degree programs.
- Administration should expedite and faculty should engage in the creation of interdisciplinary degree programs.

Orient faculty and staff regarding campus mission

- Create a training program for faculty and staff to inform them of institutional resources and services with the goal of providing improved assistance and support to students.
- Educate professional and CSEA staff about the Strategic Plan and have directors discuss ways to achieve the plan with their staff
- Extend faculty orientation programs over a longer time-period and develop orientation programming for staff.

Reinvest in and increase full-time faculty and staff.

- Seek a 65-35% ration of FT to PT faculty delivering instruction.
- Evaluate ethnic and gender diversity in departments and institute appropriate targeted searches.
- Recruit and hire scholar/teacher faculty committed to BSC mission and goals.
- Hire and appoint chairs committed to BSC mission and goals

Manage the deployment of adjunct faculty.

- Define criteria for allocation of adjunct faculty.
- Establish competitive adjunct faculty fee per course stipends.
- Establish regular evaluation of adjunct faculty.
- Increase adjunct faculty fee per course stipends when possible.
- Establish regular evaluation of adjunct faculty and ensure that there is an institutional review process to verify their effectiveness in the classroom.

Continue to support five-year cycle for academic program review and renewal.

- Continue five-year academic program review schedule and dedicate resources to support deans action plans; include in these processes minors and graduate programs.
- Implement a campus review cycle for interdisciplinary academic minors.

Communication and publicity

- Publicize widely across campus the successes of faculty
- Continue to improve coordination of campus-wide events and seeks ways to develop a campus-wide calendar
- Develop an accessible, campus-wide planning calendar to assist with scheduling guest lectures, events and student activities to improve coordination.
- Bring together the information currently housed in the assorted calendars used on campus into a centralized, user-friendly master calendar that will allow students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests to easily access information about upcoming events/activities.
- Continue to work toward a comprehensive communication plan.

Instructional infrastructure and technology

- Implement processes for annual upgrade of instructional facilities and equipment.
- Continue to improve campus facilities to support teaching and academic goals
- Continue to develop the Information Commons model in the library
- Enforce prerequisites during registration.

Perform annual institutional self-evaluation to inform cycles of planning.

- Identify bottlenecks impacting student progress toward graduation.
- Identify danger signs and critical points where we lose students.

Engage in a process of evaluation of the recent reorganization with faculty and staff. The following can be considered as talking points to be explored—has the reorganization helped to:

- Consolidate academic departments.
- Create clusters of disciplines that foster interactions between departments and other campus units or centers.
- Position the academic community to expand involvement with economic development and community outreach.
- Create opportunities for departments to be more interdependent and interdisciplinary.
- Establish alignments that are more competitive in attracting students and external resources.
- Increase efficiency in sharing of resources including space, facilities, equipment, and personnel.
- Establish interactions for creation and delivery of new academic programs.

Identify new markets, leverage technology, and use creative delivery models to offer courses and services.

- Identify and implement priorities to employ technology as an advanced learning tool and to support learning productivity.