



Forty-Eighth Annual Commencement



*Virtual Graduation
Wednesday, May 19, 2021
7:00 P.M.*



May 19, 2021

Dear Graduates:

Congratulations! You did it! Despite having the extra responsibilities of family, as well as financial and career obligations that traditional students may not have had to navigate, you accomplished your goals of growing both personally and professionally. Navigating the unknowns and fears precipitated by the COVID-19 virus, added additional stresses that could have stopped you from succeeding. However, these extraordinary times required new ways of thinking and acting to accommodate a new "normal." On behalf of the faculty and staff at the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC), I would like to let you know how proud we are that you conquered your fears and self-doubt; and overcame your struggles, trials and tribulations to succeed.

Just remember, *"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."* (Eleanor Roosevelt). By engaging in hard work, having faith and perseverance you did not let anyone or anything interfere with your dreams.

Welcome to the next chapter in your life and thank you for investing your time and energy into becoming an alumnus of the Buffalo EOC. As you continue to accomplish your goals please remember us and let us know how you are doing. Once again, congratulations!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julius Adams".

Julius Gregg Adams, Ph.D.
Executive Director



University Center for Academic
and Workforce Development

May 19, 2021

To the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center Class of 2021:

Spring is always a time of hope and optimism, with the promise of growth and renewal in our sights. In 2021, our families and communities are desperate for a cause to celebrate and an occasion to surround ourselves with positivity.

Today, you have delivered that hope and positivity to all of your loved ones and everyone around you. Our EOC's across New York State are special and unique, but are connected by several common threads. The resilience, courage, toughness and talent of our students are ties that bind us from Buffalo to Long Island and everywhere in between. By completing your program, you are forever a part of that rich tradition of excellence.

As an EOC graduate, you exemplify the growth and renewal we yearn for in spring. You have grown through challenges and struggles, learned from mistakes, conquered obstacles beyond your control and completed your program to become a new you – full of confidence, prepared for higher education or the workforce, and ready to meet your next chapter in life head-on.

The faculty and staff at the Buffalo EOC have poured themselves into you, because they believed in your mind, heart and spirit from the day you applied to your program. With your program complete and certificate in hand, I know they are proud to say – “we were right all along!”

Celebrate this tremendous accomplishment, because you have earned it. Carry this joy with you, because I promise you that your story remains unwritten. I could not be more proud of what you have achieved, or more excited to see where your new skills will take you. Each spring, remember the hope and optimism you felt today, and attack the chance for growth and renewal the way you have at the Buffalo EOC.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lisa L. McKay
Associate Provost and Director
University Center for Academic
and Workforce Development



The State University
of New York

Dr. Jim Malatras
Chancellor

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
Albany, New York 12246

www.suny.edu

May 19, 2021

To the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center Graduating Class of 2021:

In looking back at your journey with SUNY's Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center, be proud of what you have achieved. In the best of times, enrolling in an EOC is a bold move. It demonstrates that you believe you can achieve whatever you set out to accomplish, no matter the obstacles in your way. To make that type of decision and declaration in the midst of a global health crisis? That is more than bold – it is courageous.

Even as the SUNY community was forced to adapt quickly to the pause of regular operations and instruction on our campuses, you didn't shy away from what was ahead. You balanced so much – children home from school needing supervision; family needing medical care; your own safety at risk every time you stepped outside – and in spite of all the adversity, you marched forward toward your goals to achieve great success.

That first step of enrolling at the Buffalo EOC has been followed by progress to the certificate of completion you hold today. From your first meeting with EOC support staff, to your first day of class, the assessments along the way and all the bonds you have built in between, you have proven to the world what you knew about yourself all along – you are unstoppable.

Whether you participated through the SUNY Online Training Center, or in remote or hybrid programming at the Buffalo EOC, your graduation today is a testament to the power of your ambition and perseverance. Keep striving to do more. I can't wait to see what you accomplish next.

On behalf of the entire SUNY community, I'm proud of all you've accomplished.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Malatras".

Jim Malatras
Chancellor





**Office of the Chancellor
University Life and Student Affairs**

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway, Albany, New York 12246

www.suny.edu

May 19, 2021

To the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center Class of 2021:

Dear Graduate,

It is my sincere pleasure to join the faculty, staff and students in recognizing you today on your tremendous accomplishment. As you know, the Educational Opportunity Centers were founded to help students to reimagine themselves and become successful in an increasingly competitive marketplace. As you reflect on your commitment and perseverance, please be reminded that you have changed your career trajectory not only for yourself, but for your family. My greatest hope is that you will continue this positive journey to reach your full potential. Please thank your faculty members for giving you the analytical, technical and soft skills that are necessary for you to become gainfully employed or continue with your academic endeavors.

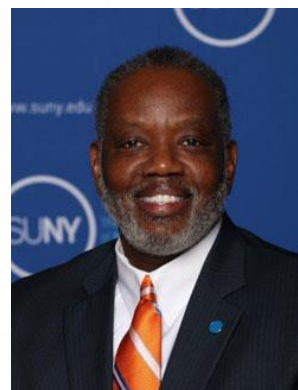
There are many people that played a role in your success today, our mission and vision is predicated on the hope that you will take full advantage of this opportunity and help us to identify other students to consider the transformative value of the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center.

EOC graduates are the truest testament of SUNY's ability to move our communities, state and nation forward. As SUNY's Student Advocate, I am truly humbled by what you have accomplished. I wish you and your family exceedingly well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Graham".

Dr. John L. Graham
Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and
Student Advocate



May 19, 2021

Dear EOC Graduates:

On behalf of the entire University at Buffalo community, congratulations to each of you on your graduation from the Educational Opportunity Center! It is truly a pleasure to celebrate your success as students, and your determination to seek out the knowledge and skills to enhance your lives and contribute meaningfully to the world. Your graduation from the EOC marks a tremendous personal milestone and an achievement that will provide transformative opportunities for you on the journey ahead. You are valued members of our UB community, and we are delighted to recognize you for this wonderful accomplishment.

This year's commencement, in particular, stands as a profound tribute to your perseverance and ingenuity in both your academic pursuits and your personal endeavors. In the face of the myriad challenges of the past year and a half—from the pandemic and the ensuing economic downturn to the nationwide reckoning with systemic inequities—your unwavering dedication to accomplishing your goals and advancing social justice has been remarkable.

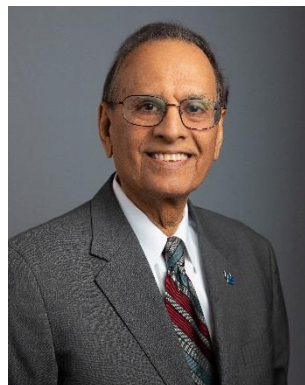
In turn, if we have done our job, you are graduating with not only a wealth of disciplinary expertise, but a deep appreciation for the role and value of public service. Education is not meant for selfish gain; it is intended for the greater good. Indeed, this is a hallmark of a University at Buffalo education: that you share your enlightened viewpoint with the world, for the betterment of the world. In trying times such as these, our global society needs your engagement and your inclusive worldview more than ever.

Your UB family is so proud of all that you have accomplished, and for the resilience, creativity and foresight you have demonstrated in the pursuit of these goals. Your achievements as EOC graduates are an inspiring reminder of all that can be attained through educational opportunity. Wherever your career plans take you, I hope that the knowledge and values you have learned at the EOC will serve you well in your future endeavors.

Congratulations, again, on your graduation, and best wishes for continued success on the road ahead!

Sincerely,


Satish K. Tripathi
President



May 2021

Dear Graduates,

On behalf of the entire University at Buffalo community, please accept my congratulations on your graduation from UB's Educational Opportunity Center. After an exceptionally challenging year, reaching this milestone is a tremendous accomplishment and one that should be a source of great pride to you and your family.

During your time with us, you have grown personally and intellectually and are now well positioned to pursue and achieve all of your academic and professional goals. Your perseverance, determination and commitment to your studies have brought you to this point. Enjoy this important achievement and recognize this is a foundation on which to build your future.

Congratulations and best wishes for your continued success.



A. Scott Weber
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs





**THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY**

CRYSTAL D. PEOPLES-STOKES
141st Assembly District
MAJORITY LEADER

Class of 2021
C/O: Dr. Julius Gregg Adams
Executive Director
SUNY at Buffalo | Educational Opportunity Center
555 Ellicott St.
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: 48th Annual Commencement Ceremony | SUNY at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center

Dear UB EOC Class of 2021:

I want to congratulate SUNY at Buffalo's Educational Opportunity Center's (EOC) Class of 2021 and cordially welcome all of your family, friends, and supporters! Today marks the day that commemorates your academic accomplishments throughout your time as a student of the University at Buffalo!

Obtaining a quality education is indeed the vehicle to success. You are graduating at a unique time in history, during a global pandemic in which you have overcome significant hurdles and challenges to attain this incredible achievement. Job well done!

Now as graduates, you have accomplished the first step on the road to your future. I want to commend you for putting forth the necessary diligence, determination, and commitment to reach this important milestone in your lives. I encourage you to reach for your dreams and follow your passion while you continue to set higher personal, educational, and career goals that reflect your learned interests and values. I urge you to remember this community and all that it has to offer you!

I wish you all luck and continued blessings in all of your endeavors. May you continue to personify EOC's guiding principles of "lifelong learners who are self-directed, empowered, and committed to excellence."

Sincerely,

Honorable Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes
Majority Leader, New York State Assembly
141st District



Educational Opportunity Center INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

The State University's commitment to serve underprepared students more extensively resulted in the creating in 1966, of four Urban Centers. The Centers, located in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Albany and **Buffalo**, were funded by the Governor and the New York State Legislature, to provide occupational training and college preparatory programs.

Further, extending these services in 1969, the State University created seven Cooperative College Centers, offering remedial lower division college courses for underserved populations of Syracuse, Wyandanch, Mouth Vernon, **Buffalo**, Rochester, Westchester, and Nassau.

In 1973, the Urban Centers and Cooperative Colleges merged to form the more comprehensive Educational Opportunity Centers in **Buffalo**, Rochester, Syracuse, Troy, Yonkers, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Long Island. The same year, the Schenectady Outreach Center, formerly a satellite of the Center in Troy, became a separate entity. Each of the new Centers offered vocational training, college preparation and support services as well as community services aimed at neighborhood residents.

Legislative initiatives in 1985 and 1986 brought the addition of Centers in the Bronx and Queens boroughs of New York. Also established in that year were specialized SUNY outreach and recruitment components in the Brooklyn, **Buffalo** and Rochester Centers. These efforts articulated well with the Educational Opportunity Programs on our SUNY Campuses.

Today, the network of Educational Opportunity Centers represents a major effort by the State University to meet the educational and vocational needs of economically disadvantaged persons. Programs are geared to grow and adapt to the changing environments in which they operate, while serving as a readily accessible first step toward the attainment of educational and/or vocational objectives and ultimate self-sufficiency.

Our **Buffalo** EOC relies on multiple community, corporate, and educational collaborations to meet the needs of our students. These collaborations open access and opportunity for students and offer significant resources, thus enabling our role in broadening access to higher education and the workforce.

Our diverse student body comprises adult aged 17 to past retirement age. Our students rely on a full complement of life experiences that enable their success in their pursuit of educational opportunity and job training.

Our students who are enrolled in vocational-technical programming are required to satisfy an externship commitment as part of their program completion requirements. In addition, all students are exposed to opportunities that encourage campus visits, participation in career fairs and job seeking related events.

In all, we have efficiently harnessed the resources of the State of New York and effectively supported the public mission of the State University of New York. Those of us who are members of the EOC community carry a deep commitment to our constituency, share pride in the work that we accomplish and are visibly committed to excellence.

Our **Buffalo** EOC has evolved into a vibrant, dynamic learning community that delivers comprehensive community-based academic and workforce development programs, wrap-around supportive services and access to further education and employment. Our Center is committed to providing educational and growth experiences that empower students to realize their dreams and turn efforts into achievements.

Program for Virtual Commencement

Prelude

Pomp and Circumstance

Opening of Ceremony

Robert S. Miletich
Chair of the Faculty Senate and
Professor of Nuclear Medicine and Neurology
Department of Nuclear Medicine
University at Buffalo

Welcome.....Julius Gregg Adams, Executive Director
Educational Opportunity Center

Greetings

University at Buffalo.....A. Scott Weber
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Keynote Speaker.....The Honorable Timothy M. Kennedy
New York State Senate – 63rd District

Award Presentations

Distinguished Alumni Award.....Debra E. J. Thompson
Associate Executive Director/
Director of Instructional Services
Educational Opportunity Center

Arthur O. Eve Award.....Debra E. J. Thompson
Associate Executive Director/
Director of Instructional Services
Educational Opportunity Center

Student Honors

Presentation of Student Awards.....Debra E. J. Thompson
Associate Executive Director/
Director of Instructional Services
Educational Opportunity Center

Student Incentive Awards

Central Sterilization Technician:	Linda Hicks
Customer Service:	Denise Poole
High School Equivalency:	Shroq Fadil
Medical Billing and Coding:	Adam Murphy

Presentation of the Graduating Class.....Julius Gregg Adams, Executive Director
Educational Opportunity Center

Conferral of Completion Certificates.....A. Scott Weber
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
University at Buffalo

Closing Declaration..... Robert S. Miletich
Chair of the Faculty Senate and
Professor of Nuclear Medicine and Neurology
Department of Nuclear Medicine
University at Buffalo

Recessional
Pomp and Circumstance

2020 – 2021 Faculty & Staff Roster

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Julius Gregg Adams

Elizabeth Blank, Ruby Velez

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Director of Budget and Administrative Services

Mary Lou Conroy

Nancy Aviles, Philip Hamilton, Shaf Rahman (Retired), Christina Short, Jorge Torres

ALUMNI AFFAIRS AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Margot Keysor

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPER

Lynette Towns

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Roscoe Garner

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Frank Williams

Leilani Chestnut-Jones

ADMISSIONS

Ciara Johnson

Anthony Miller, Eduvije Sanchez

CAREER PLANNING AND PLACEMENT

Terry Patterson (Retired), Rashada Stewart

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Debra E. J. Thompson

ATTAIN

Mayra Colon-Ruiz, Kevin Thomas

COMMUNITY AND COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

Oliver Glover

SUPERVISOR OF COUNSELING AND ADVISEMENT

Anthony Funigiello

Keisha Alston, Melissa Davis, Heidy Galan-Honrado, Kristie Kaminski

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Orinthia Baker, Michael Baugh, Shirley Bennett, Phillip Bland, Tyra Blodgett, Areta Buchner, Susan Camizzi (Retired), Marsha Christiano, Tasha Coble, Louella Cole, Paul Cragg, Elaine Hennie-Megna, Martin Hernik, Mary Jo Jenson, Wilhelmina Jones, Nancy Lane, Joseph Luh, Tonya Minor, Marcia Mitrowski, Patricia Moss, Magdalena Nichols, Kenneth Norman, Kokila Parmar, Barbara Pitkin, Marian Slaughter, Lois Smith, Sharon Stewart, Dorothy Taylor (Retired), Kelly Thomas, Isabel Travis, Gwendolyn Triplett, Detra Trueheart, Rapheal Washington, Lawneice Williams, Deidre Cole Woodall, Chris Yuen

EOC Advisory Council

Ms. Mary Craig, Chairperson

Dr. Timothy Martin Adams
CCS Oncology

Dr. Mara B. Huber
University at Buffalo

Dr. Lavonne Ansari
Community Health Center of Buffalo, Inc.

Dr. Steven A. Marks
Catholic Health

Chancellor Emeritus Robert Bennett
NYSED Board of Regents

Ms. Lucinda Phillips, MS, RN
Retired, D'Youville College

Mr. Stan Coleman
Appaloosa Productions, Ltd.

Ms. Ann Marie Przybyl, ex officio
ACCESS/West RAEN

Mr. Lawrence H. Cook, II
The John R. Oishei Foundation

Commissioner William Renaldo
Buffalo Fire Department

Ms. Phyllis Damico
NYS Department of Labor

Ms. Bridget Russo
American Oncology Network

Dr. Gregory A. Fabiano
Florida International University

Mr. David C. Scott
Roswell Park Cancer Institute

Ms. Robyn Flesher
1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund

Ms. Michelle Urbanczyk
Explore & More Children's Museum

Dr. Ellen E. Grant, LCSW-R
Deputy Mayor, City of Buffalo

Mr. Daniel Vivian
University at Buffalo

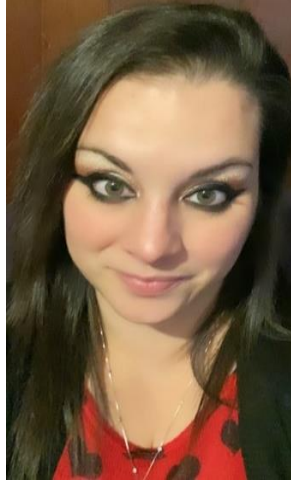
Mr. Stuart L. Harper
Buffalo City Mission

Mr. David Zapfel
Gerard Place

Walter B. Holland
Regional Public Health Dentist

2021 UBEOC Distinguished Alumni Award Ms. Mandy Ferrini

BEOC Class of 2009



“Obstacles were blocking my path. EOC was my stepping stone and guided me past them.”

Ms. Mandy Ferrini is an incredible representation of the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center’s (BEOC’s) mission of self-empowerment and lifelong learning. Ms. Ferrini was a single parent, coping with her son’s need for open-heart surgery, at the same time delaying her own reconstructive surgery from a serious work injury. She is a domestic violence survivor and an entrepreneur who lost her business due to arson. Through it all, Ms. Ferrini not only persevered but thrived.

Ms. Ferrini enrolled in the BEOC Dental Assistant Program when she was vulnerable and unsure about what her next steps would be. Despite the challenges of being a single parent, she successfully completed her academic program, earned her certification as a Dental Assistant, and accepted positions at Baker Victory Dental and WNY Dental. Her desire to continue to grow led to her enrolling at D’Youville College where she earned her BA degree in Sociology in 2014. In recognition of her achievements as a non-traditional student, she was selected to receive the “Older and Wiser Learner Award.”

In 2017, Ms. Ferrini earned a Master’s degree in Mental Health Counseling from Medaille College and was inducted into the American Counseling Association Honor Society. Upon graduation, she accepted a Marketing Specialist position at United HealthCare where she worked until the COVID-19 Pandemic forced her layoff from the company. Ms. Ferrini’s tenaciousness once again overshadowed this obstacle and she and a partner re-opened *Pizza Bella & More*, an iconic restaurant in the City of Buffalo’s Riverside neighborhood. While co-owning *Pizza Bella & More*, Ms. Ferrini supplied lunches to students learning remotely from the Charter School for Applied Technology, and purchased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for neighborhood residents. In July 2020, *Pizza Bella & More* was the victim of an arson fire, but Ms. Ferrini and her partner forged ahead and opened another restaurant, in November 2020, re-naming it *Bella’s Parkside Tavern*.

Ms. Ferrini stated, “My life has a theme; every time I accomplish something from adversity, I need to accomplish more.”

FRIEND OF THE EOC AWARD 2020 – 2021

The **Friend of the EOC Award** is presented to an individual or organization that has demonstrated keen understanding and outstanding support of the mission of the University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center, our student body, and the community we serve. This year's recipient of the Friend of the EOC Award is Dr. Gregory A. Fabiano.

Dr. Fabiano is a professor of psychology at Florida International University (FIU). He is a core faculty member in the Clinical Science in Child in Adolescent Psychology Doctoral Program and the Center for Children and Families (CCF).

His program of research has focused on the development, validation and implementation of effective assessments and interventions for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and their families. He has expertise in assessment and intervention development and implementation for youth with ADHD. This has included the development a rating scale teachers and parents can use to indicate impairment in daily life functioning, a parenting intervention for fathers of children with ADHD, a school-based behavioral intervention for children with ADHD in special education placements and an intensive psychosocial intervention for novice teen drivers with ADHD. He has served as principal investigator or co-investigator on multiple clinical trials that investigated psychosocial and/or pharmacological treatments for ADHD, and these studies have included multiple designs (single-subject, cross-over, between group, adaptive treatment).

This Year's Recipient:



Dr. Gregory A. Fabiano

Congratulations and thank you!

FRIEND OF THE EOC AWARD

Past Recipients

1974	Ms. Lorna Arrington	1999	Mr. Gerard Irving	2010	Certificate of Appreciation Ms. Melissa Hagen Ms. Renata M. Bator
1975	In Memory of Mr. Donald Ramsey, Sr.	2000	Friend of EOC Corporate Award Ms. Pat DeAeth Ms. Kim Evans Ms. Doreen Moscato Ms. Karen Synor Ms. Veronica Thomas	2011	Friend of EOC Corporate Award Mr. Gary R. Miller
1976	Dr. Henry Richards		Friend of EOC Award Mr. Stephen B. Colombo		Certificate of Appreciation Mr. Eric Sweet Mr. Andrew Schuler
1977	Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve		Special Recognition Mr. Richard Noll	2012	Friend of EOC Award Ms. Colleen Cummings
1978	Mr. William Hassett	2001	Friend of EOC Corporate Award Ms. Diane Welch		Certificate of Appreciation Ms. Tami Hollie-McGee
1979	Mr. Joe Lentini		Friend of EOC Award Dr. Donald Jacobs	2013	Friend of EOC Corporate Award Mr. Frank E. Merriweather, III Ms. Il-Nisa Banks
1980	Judge Barbara Sims	2002	Mr. Michael Reda	2014	Dr. Michael L. Glick, Dean University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine
1981	Ms. Sylvia Moye	2003	Mr. Louis Zicari		Dr. William M. Feagans, Professor University at Buffalo Oral Medicine
1982	Ms. Barbara Banks		Friend of EOC Industry Award Mr. Daniel Boody	2015	Mr. David C. Scott, Director Diversity & Inclusion Roswell Park Cancer Institute
1983	Mr. Daniel O'Connell	2004	Friend of EOC Award Mr. H. McCarthy Gipson Dr. Mary H. Gresham	2016	Joseph E. Gambacorta, DDS, Assistant Dean, Clinical Affairs University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine
1985	Mr. Freddie Patrick Mr. James Logan		Certificate of Appreciation Mr. Donnell G. Mueller Mr. Robert Huggins	2017	St. Luke's Mission of Mercy
1986	Ms. Patricia Hoebel	2005	Ms. Mary Craig	2018	Kevin G. Smith, Deputy Commissioner NYS Education Department
1987	Ms. Sinette Winfield	2006	Mr. Dale Martin	2019	Ms. Ann Marie Przybyl, Director Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES), West Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN)
1988	Mr. Archie Hunter	2007	Mr. Frank DeCarlo	2020	Mr. Warren Crysler, Territory Sales Representative Jostens
1989	Mr. Manning Fogan	2008	The Honorable Crystal D. Peoples		
1990	Commissioner Karen Schimke	2009	Friend of EOC Award Mr. Vijay Macwan		
1991	Mr. George McCoy		Certificate of Appreciation Mr. James (Beau) Willis Mr. Scott D. Nostaja		
1992	Dr. Arnold Lubin	2010	Friend of EOC Award Dr. Marnie LaVigne		
1993	Tops Friendly Market				
1994	Dr. D. Bruce Johnstone				
1995	Mr. Jack Mooney				
1996	Independent Health Mr. James P. Davis, Esq. Wegmans				
1997	Rev. William Gillison Mr. Stanley Malkinski (Posthumously Awarded)				
1998	Ms. Elaine Todd				

2021 The Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award

This recognition honors the legacy of Mr. Arthur O. Eve and is presented to a current Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC) student or alumnus/alumna who demonstrates leadership, advocacy, community service, and/or commitment to education. Known for his work with “the least, the last and the lost members” of our community, Deputy Speaker Arthur O. Eve served in the New York State Assembly for 35 years. In 1967, as a freshman Assemblyman, Mr. Eve put into action the principles of access and opportunity to higher education by developing an appropriations bill that gave birth to the SEEK/Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). He continued to spearhead legislative efforts to open the doors to education, including the legislation that helped launch the Educational Opportunity Centers. In recognition of Mr. Eve’s tireless efforts to make educational attainment a reality for all and his life attributes of leadership, advocacy, community service, and unwavering commitment to education, the UBEOC established the Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award.

Ms. Bernarda Arias

BEOC Class of 2014



“BEOC helped me tap into a field I had no knowledge of and set me on a new career path.”

Ms. Bernarda Arias was born in the Dominican Republic. She came to the United States at a young age and lived in New York City until she moved to Buffalo, New York in 1998 to pursue her college degree. After arriving in Buffalo, Ms. Arias accepted a position at a non-profit organization, where she was employed for 7 years. When she was laid off from her position, she changed her career aspirations and enrolled at the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC) where she earned certification in Medical Billing and Coding. Ms. Arias credits the BEOC with helping her to see the career opportunities available to her in the field of Allied Health. Her passion led her to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from SUNY Buffalo State College. Ms. Arias is a qualified Human Resource professional with over 15 years of experience working at Fisher-Price/Mattel, Southwest Key Program, Inc. and ultimately at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Ms. Arias is currently the Diversity Program Assistant at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Institute (RPCCI). In this role, she is in charge of organizing and planning special events throughout the year, which focus on celebrating diverse cultures, religions, and holidays such as Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. She also coordinates many faith-based events (e.g., celebrating Islam, Festival of Lights, etc.) and luncheons that focus on educating the RPCCI and surrounding community about different religions and beliefs. Her duties also include assisting in any harassment and discrimination issues that may arise at RPCCI.

Ms. Arias stated that one of the best aspects of her position in the Diversity Office is giving back to the community. *“I learn more about myself and I meet interesting people who give me new insights on life. But the most important thing is that I am making a difference; even doing small things can have a big impact on others.”* It is with this perspective that Bernarda facilitates community outreach events between RPCCI and the BEOC. Ms. Arias also connects with other community organizations including the Pride Center of Buffalo, Native American Community Services, the Buffalo Employment and Training Center, the Hispanic Heritage Council and the Buffalo Urban League to educate them about employment opportunities at RPCCI.

Ms. Arias is a strong advocate of young women who want to succeed in life. Through her sorority, Sigma Lambda Upsilon/Señoritas Latinas Unidas, she became the co-founder of the L.A.D.Y.S (Leadership, Advancement and Development of our Young Sisters) program that focuses on reaching young women who aspire to enroll in a college/university. Ms. Arias has also received community recognition as the recipient of the 2018 Mary B. Talbert Civic and Cultural Club *Unsung Heroes Award* and the 2018 Hispanic Coalition of NY *40 under 40 Rising Star*.

According to Ms. Arias, *“The purpose of life is not just to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, and to have it make some difference that you have loved and lived well. No one has ever become poor by giving.”*

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

2020 – 2021

The following students have achieved a grade point average of 3.0 or better:

Abdulqader, Lana	Glenn, Latoya	Nunez, Hector
Alexander, Mickie	Goke-Pariola, Olatanwa	Nunez, Ricardo
Ali, Khadija	Gray, Anea	Nwafor, Daphne
Alnounou, Dalia	Hicks, Linda	Ologbenla, Oyenike
Balachandran, Yasothara	Ibrahim, Mohammed	Page, Princess
Baldon, Ayana	Ingram, Kyra	Pointer, Alexcee
Bannu, Lenubari	Ivanchuk, Oksana	Poole, Denise
Barakzai, Laili	Johnson, Jasmine	Pouncey, Latasha
Barksdale, Kayla	Kenner, Tiffany	Purdue, Jasmine
Bland, Deanna	Kipler, Karla	Qasem, Ranyah
Bynes, Mercedes	Kyser, Joelle	Ricciardi, Janet
Carr, Passion	Lopez, Alexy	Rondon, Raquel
Coleman, Unique	Lowe, Kayla	Salek, Paradise
Dare, Michael	Mahatab, Hamim	Santos, Brenda
Dauer, Lynn	Mason, Nekeya	Sharieff, Muzammil
Donaldson, Tammie	Mason, Nia	Vazquez, Olga
Espinosa, Yanelis	Mattina, Gabriella	Wells, Ashley
Evans, Carla	Merkey, Jarrett	White, Brittani
Fadil Jawahir	Minor, Rickita	Whiteside, Amber
Fadil, Shroq	Mirza, Tatiana	Wilson, Ashley
Farley, De'Asia	Mmbamba, Ause	Winfrey, Torrie
Fischer, Lisa	Morales, Jayla	Woodruff, Mercedes
Gamble, Precious	Murphy, Adam	Zahra, Sumbule
Gigi, Shawntrese	Njuguna, Laban	

**Congratulations to the students who passed
Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications
and
Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA)**

Hawzhen Ali, Introduction to Programming

Stephen Caron, Microsoft Office Word 2016

Phyllis Cartwright, Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2016

William Gutowski, Operating Systems Fundamentals

Robert Johnson, Administration Fundamentals

Bryan Pasciak, Microsoft Office Excel 2016

Lori Schreiber, Microsoft PowerPoint 2016

Daniel Schroeder, Microsoft Office Excel 2016

John Weiss, Microsoft Office Word 2016

ACADEMIC

ACADEMIC REVIEW

Alexander, Mickie

Ali, Khadija

Barakzai, Laili

Wells, Ashley

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY (HSE)

Alnounou, Dalia

Coleman, Unique

Fadil, Jawahir

Fadil, Shroq

Glenn, Latoya

Ibrahim, Mohammed

Keeler, Samantha

Lopez, Alexy

Majeed, Marwa

Mattina, Gabriella

Minor, Rickita

Mmbamba, Ause

Salek, Paradise

Santos, Brenda

Schutt, Josiah

Sharieff, Muzammil

Woodruff, Mercedes

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (BASIC)

Abdulqader, Lana

Ivanchuk, Oksana

Kipler, Karla

Nunez, Hector

Qasem, Ranyah

STRATEGIES TO EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR PARENTS PROGRAM (STPEP)

Carpenter, Octavia

Kunselman, Kelly

Wilson, Sharon

VOCATIONAL/ TECHNOLOGY

INCUMBENT WORKER SERIES

Aguglia, Patricia

Aquino Kayla

Ayala, Lilian

Banks, Caira

Carroll, Robert

Coleman, Lydia

Cullinan, Gina

Earsing, Donna

Ezeagwuna, Tochuklo

Faggiano, Phyllis

Finn, John

Frost, Elaine

Galloway, Lucy

Harvey, Anthony

Johnson, Rachel

Jones, Michelle

Kaczmarek, Shelia

Kenny, Meagan

Kiehle, Jennifer

Knapp, Edward

Kozell, Kimberly

Kozlowsk, Sharon

Krzywowiaza, Christine

Loiacono, Jennifer

Maldonado, Anna

Mathurin, Resentsher

McCall, Karen

Messina, Rose

Montano, Juan

Morath, Jen

Myszka, Judith

Palacios, Danessa

Robinson, Amy

Sarida, Carmen

Schmitt, Christianne

Shaikh, Irshad

Shively, Rebecca

Suarez, Barbara

Tilmon, Joseph

Washington, Raphael

Young, Sonia

Zedick, Sue

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Balachandran, Yasothara

Baldon, Ayana

Bannu, Lenubari

Barksdale, Kayla

Bland, Deanna

Bynes, Mercedes

Carr, Passion

Dare, Michael

Dauer, Lynn

Donaldson, Tammie

Espinosa, Yanelis

Evans, Carla

Farley, De'Asia

Fischer, Lisa

Gamble, Precious

Gigi, Shawntrese

Goke-Pariola, Olatanwa

Gray, Anea,

Hicks, Linda

Ingram, Kyra

Jackson, Lakisha

Johnson, Jasmine

Kenner, Tiffany

Kyser, Joelle

Lowe, Kayla

Mahatab, Hamim

Mason, Nekeya

Mason, Nia

Merkey, Jarrett

Mirza, Tatiana

Morales, Jayla

Murphy, Adam

Njuguna, Laban

Nunez, Ricardo

Ologbenla, Oyenike

Page, Princess

Pointer, Alexcee

Poole, Denise

Pouncey, Latasha

Purdue, Jasmine

Ricciardi, Janet

Rondon, Raquel

Scott, Teaonna

Vazquez, Olga

White, Brittani

Whiteside, Amber

Wilson, Ashley

Winfrey, Torrie

Zahra, Sumbule

ALLIED HEALTH

CENTRAL STERILIZATION TECHNICIAN

Barksdale, Kayla

Bland, Deanna

Carr, Pasion

Donaldson, Tammie

Fischer, Lisa

Hicks, Linda

Johnson, Jasmine

Kenner, Tiffany

Lowe, Kayla

Mason, Nia

Merkey, Jarrett

Morales, Jayla

Nwafor, Daphne

Ologbenla, Oyenike

Pouncey, Latasha

Ricciardi, Janet

Rondon, Raquel

White, Brittani

Winfrey, Torrie

MEDICAL BILLING & CODING

Dauer, Lynn

Evans, Carla

Gigi, Shawntrese

Murphy, Adam

Pointer, Alexcee

Purdue, Jasmine

Vazquez, Olga

This Journal is not an official graduation list.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this Commencement Program, printing deadlines may result in omission of some names and use of names of persons not completing graduation requirements as intended. This printed program, therefore, should not be used to determine a student's academic status.



May 19, 2021

Dear Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center "Alumn,"

Your accomplishment is testament that Covid 19 did not constrict your conviction to achieve! You faced challenges you could never have foreseen in your wildest imaginations this past year. You air-hugged family and friends. You eye-balled six feet of distance as if you had a tape measure. You re-cycled oxygen breathing through a mask. You greased your hands with sanitizer. You embraced a new role as "school" teacher to your children. You became "techies" and sat in Zoom rooms. You adapted, innovated, streamlined, sacrificed, juggled, struggled, modified, managed, created, cut back and persevered, yet through it all ... you succeeded and graduated from the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center!

The mission of the Buffalo EOC is to promote success through lifelong learning and self-empowerment. As you continue to pursue your educational and employment goals, know that as Alumni, the Buffalo EOC will always be here for you. The services of the Counseling, College Connections and Career Services offices are available to you over your lifetime. The Alumni Affairs Office is your connection so you are most welcomed to stay connected.

Periodically check the Buffalo EOC website and Alumni Affairs pages. Sign up for the Alumni Listserv and receive Center news, invitations and the Alumni newsletter, *The Affiliate*, directly to your personal email. Friend us on Facebook. [Follow us on Twitter and Instagram.](#) Become involved in Alumni Affairs and engage in professional and social activities. Volunteer at some of the Center's numerous events, like the *Men's and Women's Conferences* and the annual *Strengthening Families* event. Become Alumni Ambassadors and assist in recruiting new students who are ready to meet their challenges like you did. Speak to prospective and enrolled students and share your experience and insight. Attend the annual Alumni Awards and Recognition Reception and network with other Alumni. There are so many ways to stay connected!

Congratulations again *Alumni*! The Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center is proud of your accomplishment and we are excited to continue to support you in your future endeavors!

Margot Barrett Keysor
Administrator, Alumni Affairs and Student Development
716.645.1908
keysor@buffalo.edu



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2021!
Welcome to Alumni Affairs.

Contact the *Office of Alumni Affairs and Student Development* to see what services and opportunities are trending for BEOC Alumni!

Are you a BEOC graduate or do you know a BEOC graduate?



BEOC ALUMNI AWARDS and RECOGNITION RECEPTION May 2019

Margot Barrett Keysor, Administrator Alumni Affairs and Student Development

716.645.1908 keysor@buffalo.edu www.buffalo.edu/eoc

It's not how you start... it's where you finish. The Buffalo EOC is waiting for you!