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## HIGHER EDUCATION

### Simpson rallies Believers to boost UB

By Jay Rey NEWS STAFF REPORTER

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When University at Buffalo President John B. Simpson speaks to the community about his vision for a bigger, better UB, he inevitably gets one question: How can we help?

An answer came Tuesday, when school officials unveiled “UB Believers,” an effort to build broadbased community support and enlist more advocates of UB’s plans to grow by 40 percent over 13 years.

“By working together, we have a strong future for our region,” Simpson said at a news conference in the Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences at Virginia and Ellicott streets. “It will ultimately allow us to succeed at what we’re doing at the university.”

Simpson has proposed growing UB by 10,000 students and 750 faculty by 2020, on its way to becoming a top-tier public research institute.

But UB will need a lot of help from the state — both financially and, as Simpson has discussed, through legislation allowing a change in tuition policies to assist UB in paying for its ambitious expansion.

The university is rallying support, through UB Believers, in hopes the larger Western New York community can become a strong advocate in Albany.

For state lawmakers, the UB president’s lobbying for the school is one thing, but hearing from thousands of constituents who support the university’s plans to grow is quite another, said Marsha S. Henderson, UB’s vice president of external affairs.

“It’s advocacy at the grass-roots level,” Henderson said.

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UB is trying to win over the community with the idea that a bigger, stronger UB is better for the region.

A 40 percent larger UB, for example, would expand the skilled labor pool in Western New York, Henderson said.

More university research would generate more local startup companies, and UB's annual economic impact to the area would rise to \$2.6 billion from \$1.5 billion, according to university projections.

So far, the university has recruited a core of about 100 UB Believers — several introduced Tuesday — and plans to grow that number into the thousands by simply asking people to relay their support for UB's growth to friends, colleagues and elected officials.

“Help us make it happen through your voice,” Henderson said.

To learn more, or register free, go to [www.buffalo.edu/YourUB](http://www.buffalo.edu/YourUB).

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