

Department of Political Science and Public Administration
State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo State
MPA Diversity Plan¹

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¹ The MPA program committee would like to thank NASPAA-accredited programs who made their diversity and inclusion plans available on the NASPAA website. We would particularly like to thank the team at CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice whose diversity plan particularly informed the development of our plan.

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Mission Statements

SUNY Buffalo State's MPA program's commitment to fostering diversity is articulated in our mission statement and aligns with the mission statements of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, SUNY Buffalo State, and the State University of New York.

SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy: Definition of Diversity

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).

MPA Program Mission Statement²

The SUNY Buffalo State College Public Administration and Nonprofit Management MPA Program prepares a **diverse body** of pre-service and in-service professionals for positions of leadership in local, national, and international public service. The program cultivates values of accountability, ethics, and social equity through learning, service projects, and research. The program contributes to the body of knowledge and advances the quality of governance.

Department of Political Science and Public Administration Mission & Goals³

The Political Science and Public Administration Department empowers students to succeed through excellence in teaching, research, and service. As an anchor institution and urban-engaged campus, our vibrant intellectual community connects with the public and nonprofit sectors to enhance governance, service provision, and the overall quality of life in the Buffalo metropolitan area. **We deliver inclusive, socially equitable, and innovative programs** that foster creative and critical thinking. We nurture life-long learners who respect the interconnectedness of knowledge and global sustainability. Through experiential learning opportunities, students prepare for the diverse array of 21st century careers.

Department Goals

- **Maintain a Talented and Diverse Faculty and Student Body.**
- To enhance and expand the curriculum to reflect current trends and developments within Political Science, International Relations, and Public Administration Disciplines.
- To provide the skills that students will need to compete on the job market and/or to gain admission into other graduate or professional studies programs.
- Promote students' intellectual development with and beyond the classroom setting by providing both research and experiential learning opportunities.

² <https://politicalscience.buffalostate.edu/mpa-program-mission-statement>

³ <https://politicalscience.buffalostate.edu/our-mission-goals>

- To foster opportunities for students to obtain practical experiences through internships that focus on issues specific to our disciplines and where appropriate.

SUNY Buffalo State Mission Statement

Buffalo State College is committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty, and staff. The goal of the college is to inspire a lifelong passion for learning, and to **empower a diverse population of students** to succeed as citizens of a challenging world. Toward this goal, and in order to enhance the quality of life in Buffalo and the larger community, the college is dedicated to excellence in teaching and scholarship, cultural enrichment, and service.

Core Values

We, the Buffalo State College community, are committed to:

- Access to quality public higher education.
- Quality teaching and learning.
- Opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential.
- The rigors, joys, and fulfillment of intellectual discovery.
- Supportive and collegial relationships.
- **Respect for diversity and individual differences.**
- Service to society.

SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Diversity Statement

Diversity can be broadly defined to include all aspects of human difference, including but not limited to, age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression and identity, language heritage, learning style, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, social-economic status, status as a veteran and world-view. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion focuses in particular on achieving equal access, meaningful academic and intellectual inclusion in curriculum, research, and service, and holistic integration into the academic culture of higher education at all levels for New York State's underrepresented populations and students who are economically disadvantaged.⁴

⁴ <https://equity.buffalostate.edu/definition-diversity>

A. Faculty and Diversity

Standard 3 Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance

3.2 Faculty Diversity: The program will promote equity, diversity, and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, retention, and support of faculty members.

Program objectives related to Standard 3.3

Objective 1: Maintain recruiting, selection, and retention processes and policies to attract and retain a diverse tenured/tenure-track faculty in the MPA program.

Objective 2: Maintain recruiting, selection, and retention processes and policies to attract and retain a diverse part-time MPA faculty.

MPA Program Recruitment Practices

All job searches – whether for full-time or part-time – are supervised both by Human Resources and the Equity and Campus Diversity Office. One of the major responsibilities of the Equity and Campus Diversity Office is monitoring, implementing, and evaluating federal and state laws and SUNY procedures regarding equal opportunity and affirmative action. Whenever possible a full, open affirmative action search procedure should be conducted prior to filling a position vacancy.

The Equity and Campus Diversity Office provides assistance to ensure that equal employment opportunity and affirmative action guidelines are followed. The campus continues its commitment and legal responsibility to use affirmative action in creating large and diverse pools of applicants for all positions and in assuring that all applicants receive equal employment opportunity.

The release of the position is approved using the position release form from the budget office. The Recruitment Plan is completed using the web-based on-line tracking system. Applicants apply for positions using the on-line system <https://jobs.buffalostate.edu>. Applicants are notified that their application has been received through the on-line system. The AA/EEO Self-Identification Data is collected through the on-line system as a part of the on-line application. Applications can be reviewed and screened through the system anywhere the internet is available, including off-campus. The Pre-Interview report is completed on-line and forwarded for necessary approvals through the on-line tracking system. The Interview and Recommendation report is completed using the on-line tracking system. Applicants are notified that the position has been filled through the on-line tracking system.⁵ Buffalo State follows a 12 step process for faculty searches:

Step 1: Initiator requests approval of Position Release <http://budget.buffalostate.edu/position-release-form-0>

⁵ <https://equity.buffalostate.edu/sites/equity.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/procedures/search/2010-2011shortversion.pdf>

Step 2: HR creates user account for the search.

Step 3: HR provides assistance to the search committee concerning the operation of the People Admin system

Step 4: Search committee develops and/or reviews the recruitment plan. The plan is forwarded for approval using the on-line system.

Step 5: The search chair schedules an orientation meeting with Equity and Campus Diversity concerning the AA/EEO process.

Step 6: Search committee places advertisement.

Step 7: Search committee receives and screens applicants using the on-line system and selects candidates for interview.

Step 8: Search chair completes Pre-Interview Report

Step 9: Search committee conducts interviews

Step 10: Search chair or designee checks references and verifies credentials

Step 11: Search chair completes Interview and Recommendations Report

Step 12: Administrator completes the Appointment Form and forwards to HR.

[Evidence of Faculty Diversity in the MPA Program](#)

Buffalo State's Department of Political Science and Public Administration has been a leader in SUNY with respect to hiring and mentoring a diverse faculty that reflects diversity in NYS and the United States. Significantly, we are the only Department of Political Science and Public Administration in the entire SUNY system, and the only MPA program located in department with political science majors and minors. Unusually in SUNY political science departments, we have been led by two women department chairs with the PhD in Political Science or Public Administration/Affairs (Dr. Buonanno, 2006-2012, Dr. Ceesay 2020-present), African American faculty (Dr. Neal, 1998-2006, Dr. Ceesay), and Asian Americans (Drs. El-Behairy and Raoof). We also have a long and proud history of not only inclusive hiring, but tenuring faculty from diverse ethnicities and faith traditions. Our faculty have come from Egypt, The Gambia, Iran, India, Iraq, and South Korea. Professors Baek, El-Behairy, Desai, Raoof, and Park brought their experience as permanent residents and naturalized American citizens from Middle East and Asian countries); women (Professors Baek, Buonanno, Ceesay, and Slavin); African American (Professors Ceesay and Neal) and Latinx (Professor Rivera). Our faculty have come from diverse geographical locations in the U.S. to teach at Buffalo State, including Georgia, New York, Tennessee, California, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and South Carolina. We also have worked together as a faculty to continue to attract and mentor assistant professors (untenured) from diverse backgrounds, having applied on four occasions for SUNY diversity fellowships to enable us to inclusively hire assistant professors. Further to this support for mentoring, Dr. Soni (teaches in the MPA core and the MPA International Public Management track) received the prestigious Nulla Drescher award, which provides a pre-tenure sabbatical for women faculty members to focus exclusively on research. Our assistant professor in the MPA program (all other full-time faculty are tenured) teaching *Administrative Law*–

Adamu Shauku, JD, PhD – is a military veteran and is African American. Since its certification by the New York State Department of Education (2011) the MPA program has been led by women (Professors Buonanno and Ceesay). Our MPA faculty is representative of the community: Byron Brown, the first Black mayor of the City of Buffalo (part time); Greg Rabb, the first openly gay politician to win office in Western New York (male, white, part time); Lisa Parshall (female, white, part-time), Molly Ranahan (GLBTQI community, part-time), Miguel Reyes-Mariano (Latino, veteran), part-time, Jason Rivera (Latino, tenured associate professor), Suparna Soni (female, Asian, tenured associate professor); Vida Vanchan (female, Asian, tenured professor), Atta Ceesay (female, African American, tenured associate professor), Laurie Buonanno (female, white, tenured professor); Frank Ciaccia (male, white, part-time); Jason Knight (male, white, tenured associate professor); Kenneth Stone (male, white, part-time); Peter Yacobucci (male, white, tenured associate professor).

Collegewide Policy for Faculty Recruitment

Buffalo State demonstrates a college-wide commitment to diversity and inclusion for faculty. We are guided by the following collegewide plans & committees:

- Embedded in Buffalo State’s Strategic Plan⁶
- The Equity and Campus Diversity Strategic Plan⁷
- President’s Council on Equity & Diversity⁸ – Department Chair, Dr. Atta Ceesay is a member of this committee

The State University of New York Programs

Buffalo State is tapped into SUNY’s PRODI-G – Promoting Recruitment, Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Growth – a SUNYwide program to inspire underrepresented student by increasing the diversity of SUNY faculty across the system.⁹ Our MPA program has applied for diversity fellowship (the earlier version of PRODI-G) for two our MPA faculty – Dr. Atta Ceesay and Dr. Jason Rivera – and we continue to seek out opportunities through our college administration and PRODI-G to recruit faculty through PRODI-G.

⁶ 2016-21. <https://suny.buffalostate.edu/sites/default/files/2020-05/sp20162021.pdf>

⁷ 2017-2021

<https://president.buffalostate.edu/sites/president.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/PCECDstratplan.pdf>

⁸ <https://equity.buffalostate.edu/presidents-council-equity-and-campus-diversity>

⁹ <https://www.suny.edu/prodig/>

B. Students and Diversity

Standard 4 Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students

4.4 Student Diversity: The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions practices, retention efforts, and student support services.

Program objectives related to Standard 4.4

1. Recruit a diverse pool of students to the MPA program.
2. Continue with our consistent admissions processes and standards that take account of a wide range of experience.
3. Inform and encourage all potential applicants and current students about funding available to enhance socioeconomic diversity within our student body.
4. Recognize and respond to the diverse needs and interests of our student community, promote a vibrant, engaged campus life, with the sense of community, civility, social and environmental consciousness, and mutual respect.

Objective 1. Recruit a diverse pool of students to the MPA program.

Buffalo State is an urban-engaged campus located in the City of Buffalo, New York State's second-largest city. Buffalo State is the *only* SUNY campus in a major metropolitan area, offering exceptional cultural and recreational opportunities – all within walking distance. Buffalo State's students represent the largest and most diverse student body of the 13 SUNY comprehensive colleges. We enroll significant proportions of nontraditional (adult), first-generation, and disadvantaged students with demonstrated potential.¹⁰ Buffalo State has a large percentage of underrepresented minority students with 55.1% of Buffalo State's undergraduate students being minority students, and 50% of undergraduates are members of underrepresented minorities (African American, Hispanic, Native American, Multiracial).

¹⁰ <https://ecatalog.buffalostate.edu/undergraduate/about-suny-buffalo-state/>

Plan

OBJECTIVE	RECRUIT A DIVERSE POOL OF STUDENTS
Strategy #1	Recruit from Buffalo State undergraduate student body.
Actions	<p>-Targeted emails to the majors and minors from which the MPA draws inviting Buffalo State students to apply to the MPA program: Business Administration, Communication, Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Urban Planning.</p> <p>-Class visits from faculty and MPA students to selected classes.</p> <p>-Graduate School, in conjunction with College Marketing and Communications, considers the MPA program as one of the top 10 programs to promote when planning paid campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentioned in 1 minute radio ads on Spotify, Radio.com, and NPR radio slot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ During fall/spring semester around Open House ○ Before beginning of semester during “Still Time to Apply” campaigns • Paid social media promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open House Campaigns ▪ Still Time to Apply Campaigns ○ Audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location: United States: Binghamton (DMA), Buffalo (DMA), Albany-Schenectady-Troy (DMA), Rochester, NY (DMA), Watertown (DMA), Syracuse (DMA) ▪ Age: 20-55 ▪ People Who Match: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Level: In college or College grad • Interests: (ANY/OR) Disaster recovery, Data analysis, Nonprofit organization, Nonprofit Director, Governance, Human resources, Political science, Intelligence, Emergency Management, Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, National Security, Master of Public Administration or Government, Public Policy or Public Administration, Budget Analysis, Economics, Management, International Relations ○ Graduate School follows up with all individuals who express interest in the MPA program with a “Thank you for your interest!” email with details about the MPA program and a link to the MPA program website.
Timeline	At the beginning of each fall semester (department), periodically by the Graduate School.
Responsibility	MPA Program Director/Administrative Assistant/Graduate School
Assessment	Track number of minority student applications from Buffalo State.

Plan

OBJECTIVE	RECRUIT A DIVERSE POOL OF STUDENTS
Strategy #2	Recruit veterans of the US armed forces
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information sessions co-sponsored with the campus veteran's office• Work with MPA Alumni and MPA Advisory Committee to identify opportunities to recruit veterans• Provide information about the MPA program to nonprofits serving veterans in the Western New York community and federal/state/local government offices
Timeline	Ongoing
Responsibility	MPA Program Director/Administrative Assistant
Assessment	Track number of applications from veterans to the program.

Objective 2. Consistent admissions processes and standards that take account of a wide range of experience.

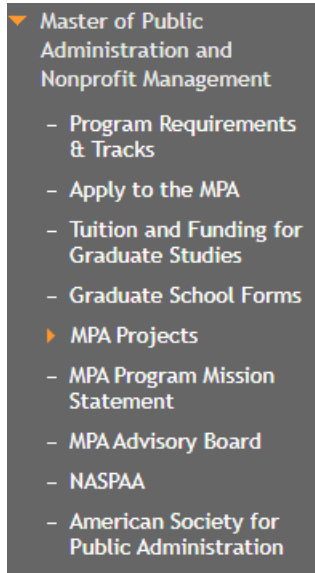
Plan

OBJECTIVE	FAIR & CONSISTENT ADMISSIONS PROCESS
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize numerical system and interrater reliability• Letter of intent included in the application• Rolling admissions
Actions	A minimum of three members of the MPA admissions' committee review each applicant. Letter of intent points awarded for a wide-range of volunteer or work experience in the nonprofit, faith-based, and public sectors
Timeline	Rolling admissions
Responsibility	MPA Admissions Committee
Assessment	Admission evaluation sheets remain on file for three years

Objective 3. Inform and encourage all potential applicants about financial aid, fellowships, and scholarships.

Plan

- A link to the Graduate School webpages with information on financial aid, fellowships, and scholarships is included on the MPA webpages.¹¹



Screenshot of MPA webpages showing link to funding information.

- Accepted students provided information about funding in their acceptance letter.
- MPA Advisors send an email to each new advisee to remind them to take advantage of funding opportunities. Special emphasis on encouraging students to apply for *The Graduate Diversity Fellowship Program*, which is a SUNY-wide initiative that offers fellowships to students who have been admitted to graduate or professional study. This program is intended to assist in the recruitment, enrollment and retention of students in doctoral and master’s level programs who can demonstrate that they contribute to the diversity of the student body, especially those who can show that they have overcome a disadvantage or other impediment to success in higher education.¹² Many of our MPA students have had three semesters of tuition (their entire MPA coursework) covered by this award. Some of our students have received stipends in addition to tuition remission under this program.

¹¹ <https://politicalscience.buffalostate.edu/master-public-administration-and-nonprofit-management>

¹² <https://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/fellowships>

Objective 4. Recognize and respond to the diverse needs and interests of our student community, promote a vibrant, engaged campus life, with the sense of community, civility, social and environmental consciousness, and mutual respect.

Plan

OBJECTIVE	RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY, PROMOTE A VIBRANT, ENGAGED CAMPUS LIFE, WITH THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY, CIVILITY, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MUTUAL RESPECT.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Diverse and inclusive extracurricular programming. b. Awards and Honors
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extracurricular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Apply each year for Equity & Diversity Office campus grant. ii. Recruit a diverse panel of experts each year for Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) Conference iii. Recruit a diverse panel of MPA graduates to speak to undergraduates at the PSRW Conference. iv. Recruit through email blast and social media all MPA students to apply to participate in the NASPAA Batten Annual Policy Simulation b. Awards & Honors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure all MPA students have an opportunity to learn about qualifications for admission into Pi Alpha Alpha when they are admitted to the program. Include on department website. ii. Email to all students and posted to social media encouraging them to apply for the Keith Henderson Scholarship. Include on department website.
Timeline	Throughout the year as appropriate
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. PSRW planning committee, MPA program director, Student Affairs Committee b. MPA Committee c. Department Student Affairs Committee, Pi Alpha Alpha faculty adviser
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. MPA Director’s Annual Report b. Faculty annual reports include a section on how they have met college & department inclusion and diversity goals. c. Excel spreadsheet generated by administrative assistant with all MPA students with columns for GPA & credit hours; Department annual report

C. Curriculum and Diversity

Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning

5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains: the ability to lead and manage in public governance;

- to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- **to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.**

Program Objective related to Standard 5.1: Continually examine the curriculum for opportunities to integrate topics related to diversity and inclusion.

OBJECTIVE	CONTINUALLY EXAMINE THE CURRICULUM FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE TOPICS RELATED TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Course content b. Student research opportunities
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop master list of courses with brief description of diversity and inclusion elements; courses to include diversity and inclusion subjects, case studies, guest speakers; syllabus includes Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) reflective of diversity & inclusion b. Student Research encouraged in areas of diversity, inclusion, and social justice, particularly in PAD 690 MPA Project (MPA capstone course)
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update course list each year. Include the list of courses on the MPA program website. b. PAD 690 MPA Project taught each semester.
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. MPA Curriculum Committee b. MPA Project instructors, MPA Program Director
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Faculty annual reports b. MPA Project instructors provide a report with project titles and abstracts to the MPA program director by June 1 each year for inclusion in the department's annual report.

D. Scholarship and Diversity

Objective: Reward and value the MPA faculty research activities in the support of diversity and inclusion.

Plan

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration will consider this objective in determining annual faculty discretionary salary increases (DSI), annual reviews of untenured faculty, nominations for awards and honors, and performance evaluations for part-time faculty.

E. Service and Diversity

Objective: Reward and value the MPA faculty for service within the college, university system, the Western New York Community, the State of New York, the United States, and globally in supporting diversity and inclusion as defined by the State University of New York. (See SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy: Definition of Diversity.)

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Revised August 12, 2021