# University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

# Realizing Our Ambitions 2024

A SELF-STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

# Contents

## CHAPTER **ONE**

### Leadership and Governance

## CHAPTER **TWO**

### Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

## CHAPTER **THREE**

### Ethics and Integrity

# CHAPTER **FOUR**

## Curriculum, Learning Assessment and Program Effectiveness

# CHAPTER **FIVE**

## Fostering Student Learning and Success

## Endnotes

## Overview

As New York's flagship university and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU), the University at Buffalo (UB) is among the premier research universities in the nation and world. UB is the thriving epicenter of the Western New York regional community, a national leader in public higher education, and a global hub for excellence in research and education. As a diverse academic community, UB's mission is to bring the benefits of our research, scholarship, creative activity, education, clinical care and engagement to global and local communities in ways that positively impact the world. Spanning three campuses in the Buffalo metropolitan area, UB is home to 12 schools and colleges and over 19,000 undergraduate students, 11,000 graduate students and 2,700 faculty. UB offers more than 500 degree programs and access to approximately 700 study abroad programs. A global community of scholars consistently ranking among the nation's top 30 universities for enrollment of international students, UB's faculty, staff, and students pursue educational and scholarly excellence within a global context.

UB's distinguished faculty include members of the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Education, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition, UB faculty have been recipients of many of the most prestigious awards in their fields, including, in 2022-23, the International Prize in Statistics, six NSF CAREER Awards, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Humanities Center, and Harvard Radcliffe Institute, to name just a few. UB's students are likewise regular recipients of the nation's most prestigious scholarships, fellowships and awards.

## Highlights and Developments Since 2014

Since our last Middle States reaccreditation in 2014, UB has made substantial progress in advancing our research, education and engagement missions as well as in realizing our ambitious strategic goals. What follows are highlights of this progress and initiatives that the university has undertaken since the last institutional accreditation.

### TOP 25 AMBITION

Building on our existing strong foundation of academic and research excellence, UB's long-range strategic goal to be recognized among the Top 25 public research universities in the nation is focused on continually pursuing academic and research excellence and on expanding the university's engagement and impact locally, nationally and globally. Through this endeavor, we are deepening:

- Societal impact by enhancing research productivity and impact, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaborations to address critical societal challenges, and providing state-of-the-art research infrastructure;

- Innovative, research-grounded educational experiences and excellent academic support to ensure student success;
- UB's culture of equity and inclusion by further integrating inclusiveness into all aspects of the university; and
- Engagement in the region by strengthening partnerships to contribute to positive health outcomes and economic vitality.

## ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

At UB, academic excellence is the foundation for everything that we do. We are committed to providing transformative educational experiences for our students, preparing them to thrive as professionals, researchers, leaders and citizens. As described in chapters four and five of this self-study, since 2014, we have engaged in the following activities to better prepare students to address the most pressing societal challenges and respond to critical issues and questions as they move beyond UB:

- UB has created more than 100 new degree programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- In fall 2016, following a university-wide effort, UB launched the UB Curriculum, our revitalized general education program that has transformed the undergraduate educational experience.
- UB continues to focus on excellence in graduate education. In 2019, we launched UB's PhD Excellence Initiative to recruit outstanding PhD students and provide them with exceptional academic programs that prepare them for future success. In addition, we increased stipends for full-time, fully funded PhD students, and we also support the cost of broad-based fees for these students. With this increased funding, UB offers competitive financial support for PhD students and continues to benchmark against AAU peers annually.
- UB has focused significant attention on improving our undergraduate graduation and retention rates. In support of this, the Student Retention Task Force was launched in 2020. The task force was charged with assessing existing retention efforts, developing recommendations for expanding or developing new initiatives, and creating an assessment plan to measure the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- The university has continued to work to identify cross-disciplinary research and scholarly areas where existing strengths align with societal needs. The RENEW Institute and Communities of Excellence were launched in 2014 and 2015, respectively, to focus interdisciplinary research teams on complex energy and environmental issues, global health, advanced manufacturing, and the genome and microbiome. The Artificial Intelligence Institute was launched in 2018. And, in 2019, UB launched the Community Health Equity Research Institute to confront race-based health disparities, a significant and entrenched problem in the region and nation.
- UB's total research expenditures have increased by 20% over the last decade, from $353 million to $425 million. Over the last decade, UB faculty have received many grants to support their groundbreaking research, including, notably, a prestigious Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) from the National Institutes of Health in 2015 to support the Clinical and Translational Research Center (CTRC). In recognition of the dramatic progress UB and its partners have made in accelerating translational science since 2015, in 2020, we were awarded a second, five-year, $21.7 million NIH CTSA grant.
- Faculty citations serve as a key indicator of our university's prominence in research. In the most recent five-year period examined, these citations have increased 150%.
- Since 2014, 48 faculty members have been appointed to the SUNY Distinguished Ranks and 13 have been appointed UB Distinguished Professors.

# CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

Located on three distinct campuses in the Buffalo metropolitan area: the North Campus, the university's main undergraduate campus; the historic South Campus, home to many of the university's professional schools; and the Downtown Campus, home to UB's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and to the Educational Opportunity Center, UB's physical presence has continued to evolve since 2014. In order to effectively enable research, education and engagement, pursuant to our mission of academic excellence and our Top 25 Ambition, UB is realizing a long-range master plan as the physical manifestation of its emergence as a premier 21st-century public research university. This plan was designed to develop and modernize facilities to support the growth of research, to enhance the student experience and to connect more closely to our surrounding communities. These projects are fully described in chapter two; highlights include:

## North Campus

- Development of a classroom master plan to improve the classroom experience for students, enable pedagogical innovation and create learning precincts on the North and South Campuses.

- The realization of the Heart of the Campus (HOTC) initiative to build community and a sense of place at the center of the campus through the renovated Oscar A. Silverman Library, the innovative 1Capen student support center, and, most recently, the One World Café, which was opened in spring 2022.

## South Campus

- Hayes Hall, our iconic university landmark which houses the School of Architecture and Planning, has been completely renovated and restored.

- Ongoing South Campus renovations include:
  - » Foster Hall, which will be the new home of the Graduate School of Education.
  - » Crosby Hall, which will house undergraduate School of Architecture and Planning programs.
  - » The Biomedical Research Building, which will provide an interdisciplinary research center for the health sciences schools.
  - » The School of Dental Medicine, which is undergoing a multimillion-dollar renovation to enhance students' education and patients' treatment at the school's dental clinic.

## Downtown Campus

- In December 2017, we opened the doors of the new, downtown home of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, located in the heart of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, our region's biosciences corridor, co-locating students, researchers and clinicians in a collaborative ecosystem. The new location bolsters UB's unique comprehensive Academic Health Center, which brings together the talents of clinicians, educators and researchers to provide a superb research and educational environment to foster basic discovery in the biosciences, health-sciences translational research, preventive and interventional clinical trials, superb clinical care, and training of the next generation of health care practitioners in these disciplines.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Recognizing that a diverse, equitable and inclusive community is an essential foundation for achieving excellence and success, UB has long been committed to fostering diversity, equity and inclusivity on campus. Since 2014, UB has pursued an increasingly robust and comprehensive plan and effective strategies for advancing equity, diversity and inclusion across the university. Many ways that we are accomplishing this are addressed throughout the self-study; below are some of the key highlights and milestones in these efforts:

- In 2014, UB founded the Office of Inclusive Excellence, led by the vice provost for inclusive excellence (VPIX), UB's chief diversity officer and a member of the president's cabinet, to facilitate UB's diversity and inclusion strategies and support UB's efforts to provide an inclusive campus culture. A pioneer within SUNY in launching an office focused on equity and inclusion and in creating a cabinet-level, chief diversity officer position, UB was a model for the entire system when SUNY launched its multi-prong effort in 2015 to address diversity and assure inclusive excellence system-wide.

- In 2016, UB released an overarching strategic diversity and inclusion plan focused on integrating inclusive excellence into all aspects of university operations.

- In 2019, UB created a university-wide network of unit diversity officers (UDOs), who represent each of UB's schools/college and several administrative offices and who work closely with the VPIX. The UDOs are a national model for coordinating efforts and sharing resources across a large university.

- UB is dedicated to enhancing our social impact and addressing issues related to structural racism and inequity through our curriculum, research, and hiring and retention practices. In 2020, President Tripathi formed the President's Advisory Council on Race (PACOR) to ensure that UB is equitable in its policies, programs, activities and traditions.

- One of the university's top priorities is to enhance the diversity of our faculty. In support of this effort, several individual schools have launched or grown faculty pipeline programs, including the Distinguished Visiting Scholars program in the College of Arts and Sciences, which is among the largest and most comprehensive programs of its kind. University-wide, in fall 2021, UB launched the Visiting Future Faculty (VITAL) program for promising doctoral scholars.

- Both the Mid-American Conference (MAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have recognized UB for establishing an inclusive environment in athletics, both on campus and in the community.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

UB continues to seek innovative ways to integrate our research, education, engagement and economic development activities through building partnerships with New York State, public and private organizations, and companies to help drive economic growth, employment, productivity and wealth; provide our students with transformative educational experiences that prepare them for future success; help researchers transition technology from the lab to the marketplace; and build bridges between academia and industry.

From connecting industry partners to entrepreneurs to fostering entrepreneurship through our Innovation Hub, which was launched in 2018, UB is accelerating the growth of Western New York start-ups and supporting commercialization of technologies generated by UB and our partner institutions. For example, through Cultivator—a new program from the startup ventures team at Business and Entrepreneur Partnerships—UB invests up to $100,000 and nine months of mentorship in early-stage companies founded by students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members.

## SUSTAINABILITY

In 2020, UB launched a new climate action plan developed through a robust campus engagement process. UB's "10 in 10" is a roadmap of the important steps we are taking to increase climate action throughout the university and put us on a path to net-zero emissions by 2030. Over the past three years, UB has reduced our carbon footprint by 33%. With the installation of solar panel arrays nearly complete, we are producing 2.9 million kilowatt hours per year, which is equivalent to offsetting the energy use of nearly 500 homes. We are well on our way to achieving climate neutrality by 2030. UB's sustainability work has received extensive national and international attention in recent years, including being ranked among the top green universities in the nation by the EPA, Princeton Review, Environment America Research and Policy Center, U.S. Green Building Council, Sierra Club, College Consensus, and Online Schools Center, among others. UB was ranked the No. 1 university in the world in addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal pertaining to climate action by Times Higher Education, and we ranked first in the EPA's Green Power Partnership list of the largest college and university green power users. In her fall 2022 visit to UB to discuss climate action, Vice President Kamala Harris recognized our university as a model for sustainability work.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Like universities around the world, UB experienced an unprecedented disruption to campus operations as a result of COVID-19. In March 2020, UB immediately transitioned 4,000 courses to a remote-learning format and, led by Provost Weber and other senior leaders, launched a framework of university-wide committees to develop plans for a variety of short and long-term scenarios in response to the pandemic. Composed of over 180 faculty, staff, students and senior administrators, these committees were charged with determining how best to allow UB to continue delivering excellent educational and research programs while protecting the health and safety of the university community.

As a result of this planning effort, in fall 2020, we were able to continue campus operations and deliver excellent educational opportunities remotely while experiencing an 87% reduction in classroom density. In fall 2021, we returned to a full in-person experience for all students. Throughout the transition back to on-campus activities, we continued to adapt to shifting health and safety guidance while reaffirming our mission as a place-based educational institution. Because of our experience with COVID-19, we now have procedures in place to maintain continuity of education in the face of future pandemics or other emergencies.

In addition, our university has contributed to the health and safety of the communities we serve by providing critical research, evidence-based information about COVID-19, and support for the New York response to the pandemic. We led the New York State effort to vaccinate the members of our five-county region. When the vaccine was in highest demand, our students created a website to help people find vaccination appointments. Additionally, UB's Genomics and Bioinformatics Core is part of a $20 million state-wide effort to identify COVID variants. An interdisciplinary group of researchers has created a wastewater surveillance system to monitor trends not only in COVID-19, but in many viral infections. Researchers also collaborated with institutions in South Korea to test the efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine created by a UB faculty start-up.

# Preparation for and Scope of the Self-Study Process

Immediately following our last site visit in 2014, university leadership established a process to continually review UB's progress in achieving MSCHE standards. In 2020-21, evidence gathering committees began compiling core information necessary to inform the institutional self-study process. The evidence was then organized and evaluated for gaps.

In fall 2021, our reaccreditation Organizing Committee completed the MSCHE self-study institute and, by January of 2022, our self-study design was completed in advance of MSCHE Vice President for Institutional Field Relations Paul Starkey's virtual visit in March 2022.

Also prior to Paul Starkey's visit, UB created five Self-Study Teams composed of faculty and staff from across academic and administrative units, which conducted a comprehensive review of reports, documents, institutional data and other sources of evidence related to assigned accreditation standards:

- **Governance, Leadership, Administration, Mission and Goals:** Standards 1, 7;
- **Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement:** Standard 6;
- **Ethics and Integrity:** Standard 2;
- **Curriculum and Assessment of Student Learning:** Standards 3, 5; and
- **Support of the Student Experience:** Standard 4.

In 2022, these teams drafted content for the self-study focused on highlighting UB's strengths and identifying areas for improvement. Chapter drafts were reviewed and refined with input from stakeholders with content expertise and leadership roles to produce a working self-study draft, which was shared with the campus community for feedback in advance of the team chair's visit to campus in October 2023. Feedback from the campus community and team chair was incorporated and the self-study and supporting documents were finalized in January 2024. Throughout this process, we have maintained a commitment to transparency and inclusiveness by including relevant members of the campus community on various self-study committees and inviting thorough review by key constituents and stakeholders.

# Organization and Overview of the Self-Study Report

Our university's self-study is organized into five chapters, which deploy an evidence-based approach to address the seven Middle States standards, organized thematically. Throughout the self-study, endnotes have been incorporated that reference supporting evidence not contained directly within the self-study text. All chapters close with a general summary and thoughts on future directions.

**Chapter 1: Leadership and Governance** addresses Standard 1: Mission and Goals and Standard 7: Governance, Leadership and Administration. This chapter includes a brief institutional history and overview of our university today, including our mission, vision and goals. It provides an evidence-based picture of our broader institutional activities and strategic investments through our annual resource planning process to advance our Top 25 Ambition and implement the recommendations of the President's Advisory Council on Race (PACOR). This chapter describes UB's institutional governance, including our compliance, integration and collaboration with the State University of New York (SUNY), SUNY Faculty Senate, UB Council, SUNY Research Foundation, UB Foundation, and shared governance through the university's Faculty Senate, Graduate Student Association and Undergraduate Student Association. It provides a comprehensive outline of university leadership and administration, from the president's cabinet to decanal leadership in the academic units, and outlines expectations and processes for reporting, integrity and reviews to ensure accountability, improve the overall functioning of the university, and enable UB to achieve even greater heights of academic excellence in pursuit of our mission and goals.

**Chapter 2: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement** provides an evidence-based picture of our overall institutional efforts related to Standard 6: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement. As this chapter describes, UB employs a comprehensive, three-phase annual resource planning process, which enables UB to review our financial capacity holistically and align resources with advancing institutional goals and priorities. In addition, this chapter examines our human resources, facilities and space planning efforts relative to the fulfilment of our operative, academic and strategic needs. UB's supporting information technology enterprise and infrastructure are also discussed, as is our annual audit process, which ensures effective stewardship and utilization of the resources entrusted to the institution.

**Chapter 3: Ethics and Integrity** addresses Standard 2: Ethics and Integrity. UB is committed to ensuring that we foster a respectful and diverse campus, including through attention to student conduct and oversight, and through grievance policies for our various campus constituents. In addition, UB is dedicated to ensuring an ethical, transparent, objective and fair environment through conflict of interest policies, fair and impartial processes, and campus communications grounded in ethics and integrity. This chapter also outlines UB's protocols and obligations for external reporting and compliance regarding consumer information reporting; student enrollments, retention, completion rates and outcomes reporting; Cleary and SaVE Act reporting; Middle States compliance; student privacy and information security; and athletics compliance. It includes an overview of general assessment policies and procedures to ensure a broad climate of ethics and integrity.

**Chapter 4: Curriculum, Learning Assessment and Program Effectiveness** addresses Standard 3: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience and Standard 5: Educational Effectiveness Assessment. UB is dedicated to delivering quality educational programs that prepare our students for success. This chapter includes an overview of the curricular development and approval process as well as our new general education program, the UB Curriculum. UB has a highly qualified and dedicated instructional faculty who deliver transformative educational programs. UB has established faculty review, reappointment, promotion and tenure processes; offers professional development opportunities to support faculty growth and innovation; provides support and recognition of graduate teaching assistants; and provides a variety of resources to accommodate a broad range of teaching and learning needs. UB is committed to promoting student success in academic programs and assessing program effectiveness, student learning, and students' academic experience, and to promoting continuous improvement in these areas.

**Chapter 5: Fostering Student Learning and Success** addresses Standard 4: Support of the Student Experience. This chapter includes a comprehensive discussion of student recruitment and admissions at all levels, as well as on the cost of attendance and student financial services. It presents UB's student enrollment trends and includes sections on both undergraduate and graduate retention and degree completion. UB provides a comprehensive suite of services to promote student success and retention, including orientation, advising services for undergraduate and graduate students, and academic support services (tutoring, supplemental instruction, support for subpopulations and at-risk students, international student services and support at both UB and our offshore programs, support for student athletes, accessibility resources, and services to support veterans and military students). To prepare students for life beyond the university, UB emphasizes global experiences, entrepreneurship and experiential learning and provides fellowships and scholarships and career-focused support. In addition, UB provides comprehensive IT and library support for students, as well as wellness and counseling services. The core operational components of the Division of Student Life are outlined, as are the fundamental aspects of student engagement and organizations and the services provided by campus living and campus dining and shops. UB is committed to ensuring adequate assessment of programs and initiatives that support the student experience.

# Conclusion

As a data-driven institution with a focus on continuous improvement, the self-study process has provided an important opportunity for UB to reflect on our strengths and accomplishments, and to assess our strategic goals and progress toward achieving them. The self-study and evidence that accompanies it demonstrate that UB achieves the criteria outlined in the Middle States standards for accreditation, which serve as a foundation for our pursuit of our strategic goals to further our mission of academic excellence.

# Leadership and Governance

This chapter provides an overview of the University at Buffalo, our mission and strategic goals, and our institutional leadership and governance structure, in relation to Middle States Standards 1 and 7.

## Institutional History and Overview

Impactful research, scholarly distinction, transformative student experiences, and far-reaching service to local, state, national and international communities define UB's mission as one of the nation's leading public research universities. UB was founded in 1846 as a private medical college located in downtown Buffalo and joined the State University of New York (SUNY) in 1962. SUNY is the largest comprehensive state university system in the United States, and UB is the flagship and the largest and most comprehensive public research university within the system. In 1989, UB was among the first public universities in the Northeast to be admitted into the Association of American Universities (AAU). Over the years, UB's scope and mission have expanded significantly as it has grown into a world-renowned research university that is deeply engaged in the Western New York community. UB is a national leader in public higher education as well as a global hub for research and education.

UB enrolls nearly 32,000 students (approximately two-thirds undergraduate students and one-third graduate students) and offers more than 500 degree programs at the baccalaureate, master's, professional and doctoral levels across its 12 academic units. UB's 293,000 alumni live in all 50 states and 150 countries worldwide.

UB has a distinguished faculty of 1,678 full-time and 1,107 part-time members (totaling 2,025 full-time equivalent, or FTE, faculty) as of fall 2023. UB is home to more than 80 research centers and institutes; its current annual research expenditures, including those in affiliated institutions, exceed $450 million. The University Libraries hold more than four million volumes in seven libraries and provide access to an exceptionally wide array of digital information resources.

UB's academic programs and facilities are located on three distinct campuses in the Buffalo metropolitan area. UB's North Campus, located in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst, is the university's main undergraduate campus and home to university administration, as well as UB's primary athletics and cultural facilities.

Three miles to the south, on the northern edge of the City of Buffalo, is UB's historic South Campus, home to many of the university's professional schools. UB's Downtown Campus is the home of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Center for Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences, Clinical and Translational Research Center, Ira G. Ross Eye Institute, and the Educational Opportunity Center. The downtown medical campus is a dynamic hub for translational research, clinical care, education and entrepreneurial innovation.

Recognizing the key role that a vibrant 21st-century physical campus environment plays in enhancing education, research and community engagement, UB is actively fulfilling its physical Master Plan goals for enhancing its North, South and Downtown campus spaces while connecting them more effectively to their surrounding communities.

With annual operating revenues of $826 million, UB and its affiliated entities generate an estimated economic impact of $3 billion annually in New York State. UB's total workforce of more than 7,000 full-time equivalent employees makes it one of the region's largest employers. UB is also a leader and an active partner with the more than 20 public and private colleges and universities in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

# University Mission, Vision and Goals

## MISSION

The University at Buffalo is a diverse, inclusive scholarly community dedicated to bringing the benefits of our research, scholarship, creative activities and educational excellence to local and global communities in ways that impact and positively change the world. We view the three traditional pillars of the public higher education mission—research, education and service—as interdependent endeavors that continually enrich and inform each other. Groundbreaking research, transformative educational experiences and deeply engaged service to our communities define the University at Buffalo's mission as a premier, research-intensive public university.[1]

## VISION

Building on the existing strong foundation of academic excellence, knowledge and understanding, the University at Buffalo will advance into the nation's Top 25 public research universities, thereby expanding the scope of our reach and strengthening UB's world-wide impact.

## TABLE 1.1: UB'S STRATEGIC GOALS:

| Goal | Objectives |
|------|-----------|
| To achieve greater societal impact locally and globally by: | • Enhancing faculty productivity and impact through increased research, scholarly funding and excellence<br>• Encouraging collaborations across the disciplines to amplify faculty strengths, create synergies and pursue innovation<br>• Providing state-of-the-art research environments<br>• Enhancing research, teaching and mentoring support structures to ensure faculty success |
| To provide our students with transformative, innovative and research-grounded educational experiences by: | • Elevating the academic profile of undergraduate, graduate and professional students; further improving undergraduate four-year and six-year graduation rates<br>• Enhancing academic and career support structures to ensure student success<br>• Providing state-of-the-art educational environments<br>• Expanding our impact as a recognized leader in international education<br>• Preparing students to live and lead in a global world |
| To promote a university-wide culture of equity and inclusion by: | • Integrating inclusivity into all aspects of our university<br>• Further enhancing faculty and student diversity through focused recruitment strategies<br>• Implementing best practices with regard to recruitment and retention of faculty, students and staff |
| To deepen our engagement in the regional community by: | • Further participating with our local community to enrich the student experience and contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of Western New York<br>• Improving health care outcomes for the region<br>• Becoming a national destination for clinical care and medical/health sciences education |

## MISSION AND GOAL DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT WITH UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

UB's mission and goals were written and developed by the president and the president's cabinet, which is comprised of the vice presidents and selected vice provosts.[2] The mission and strategic goals are reviewed each year for relevance and attainability at UB's annual leadership retreat. At this retreat, accomplishments are shared, progress in achieving strategic goals is assessed, and emerging strategic priorities are discussed. Adjustments to goals, metrics and related initiatives are made as needed.[3] Two key strategic initiatives are aligned with activities of all units across the institution: the Top 25 Ambition and implementation of the recommendations of the President's Advisory Council on Race (PACOR).

## Top 25 Ambition

Building on our strong foundation of academic and research excellence, UB's long-range strategic goal is to be recognized among the Top 25 public research universities in the nation by 2030. With a mission and strategic goals focused on delivering groundbreaking research and scholarship, transformative educational opportunities and impactful engagement with our local and global communities, achieving Top 25 is about more than a number. It is about excelling in our mission driven priorities.[4] UB's Top 25 Ambition was launched based on a review of the mission and goals at the 2019 senior leadership retreat. This ambition was communicated widely to the campus in fall 2019 via a formal announcement and the President's State of the University Address.[5]

The Top 25 Ambition advances UB's mission and goals through existing programs and activities, as well as new initiatives. The Top 25 website enumerates these efforts in a variety of areas across the institution, including through investments in undergraduate education (e.g., the UB Curriculum, UB's undergraduate general education program; the Honors College; study abroad; entrepreneurship and experiential learning opportunities; and Finish in 4), as well as graduate education (the PhD Excellence Initiative), the development of new degree and dual-degree programs, new interdisciplinary departments, campus master plan implementation, and renovations and new buildings.[6]

A key strategy for achieving Top 25 has been to elevate the excellence and stature of key departments and programs through targeted investments to enhance disciplinary excellence through growing faculty strength and impact. In support of this effort, in 2022-23, UB launched the Advancing Top 25: Faculty Hiring initiative, supported by a historic investment from New York State. Through this initiative, UB plans to hire upward of 200 full-time faculty over two years in areas of great societal importance and university strength to carry out impactful research and scholarship, provide innovative educational and research opportunities for our students, and enhance UB's international recognition.



A group photo of the 35 scholars visiting UB through the Visiting Future Faculty (VITAL) program, taken at their downtown Buffalo hotel in October 2023. The three–year pilot program, developed by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Inclusive Excellence, brings scholars to UB to learn about research and teaching opportunities at the university.



As part of the VITAL, program, scholars are invited to meet with faculty in their host units. In October 2023, Amy L. Reynolds, professor and chair of the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, introduces scholars at a meeting.

# Advancing Top 25:
## UB Faculty Hiring

Building on our existing strong foundation of academic and research excellence, UB's long-range strategic goal to be recognized among the Top 25 public research universities in the nation is focused on continually pursuing academic and research excellence, and expanding the university's engagement and impact locally, nationally and globally. UB is determined to continually promote and support collaborative, cross-disciplinary research dedicated to addressing the most critical issues and challenges of our time. UB is also committed to harnessing its educational, research and engagement strengths to combat racism, dismantle structural barriers to equity, and make UB a more inclusive place to live, learn and work.

With a historic investment from New York State and in support of our Top 25 goal, we will substantially grow our ranks of tenured and tenure-track faculty over the next two years in areas of great societal importance and university strength: democracy and society, human health, sustainability, and transformational technology. In particular, we are interested in recruiting faculty who will carry out impactful research and scholarship, provide innovative educational and research opportunities for our students, and enhance UB's international recognition.

## IMPACT AREAS

**Democracy and Society:** UB is home to world-class programs in the humanities, social sciences, law, education, management, social work, and urban planning, with recognized strength in public/election law and interdisciplinary legal and social sciences research. Through the Advancing Top 25 faculty hiring initiative, UB will enhance our strength in disciplines that enable democracies and sustainable, equitable societies to flourish.

**Human Health:** Home to five health sciences schools, UB is nationally and internationally recognized for its groundbreaking research and innovation, its impactful clinical programs, and its excellent educational programs. Through Advancing Top 25, UB will hire faculty focused on critical areas related to human health including aging, personalized healthcare, biomedical technology, and addressing health disparities.

**Sustainability:** From our groundbreaking research on the environmental disaster at Love Canal to the collaborations currently being supported by our RENEW Institute and our innovative climate action efforts across campus, which have gained extensive national attention in recent years, UB has made environmental sustainability a top priority. Through this faculty hiring initiative, UB will continue building our strength and impact in sustainability.

**Transformational Technology:** UB has a rich history of research in Artificial Intelligence (AI), data science and quantum science that continues today through the Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science and the AI Institute for Exceptional Education. Through Advancing Top 25, UB will continue building our capacity to address complex problems in the fields of AI, data science, quantum science, medicine and related areas.

## President's Advisory Council on Race (PACOR)

In June 2020, President Tripathi convened the President's Advisory Council on Race (PACOR) to guide the university's collective conversations and actions regarding racism and systemic inequality to ensure that UB is equitable in its policies, programs, activities and traditions. The council was charged with reviewing UB's policies and procedures in comparison with best practices within four focus areas: faculty and staff recruitment, hiring and retention; student recruitment, admissions, retention and graduation; curriculum and teaching; and community,[7] and it provided recommendations in each of these areas in 2021. A committee was then formed to determine how best to implement these recommendations, develop a timeline for this process, and establish specific quantitative and/or qualitative milestones for assessing progress. The implementation committee provided their final report in summer 2022 and recommendations are now being implemented. More than 150 UB faculty, staff and students contributed to this significant campus undertaking through the council and implementation committees. Across the university, units have aligned PACOR recommendations with their respective activities. Each fall, the university holds a PACOR annual progress report town hall and, during his State of the University Address, the president shares highlights regarding implementation and achievements from the previous year.



The ALANA Celebration of Achievement in the Center for the Arts in May 2023. This recognition ceremony honors graduating African, Latinx, Asian and Native American students and is hosted by the Intercultural and Diversity Center and the Cora P. Maloney Center.

# PACOR IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

## Important initiatives to arise out of the PACOR recommendations include the following:

- Expanded mentoring programs to reach diverse student populations and first-generation students, including graduate students. For example, the Office of Student Success and Academic Support is sponsoring CULTURE (Creating Undergraduate Learning Through Unity, Resources and Equity) to provide peer mentoring, intentional programming, and outreach to diverse undergraduate populations. The Graduate School is initiating the CIMER (Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research) Training Program, which includes mentor and mentee training in equity, diversity, justice and inclusion (EDJI)-related issues.

- Initiatives will soon begin to address the PACOR goal of defining inclusive design standards, processes and policies for new construction and renovation projects. In 2022-23, Phase 1 work began with the identification of best practices in architectural design and climate action principles.

- The Graduate School has updated its mission statement to more explicitly address EDJI goals. In addition, guidelines for the review of new course and program proposals are being updated to include an EDJI review. In Fall 2023, President Tripathi promulgated Faculty Senate approved updates to undergraduate general education learning outcomes based on PACOR recommendations.

- The vice provost for faculty affairs and the vice provost for inclusive excellence are co-sponsoring institutional membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD). This independent organization provides professional development, training, and a mentoring community of faculty, postdocs and graduate students.

- The vice president for research and economic development and vice provost for faculty affairs are partnering to enhance support for community-engaged research activities.

- The percentage of historically underrepresented faculty among full-time faculty hires has increased significantly due to focused hiring efforts.



Lukasz Ziarek, part of the new EDJI fellows program developed by Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation to support inclusive pedagogy, photographed working with students in Fronczak Hall in December 2023. Ziarek is an associate professor of computer science and engineering.

**Alignment with Annual Resource Planning**

The university employs an Annual Resource Planning Process (ARPP)[8] that enables UB to continue to advance our mission and make strategic investments to achieve goals and priorities. The ARPP is collaborative, bringing together the provost, Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration and individual units annually to develop financial projections and budgets and plan for the future. This process ensures that, not only are the university's resources allocated in a manner that supports the mission and goals, but also that the mission and goals are attainable in the university's current financial state.[9] ARPP is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

# Leadership and Governance

A strong governance structure and senior leadership team that effectively engage all aspects of the university community and its broader constituencies in the institutional mission and vision are essential to the University at Buffalo successfully pursuing its ambitious strategic goals. To achieve these goals, the senior leadership team must work collaboratively and transparently with faculty, staff and students, as well as with the State University of New York (SUNY) chancellor and Board of Trustees. UB's governance structure allows the university to focus on actively pursuing its mission and goals, while SUNY allocates state support to pursue those goals while also providing critical guidance.

As the flagship campus of the SUNY system, there are many facets to UB's governance structure within the SUNY system, with some responsibilities falling to UB and some to SUNY. NYS Education Law, Article 8,[10] provides the legal basis for the structure of SUNY's and UB's governing bodies, specifically the SUNY Board of Trustees and the UB Council. The Role and Authority of SUNY Council's Memo[11] clearly and transparently articulates the division of powers between the SUNY Board of Trustees and the individual university councils, including limitations on the powers of the councils.[12]

Beyond the governance provided by SUNY and the UB Council, several other bodies at UB participate in shared governance at the campus level, including the Faculty Senate and representatives from the Student Association and Graduate Student Association. The principal governance bodies are summarized beginning on the next page.



SUNY Chancellor John B. King, Jr. met with students at Blackstone LaunchPad in the Student Union during a visit to UB in September 2023. Also in attendance were President Satish K. Tripathi, Provost A. Scott Weber, and VP for Student Life Brian Hamluk.

# STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

UB is the flagship campus of SUNY, the nation's largest and most comprehensive state university system. Established in 1948,[13] SUNY encompasses 64 campuses, including four university centers, 10 doctoral granting institutions, 13 comprehensive colleges, 7 technology institutions and 30 community colleges committed to providing a broad range of programs for students within New York State and from around the world.[14]

SUNY is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 18 members, with 15 appointed by the governor with consent of the New York State Senate. In addition, the president of the SUNY Student Assembly serves as student trustee and the president of the University Faculty Senate serves as an ex-officio trustee. The SUNY Board of Trustees has ultimate governance authority for the SUNY system, including direct authority over state-operated campuses, general supervisory authority over state-funded colleges at Alfred University and Cornell University, and shared responsibilities for the community colleges. Per its bylaws, the authorities of the Board of Trustees include:[15]

- Appointing its own officers, the chancellor and the system administration senior staff;
- Appointing the president of each state-operated institution, and approving the appointment of statutory and community college presidents by their respective boards;
- On a four-year cycle, formulating a long-range state university plan or general revision to an existing plan;
- Reviewing and coordinating budget and appropriation requests of state-operated institutions and statutory colleges;
- Granting all degrees, diplomas and certificates for the completion of studies at any state-operated campus, including honorary degrees;
- Regulating the admission of students and prescribing qualifications for their continued attendance;
- Regulating tuition, fees and charges, curricula and all other matters pertaining to the operation and administration of each state-operated campus; and
- Establishing new campuses.

New York State (NYS) assists in financing the SUNY system. Additionally, the Board of Regents is responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over the university and the New York State Education Department (NYSED),[16] which is an unsalaried board of 17 members elected by the NYS Legislature to five-year terms. More information about the role of the Board of Regents and NYSED in curricular oversight is provided in Chapter 4.

## SUNY Central Administration

The SUNY Board of Trustees appoints the chancellor, who serves as SUNY Chief Executive Officer. The current SUNY chancellor is John B. King, Jr. The chancellor and his staff are responsible for recommending and implementing the plans, policies and actions of the Board of Trustees.[17] In addition to the responsibilities established by state and federal statutes and the Board of Trustees, the chancellor and central administration also are responsible for the following:

- Providing leadership and advocacy for the entire university system;
- Coordinating the planning, development and implementation of systemwide initiatives intended to result in greater effectiveness and efficiency, such as campus-based planning agreements and assessment of academic programs;
- Implementing and being responsive to applicable provisions of executive orders, directives, regulations, administrative procedures, information requests, etc., as established by state and federal agencies; and

- Providing oversight, coordination, and reporting in response to requests by state agencies, such as the State Comptroller's Office.

## SUNY University Faculty Senate

The SUNY faculty governing body is the University Faculty Senate, made up of elected representatives from each of the university centers, doctoral granting institutions and four-year campuses.[18] The University Faculty Senate meets three times a year, affording each campus representative an opportunity to meet with leadership from other campuses and with the chancellor, provost and other officials within the system. At these meetings, common concerns and possible solutions are discussed, and the chancellor and provost share SUNY administrative perspectives. Occasionally, the University Faculty Senate discusses general issues of public higher education with members of the New York State Legislature.

# UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO GOVERNANCE

## The UB Council

The **University at Buffalo Council** serves as the primary oversight and advisory body to the University at Buffalo, its president and senior officers. Established in accordance with New York State Education Law,[19] the council consists of 10 members, nine of whom are appointed to seven-year terms by the governor of the State of New York, and one student member who is elected to an annual term by the university's students. Members are held to the same standards of conduct as members of the SUNY Board of Trustees.

In addition to providing oversight for student conduct, naming of buildings, traffic regulations and presidential searches, regular duties of the council include reviewing all major plans and activities of the university in the areas of academics, student life, finances and buildings and grounds, as well as making recommendations and regulations for the benefit of the university in matters of community and alumni relations.[20] In addition, the UB Council is responsible for the review of major institutional plans prior to submission to the SUNY Board of Trustees. A more detailed description of the roles, responsibilities, and procedures of the UB Council can be found in New York State Education Law, Section 356.9, summarized in the SUNY Handbook for Council Members.[21]

## SUNY Research Foundation

All sponsored research awards are managed centrally by the **SUNY Research Foundation (RF)**,[22] a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation that was established in 1951 specifically to manage external funding received by SUNY campuses for their research activities.

As the largest, most comprehensive university-connected research foundation in the country, it serves SUNY by providing sponsored programs administration and innovation support services to assist SUNY faculty in translating research and discovery into invention, entrepreneurship, economic opportunity and public benefit. The RF develops, provides and maintains electronic business tools that are made available to individual campuses in the management of their respective sponsored projects portfolios. Each campus has RF employees who conduct the day-to-day management of research awards made to that campus. Staff at the central RF office provide services such as legal advice through the Office of General Counsel, auditing services and other general services to campuses to ensure that best grants management practices are applied consistently across the entire system.

## University at Buffalo Foundation

The **University at Buffalo Foundation, Inc. (UBF)**[23] was chartered in 1962 by the Regents of the State of New York as a nonprofit educational corporation. The mission of the UBF is to support and promote the activities and programs of the university by providing advice and counsel regarding philanthropy and fundraising, managing gifts and grants on behalf of the university, providing a wide range of financial services for the various units of the university, developing, and managing real property on behalf of the university, and providing a strong base of private-sector support for the university through the foundation's trustees and directors.

## Shared Governance

The **Faculty Senate** is the university's faculty governance body. The Senate's bylaws give it a substantial role in key governance issues, including academic departments and programs, curriculum, tenure and promotion, and research and teaching.[24] Its Executive Committee meets regularly, and the president and provost regularly attend meetings to provide university updates and hear from the faculty. The Faculty Senate advises the president and the provost and works collaboratively with senior administration on academic policy development, establishing undergraduate degree standards, delineation of promotion and tenure criteria, the conduct and evaluation of research and teaching, matters relating to the formation, restructuring and dissolution of academic units, and advising on budget priorities. Through its standing committees, the Faculty Senate explores a full range of academic, academic-support and student-life issues.[25]

The president provides an annual comprehensive report to the Voting Faculty, which is a part of UB's periodic assessment of the university's strategic goals. The Faculty Senate adopts resolutions on university issues under its purview and transmits these to the president for consideration, approval and promulgation.[26]

The Faculty Senate periodically reviews its own activities. For example, in 2022, UB's Faculty Senate appointed an ad hoc committee to review the organization of committees and their relationship to the Executive Committee and the Senate as a whole, the structure of the Senate leadership, diversity of representation on the Senate and its committees, and use of technology to improve conduct of Senate business.[27]

In the embodiment of shared governance, the Faculty Senate has forged a strong relationship with the Professional Staff Senate and the student governing bodies to respond to university issues and support the achievement of university goals and priorities. In 2016, the Faculty and Professional Staff Senates co-sponsored an inaugural Shared Governance Day, which included discussions among leadership from both bodies, as well as from student governance bodies. In recognition of these efforts, UB received the SUNY Shared Governance Award in 2019.[28]

The **Professional Staff Senate (PSS)** serves the interests of all professional staff not holding academic rank, including exempt staff from the SUNY Research Foundation, the Faculty Student Association and UBF.[29]

The purpose of the **Graduate Student Association (GSA)** is to act, through its Senate, as the advocate for the graduate/professional student body in matters affecting their student experience and to promote the interests of the university community.[30] The GSA Senate has the authority to initiate and conduct matters, within its powers, that relate to the graduate student body as a whole. The Senate may make recommendations to the appropriate university authorities about policies affecting graduate students. GSA officers are elected by their peers and meet monthly with Graduate School leadership to discuss issues related to the graduate student experience.

UB's **Undergraduate Student Association (SA),** advised by the dean of students, serves as an advocate for the undergraduate student population, enacting resolutions concerning issues of importance to the undergraduate student body in areas such as academic policy, student rights and student welfare.[31]

The SA also creates ad hoc positions, agencies, task forces and committees to act on issues of importance to students. SA officers are elected by their peers and meet periodically with the vice president for student life and the dean of undergraduate education for consultation and information exchange on a variety of academic and student-life issues. The SA administers a budget funded from student fees for that purpose.

The **Council of Advocacy and Leadership (COAL),** made up of seven student government presidents, meet regularly to discuss areas of concern for all students. Each president then takes recommendations back to their respective leadership group to determine a course of action. In addition, membership of the Dean of Students Advisory Board is made up of student leaders from a variety of groups, including academic programs. The purpose of this group is to bring areas of concern to the dean and also allow for the dean to include students in recommendations for achieving larger institutional goals.

Student input is sought for a variety of initiatives and activities. For example, UB routinely engages students in broad-based fee consultation. During a predetermined consultation period, students can complete a survey, provide feedback through an online form, and/or participate in advisory group meetings. The consultation process is advertised to students through multiple media and results are shared on the Student Accounts website.[32] In addition, students were actively engaged in the review process for the new learning management system, Brightspace. Students served on the review committee, and all UB students were invited to attend and provide feedback on the vendor demos.[33]

# University Leadership and Administration

UB's strong and cohesive senior leadership team, composed of acknowledged leaders and innovators in their fields of expertise, is committed to leading by example in building a culture of collaboration, transparency and innovation as they steer the university's academic vision. Detailed position profiles for senior leaders have been developed for use in leadership searches. These profiles describe the role and responsibilities of the position and are publicly shared on the Leadership Search website.[34] These position profiles serve as an historical record of the intended role and responsibilities of each member of UB's leadership team.[35]

Led by the president and the provost and working collaboratively and consultatively with various constituent governing bodies to advance the goals of the university, UB's administration charts the course for the university's academic, professional, financial and strategic activities.[36] It expands and refines the mission of the university; provides direction and facilitates research, teaching and learning; and bolsters the institution's responsibility and commitment to public service, both locally and abroad. The activities of UB's administration are highlighted on the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost websites.[37] Descriptions of each leadership position are shared in this section.

## PRESIDENT

The chief executive officer of the University at Buffalo, the president, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the SUNY Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the chancellor and following review of the recommendations of the UB Council.[38]

Reporting directly to the SUNY chancellor, the president assembles and guides a strong campus leadership team in fulfilling the university's mission and advancing its strategic vision. The president provides leadership, clarity, and focus in articulating UB's vision of excellence and guides its realization in partnership with a broad range of internal and external university constituencies. As a leading voice in the national and global higher education community, as well as a prominent civic and regional leader, the president works to develop and nurture synergies with individuals, institutions and communities—regionally, statewide, nationally and internationally—to successfully engage them in advancing the mission and vision of the university. A full list of the president's roles and responsibilities is available in the President's Position Profile.[39] **Satish K. Tripathi**[40] was appointed the 15th president on April 18, 2011.

## PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

As the university's second ranking officer, reporting directly to the president, the provost is responsible for leading the development and implementation of UB's academic vision. The provost provides leadership across the academic enterprise through the articulation and support of academic priorities. These priorities include excellence in undergraduate, graduate and professional education; faculty excellence in teaching, research and public service; intellectual, geographic and cultural diversity of faculty and students; transdisciplinary innovation in research, scholarship and creative activities; and global leadership in research and education. **A. Scott Weber**[41] was appointed provost and executive vice president for academic affairs in January 2020, following an international search.

## REPORTING ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

The university president and provost submit regular reports to key UB and SUNY stakeholders regarding the status of the university's work and accomplishments in pursuit of the mission and goals. Annually, the president provides his State of the University address to review the progress UB has made in the last year and share the vision for the future.[42] As part of the SUNY system, the president is required to provide an annual report each fall to the SUNY chancellor and Board of Trustees regarding the university's work over the previous year.[43] The president also provides an annual comprehensive report to the Voting Faculty[44] and quarterly reports to the UB Council.[45]

## PRESIDENT'S CABINET

The president's cabinet discusses institutional policy matters and timely issues and exchanges relevant information. The president works collaboratively with the provost, vice presidents, and academic deans, individually and collectively, to set academic and operational goals and assess progress. In addition to the provost, the president's chief of staff (also a vice president), the other eight vice presidents, and three vice provosts serve on the cabinet. Portfolios of the cabinet officers are summarized below.[46]

The **Vice President and Director of Athletics** (Mark Alnutt)[47] oversees UB's 16 NCAA Division I intercollegiate sports programs, including the associated academic support, training and development, as well as intramural and recreational sports programs and community outreach.

The **Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO)** (Brice Bible)[48] is responsible for the delivery of a robust and innovative information technology infrastructure to advance the university's research and educational missions. Leveraging technology and digital resources, the vice president and CIO provides critical oversight of information technology, computing services and administrative information systems across the university.

The **Vice President for Health Sciences and Dean of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences** (Allison Brashear)[49] has leadership responsibility for the five health sciences schools (medicine and biomedical sciences, dental medicine, nursing, pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences, and public health and health professions), in support of hospital affiliations, residency training and faculty practice plans. In addition, the vice president oversees UB's robust interprofessional education program.

The **Chief of Staff to the President and Vice President for Government and Community Relations** (Beth Del Genio)[50] serves as the president's advisor on a wide range of internal and external issues to ensure that presidential initiatives are implemented. The vice president for government and community relations serves as the primary liaison with SUNY, state and federal delegations, and works to ensure that UB is an engaged partner within Buffalo and the region.

The **Vice President for Communications** (John Della Contrada)[51] oversees the University Communications enterprise, telling UB's story effectively to its many internal and external audiences and giving the university a competitive edge in recruiting outstanding faculty, staff and students. The vice president is responsible for deploying UB's overarching communications strategy in support of institutional goals, ensuring collaboration among communications professionals and teams across the university, and developing and guarding UB's institutional brand.

The **Vice President for University Advancement** (Kathleen Heckman, interim)[52] serves as the university's senior officer for development and alumni relations, and works closely with the president, provost, deans, executive director of the UBF and the UB Alumni Association Board of Directors, as well as other university leaders and volunteers to lead the university's development and alumni engagement efforts.

The **Vice President for Research and Economic Development** (Venu Govindaraju)[53] is responsible for the overall management of UB's research enterprise, including research funding, research administration and compliance, research communications, research support, university/industry relations and economic development. The vice president supports UB's research mission through the creation of new cross-disciplinary initiatives and oversees campus research centers.[54]

The **Vice President for Student Life** (Brian Hamluk)[55] provides leadership on student issues, formulating and implementing policies that encompass all facets of student affairs to ensure effective educational and service programs, including residence halls/apartments and residential life, students' personal development in areas such as leadership training and multicultural affairs, student wellness (physical and mental health), food services, and managing administrative interactions with student governments.

The **Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School** (Graham Hammill).[56] The vice provost for academic affairs provides academic leadership and a vision for undergraduate, graduate and professional education that advance UB's mission and vision as a premier public research university. As the primary executive officer of the Graduate School, the dean is responsible for oversight of graduate education at UB.

The **Vice President for Finance and Administration** (Laura E. Hubbard)[57] is responsible primarily for strategic financial planning and analysis of resource use and development; partnering in budget planning and oversight of budget implementation; treasury and risk management; accounting, procurement and business services; internal audit; facilities planning, construction and operations; sustainability and climate action; and university police and human resources.

The **Chief Executive Officer, University at Buffalo Foundation** (Stacy Knapper)[58] provides oversight for the foundation as it works to provide advice and counsel on philanthropy and fundraising to manage gifts and grants for the betterment of UB, to develop and manage real property for the betterment of UB, and to aid in building a strong base of private-sector support for UB.

The **Vice Provost for Enrollment Management** (Christopher Connor, interim)[59] is responsible for leading, developing, articulating and implementing an enrollment management strategy to maintain academic momentum and move UB to higher levels of institutional distinction, as well as overseeing the offices of financial aid, undergraduate and graduate admissions, international enrollment, Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program, enrollment management, recruitment marketing and communications and 1Capen (which provides essential student services).

The **Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence** (Seval Yildirim)[60] is responsible for coordinating and monitoring UB's efforts to institutionalize a culture of equity and inclusion university-wide, which is critical for providing the learning and working environment necessary for achieving excellence in today's highly globalized and rapidly changing world.

## DECANAL LEADERSHIP

The deans of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and 11 schools — School of Architecture and Planning, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), Graduate School of Education, School of Law, School of Management, School of Social Work, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, School of Dental Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and School of Public Health and Health Professions — report to the provost.

UB's deans are distinguished faculty members and scholarly leaders in their fields, as well as experienced and innovative administrators dedicated to collaborating across disciplinary boundaries to achieve a shared institutional vision of academic excellence. The deans serve as the academic leaders and chief executive officers for their units, providing leadership in academic, administrative and external affairs. They are involved directly with fundraising and faculty recruitment and retention, and engage the faculty, alumni and other constituencies in realizing unit and university goals and aspirations.

Deans charge a variety of committees to address issues such as curriculum; policies; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and awards and recognition. These committees often engage with their respective dean's office as needed to address essential issues related to their unit. Some examples include CAS Governance and Committees,[61] Jacobs School Faculty Council Committees,[62] the SEAS for JEDI Committee,[63] and the School of Management Faculty Committee for Diversity and Inclusion.[64]

### Deans[65]

| | |
|---|---|
| **Keith A. Alford**<br>School of Social Work | **Kemper E. Lewis**<br>School of Engineering and Applied Sciences |
| **Marcelo W. B. Araujo**<br>School of Dental Medicine | **Gary M. Pollack**<br>School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| **Allison Brashear**<br>Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences | **Suzanne Rosenblith**<br>Graduate School of Education |
| **S. Todd Brown** (interim)<br>School of Law | **Robin G. Schulze**<br>College of Arts and Sciences |
| **Julia Czerniak**<br>School of Architecture and Planning | **Jean Wactawski-Wende**<br>School of Public Health and Health Professions |
| **Ananth V. Iyer**<br>School of Management | **Annette B. Wysocki**<br>School of Nursing |

## VICE PROVOSTAL LEADERSHIP

Seven vice provosts report to the provost, each overseeing a specific area of academic administration.[66] These include the vice provost for academic affairs and dean of the Graduate School, Graham Hammill; vice provost for faculty affairs, Robert Granfield; vice provost for enrollment management, Christopher Connor (interim); vice provost for inclusive excellence, Seval Yildirim; vice provost for institutional analysis and planning, Craig Abbey; vice provost for international education, Nojin Kwak; and vice provost for university libraries, Evviva Weinraub Lajoie; as well as the dean of undergraduate education, Ann Bisantz. The Provost Leadership Group consists of these individuals and key members of university leadership, including the associate vice provost for academic planning and the provost's chief of staff.

# Leadership Integrity and Review

Due to the nature of the SUNY system, the activities of both the SUNY Board of Trustees and the UB Council are regulated by NYS law. This ensures that members of both follow certain standards in their activities.[67] In addition, all board members, UB Council members and SUNY and UB leaders must adhere to the conflict-of-interest policy[68] to avoid actual conflicts and also to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest.

There are several mechanisms in place for reviewing and evaluating UB's leadership and governance. Review and evaluation of the Board of Trustees chair, members of the Board of Trustees, and members of the UB Council are the responsibility of the governor who appoints individuals to these roles.[69] Based on these reviews, the governor has the authority to renew or not renew an individual to these posts.

In addition, the State University of New York's Board of Trustees Policy (Article IX) requires campus presidents to send an annual report to the Board of Trustees, the chancellor, the College Council (UB Council), and the faculty every year. The report discusses campus affairs from the previous academic year and any recommendations for action in the next academic year. In addition, the SUNY chancellor periodically conducts a review and evaluation of system presidents. Recent evaluations have included a written report to the chancellor describing the university's vision for the coming year and how it aligns with SUNY's vision, a self-evaluation and a list of key stakeholders to be asked to fill out a survey regarding the president's leadership.[70]

The president conducts an annual review and evaluation of cabinet members. Each cabinet member conducts a performance evaluation of their unit's major accomplishments and challenges, comparing their performance against unit goals, and includes goals for the upcoming year. These evaluations are then discussed one-on-one with the president during regularly scheduled meetings.[71]

The provost conducts a comprehensive review of academic deans every five years. The review is led by a decanal review committee comprising nine members including eight senior faculty members from within and outside the school of the dean being reviewed. The committee conducts interviews with relevant faculty, staff, students or alumni, and may also collect written evaluations from key constituents or distribute a survey. The dean is asked to self-assess in areas such as academic leadership, external relations, promotion of inclusive excellence and institutional citizenship.[72] In addition, all academic and academic support units are reviewed annually through the ARPP. These formal evaluations, along with various school-level accreditations and regular meetings of deans and cabinet members with the president, provide opportunities for ongoing evaluation and identification of opportunities for improvement.

# Summary and Future Directions

The evidence provided in Chapter 1 demonstrates how the University at Buffalo meets the criteria relating to mission and goals (Standard 1) and leadership and governance (Standard 7). The numerous departments, offices and positions—existing on multiple tiers within the university and the SUNY system—that are actively involved in the development, implementation and review of the university's mission and goals through periodic reports, review processes, surveys, meetings and conversations result in a continual assessment of UB's mission and goals. Moreover, this structure creates an open environment whereby governing bodies can bring forth their thoughts and ideas to university leadership at will, regardless of whether a formal review process is underway. Going forward, the president's cabinet, UB's academic leadership, and governing bodies will continue to work to advance UB's ambitious goals and priorities. As a campus, UB will continue to recruit outstanding leaders who share UB's values.

# Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

This chapter outlines UB's institutional planning, accompanying resources and continuous improvement efforts, in relation to Middle States Standard 6.

## Annual Resource Planning Process

UB employs an annual resource planning process (ARPP), which has continued to strengthen and evolve since the 2014 MSCHE self-study, and which provides a framework for the university to review its financial capacity, align its current resources with UB's mission and vision, and assess potential areas for new investment.[73] Overseen by the provost and the vice president for finance and administration (VPFA), this process enables UB to align investments with advancing our institutional priorities and operate effectively and efficiently while promoting resilience and maintaining appropriate reserves. During the ARPP, the Office of the Provost (institutional analysis and academic planning) and the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration (resource planning and controller) collaborate with unit leadership (deans and vice presidents [VPs]) and their staff (academic associate deans, unit business officers [UBOs], facilities planning and enrollment managers) to plan for future years. The process encompasses the review of many different factors including enrollment, tuition revenue, staffing, research and scholarship, endowments, unit spending plans, capital and space projects, technology, risks and contingencies, and investment proposals tied to university and unit goals. In addition, tuition and broad-based fees are set as part of a SUNY-wide process. Academic units provide tuition rates recommendations, SUNY campuses propose rates to the SUNY system and final rates are set by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Broad-based fees are approved by the SUNY system, based on recommendations developed by resource planning through a collaborative process with student life and academic affairs, whose services are partially funded by these revenues, as well as in consultation with students.

Annually, a series of communications including planning memos, a Resource Planning Guide, investment proposal outcome letters, calendars and presentations are distributed by the provost, VPFA and Office of Resource Planning to deans, VPs and UBOs.[74] The Resource Planning Guide, which is updated and distributed annually, provides an overview of the planning process along with detailed information related to the university's budgeting and financial components.[75] Faculty are involved through their departments and academic units and through consultations with the Faculty Senate. To achieve desired outcomes, both the assessment of prior investment and the capacity of each individual unit within their base budgets, along with opportunities for revenue growth and/or for cost controls, are utilized to determine future funding in alignment with institutional goals. This is communicated to deans and VPs annually by the provost and VPFA, at both the ARPP kickoff and outcomes presentations.[76]

The ARPP consists of three phases. During **Phase 1**, the university and units evaluate their financial health and integrate academic, enrollment, space and human resource plans with unit and university goals to form spending priorities and investment requests. The ARPP is formally launched in December through a presentation from the provost and VPFA to the deans, VPs, UBOs and other key staff. Within this presentation, university-level priorities and objectives are articulated so that unit leaders can align their budget proposals and unit-level decision making and strategies.[77]

In **Phase 2**, units submit their three-year plans and investment requests, which serve as the basis of budget presentation meetings and resource planning decisions. Every VP/decanal unit across the university has a base budget to support operations and enable units to continue delivering groundbreaking research and scholarship, transformative educational activities, impactful engagement activities, and essential academic support and services. UB's central offices for human resources, university facilities and information technology support the human, physical and technological infrastructures of the university. In addition, unit-level base budgets also support individual unit-level needs in these core operating areas. Through a series of planning workbooks and formal presentations, units articulate how their own objectives and investment requests align with university goals and metrics.[78] These budget and planning workbooks are reviewed and assessed by the Office of Resource Planning and are provided to the president, provost and VPFA ahead of individual unit budget meetings. Each unit submits materials, which include but are not limited to the following content:

**Unit Strategic Goals:** Alignment of unit goals to university goals is critical for securing investments. Units are asked to articulate and assess how investments will advance university progress in meeting its goals and then to assess whether the expected outcome occurred. The Resource Planning Guide articulates the guiding principles that provide the foundation for aligning institutional goals with resource allocation:[79]

- **Strategic:** Align incentives with our mission and with strategic behaviors.
- **Predictability:** Build models that provide reliable foundations for planning.
- **Flexibility:** Build planning models that anticipate and are responsive to changes in the economic environment; we incorporate appropriate risk management strategies.
- **Integration:** Consider the university as a whole and make intentional connections between varying types of organizational needs and priorities.
- **Stewardship:** Exercise prudence in managing our resources, diversify revenues to promote resilience, maintain appropriate reserves, and reward efficiency and effectiveness.

**Investment Proposals:** Units demonstrate their commitment toward implementating investment proposals by initially supporting them from existing unit resources before requesting central funding. Also, units demonstrate how proposals align with the unit's and the university's strategic priorities to make the best case for investment. To facilitate the investment proposal review and decision process, additional information such as a detailed description of the proposal, the unit's contribution, anticipated outcomes, recommended metrics to assess outcomes, expected ROI and a spending plan is requested for each proposal submitted.

**Tuition Rates:** Feedback on undergraduate, graduate, specialized and professional and online tuition rates is collected and submitted to resource planning according to the ARPP calendar – typically in early December. SUNY sets tuition rates through a consultative process with campuses culminating in an enacting vote by the SUNY Board of Trustees within the bounds of an appropriation set through the state budget process.

**Capital Projects and Space Needs:** All capital and space needs are coordinated through university facilities. Major capital and space needs are addressed through a Capital Planning Committee, chaired by the provost (discussed in greater detail below). Capital projects and space needs are collected during the ARPP to gain a comprehensive view of the university's capital and space needs and initiatives. Further, units include space and equipment requests for new faculty in the ARPP. Units also consider the space implications of potential enrollment growth and include associated space requests.

**Broad-Based Fees:** Broad-based fees finance activities that benefit the student body, excluding those activities that are part of the core instructional program. Units share fee rate requests and their planned utilization of funds between mandates and strategic investments. UB considers this information when preparing its final request to SUNY for broad-based fee rate increases. The current fee policies state that "Annual Broad-Based Fee increases should be no greater than the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) unless there is a compelling case."

**Utilization of Endowment Funds:** The university has the obligation to safeguard important donor relations and to ensure that donated funds are expended appropriately and in a timely manner. There is a process through which units review these funds annually and ensure that there are appropriate plans for spending.

**Major Purchases/Procurement:** Units list all known or anticipated new procurement needs for equipment, services, software or other items that are expected to exceed $50,000 to promote departmental procurement planning and the ability for procurement services to proactively address their needs. The information requested allows procurement services to effectively understand unit procurement expectations, proactively address procurement criteria by funding source and identify opportunities for sustainability action and MWBE/veteran vendor utilization.

**Investment Outcomes:** Units provide details about use of funds and impacts from prior ARPP investments.

In **Phase 3**, all central investments are reviewed for approval by the president, provost and VPFA. Investment proposals approved through the ARPP are consolidated into an institutional view and prioritized based on central resources available for investment and alignment with university strategic goals and priorities.[80] The provost, after consulting with the VPFA, presents the recommended investments for that ARPP cycle to the president for final approval.[81] Approved investments are then communicated to each unit leader through a letter from the provost and VPFA and through an outcomes summary meeting.[82]

To respond to unforeseen demands (e.g., natural disasters or targeted faculty retention), a small number of funding requests are considered outside of the typical ARPP cycle through the emerging needs process which requires formal approval by the president, provost and VPFA to be funded.[83]

With fundamental oversight of their unit's resources, all VPs and deans are required to sign annually the university's statement of financial stewardship.[84] After decisions have been made, new budgets are implemented, and the process is evaluated and adjusted to improve the next ARPP cycle. Post audits are completed as part of the following year's ARPP process to analyze investments and outcomes to see if goals were met.[85]

# SIGNIFICANT **INVESTMENT IN FACULTY** TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES

Recognizing that a diverse, equitable and inclusive community is an essential foundation for achieving excellence and success, UB has long been committed to fostering diversity and inclusivity on campus. While UB has significantly increased the diversity of students over the last 15 years, until recently, the percentage of underrepresented faculty remained flat. In 2020, the university set a goal of doubling underrepresented faculty by 2025. Through the ARPP, funds were allocated to enhance the diversity of our faculty and ensure that we are providing a welcoming and equitable campus environment for all members of our university community. In 2022, 39% of ladder faculty hired were from historically underrepresented (URM) backgrounds compared to 7% in 2019. With turnover and other hires, this should increase the percentage of URM faculty at UB from 6.6% (6.4% ladder faculty) in AY 2019-20 to about 10.2% (9.8% ladder) in 2023, significantly advancing our goal of doubling URM faculty by 2025.

## % of Ladder Faculty from Underrepresented Groups (URM)



Line chart of % of Ladder Faculty from Underrepresented Groups (URM), 2017–2023: 2017 = 6.6%, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 = 6.8%, 2022 = 9.0%, 2023 = 9.8%.
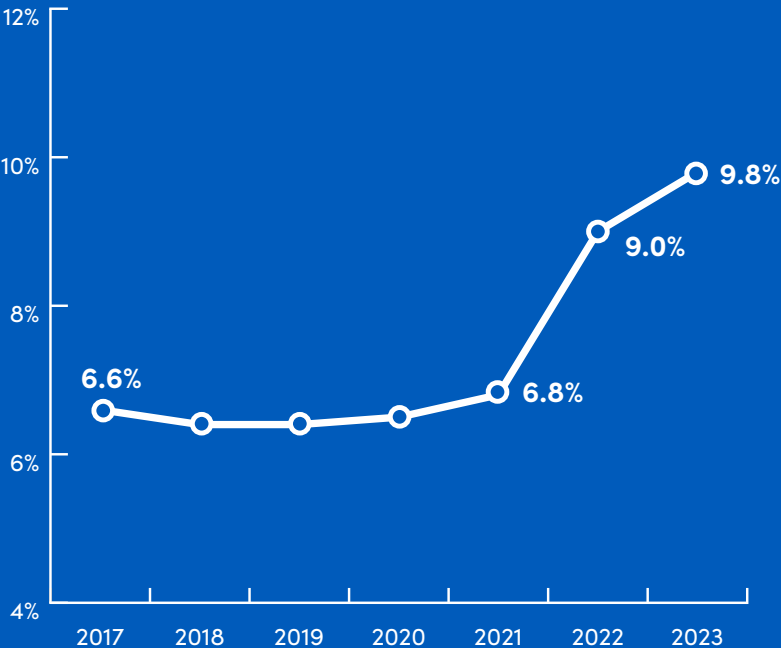
Understanding the importance of periodic assessment to ensure that processes are operating as intended and are supporting institutional priorities, both the ARPP process and the resources invested through it are assessed annually. Units are required to provide details of outcomes achieved to date, current utilization of funds and a planned timeline for fully utilizing committed resources.[86] Additionally, the overall financial health of each unit is reviewed and discussed during the ARPP to understand unit plans related to personnel, space, technology and other operating needs. A three-year outlook is submitted and reviewed by each funding source within a unit (State, Research Foundation and UB Foundation) to understand the three-year outlook across all funds for each unit.[87] Throughout the year the VPFA shares a quarterly performance dashboard with each VP/decanal unit. These dashboards assess actual quarterly performance against annual all-funds spending plans submitted by each unit, academic unit tuition revenue against targets, the utilization of philanthropic funds, unit employee counts, facilities and other business processes.[88]

An annual survey is provided to all constituents who participate in the ARPP to identify what is working well and opportunities for improvement.[89] Additionally, regular meetings occur with the provost, VPFA, resource planning and other key offices to assess current processes and budget models. In the past several years, key additions have been made to the ARPP to, for example, better align strategic priorities and resource allocations related to workforce planning, space planning, and unit carry-forward spending plans.[90]

In addition, updates to components of the university's budget models for tuition revenue allocation, ICR revenue and fringe benefit charges to self-supporting state revenues (IFR) have been made to support units more effectively with resources needed for the university to meet its strategic goals. Centrally, a multi-year financial plan is also conducted to understand the five-year financial outlook of the university's central strategic reserve (internal financial plan) that provides the resources to support the ARPP. Resource planning develops the multi-year financial plan, and it is reviewed by the controller to ensure that resources allocated through the ARPP will be available in future years before it is shared with the provost and VPFA.[91]

Debrief sessions are held with the provost, VPFA, director of resource planning, the university controller, and appropriate vice provost offices to review feedback from the president and others involved in the process and to make recommendations for improvement.[92] We have found that different types of investments require different types of assessment. Through continual ARPP assessment, the university adapts its self-improvement processes.

## ANNUAL RESOURCE PLANNING PROCESS PHASES

## PHASE 1
### September to Mid-January

**Three-Year Plan Information Collection**

**Key Outcome:** Share guidance based on the university's financial position to assist units in providing their input and needs through the Three-Year Plan Workbook.

## PHASE 2
### Mid-January to Mid-April

**Analysis, Discussion & Decision-Making**

**Key Outcome:** Gain a shared understanding of the unit's position and needs to inform the resource planning decisions of senior leadership.

## PHASE 3
### Mid-April to August

**Closure of Annual Resource Planning Process**

**Key Outcome:** Confirm unit expectations and outcomes to finalize Three-Year Plans and implement resource planning decisions.

- Financial Management loads new fiscal year budgets in the financial system for July 1 implementation.
- Evaluation of ARPP and discussion of potential changes.

# SUCCESSFUL **INVESTMENT TO STREAMLINE** BUSINESS PROCESSES AND WORKFLOW

The university is committed to identifying, analyzing and improving existing business processes to create greater efficiencies and cost savings, leading to high levels of service to students, faculty and staff. Through the operational excellence initiative, UB continues to improve operational and business processes including travel, procurement and budget planning through a series of operational initiatives.[93] These initiatives, in addition to analyzing and improving existing business processes, are designed to achieve consistent levels of service across the campus, encourage collaborations, decrease our greenhouse gas emissions, and simplify processes, improving services for all members of the campus community.

## Human Resources

The university's greatest asset is its human capital. More than 7,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty and staff (excluding student employees) work at UB across all its payrolls: 2,025 FTE faculty and 5,077 FTE staff. Across all units, the standards for becoming an employee of UB are high—95% of full-time faculty members have doctorates or terminal degrees in their field, most from peer or aspirational peer institutions. UB faculty members carry out groundbreaking research and scholarship and are leaders in their fields. Similarly, the staff at UB is among the most highly trained and sought after in the region.

While state finances and pandemic expenditure limitations had impacted faculty counts, UB has significant current and recent faculty recruitment efforts underway and has already increased full-time faculty numbers by nearly 30 since 2018. Since 2016, the state has not provided direct funding for negotiated salary increases as it had done in the past. Funds for these salary increases come from each unit's base budget. The result is less funding for new positions, which, in recent years, had limited the university's ability to increase the number of faculty positions as much as had been anticipated in our 2014 MSCHE self-study. Furthermore, the pandemic reduced hiring as expenditure limitations were imposed by the state. However, with UB's disciplinary excellence investments in support of Top 25 and new state investments in recruitment, as described in the previous chapter, faculty hiring in 2022-24 should increase our tenured/tenure-track faculty counts by 100 as compared to 10 years ago.[94] Furthermore, after analysis showed that UB's average faculty salaries had not kept pace with trends for national public research universities, $7.5 million dollars above contractual increases has been invested in salaries to retain faculty over the past three ARPP cycles.

Following national trends and compounded by the pandemic, a strong labor market, rising wages, and fully remote work options offered by some higher education institutions and the private sector challenged the university to fill open staff positions and retain current staff in some areas. In response to these challenges, UB continues to offer some flexible work options and has selectively increased wages. While we are continuing to see challenges in some areas, in 2023, UB has succeeded in returning our staff to pre-pandemic levels and growing by 22 staff members since 2018.

## TABLE 2.1: EMPLOYEE FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

**Fall 2013 to Fall 2023**

| Fall Year | Faculty FTE | Staff FTE | Total FTE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | 1,793 | 4,863 | 6,656 |
| 2014 | 1,814 | 4,872 | 6,686 |
| 2015 | 1,862 | 5,039 | 6,901 |
| 2016 | 1,834 | 4,940 | 6,774 |
| 2017 | 1,845 | 5,051 | 6,896 |
| 2018 | 1,851 | 5,055 | 6,906 |
| 2019 | 1,848 | 5,070 | 6,918 |
| 2020 | 1,875 | 4,892 | 6,767 |
| 2021 | 1,863 | 4,828 | 6,692 |
| 2022 | 1,938 | 4,829 | 6,767 |
| 2023 | 2,025 | 5,077 | 7,102 |

*Data Source: Employee census file.*
*Note: Represents primary and non-primary appointments for all non-student employees as of November 1 of the indicated year.*

# Facilities and Space Planning

UB's academic programs and facilities are located on three distinct campuses in the Buffalo metropolitan area: the North Campus, the university's main undergraduate campus; the historic South Campus, home to many of the university's professional schools; and the Downtown Campus, the focal point of which is the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, on which UB's state-of-the-art Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences is located in proximity to the university's health and life science partners. Recognizing the critical role that a campus environment plays in enabling research, education and engagement, UB is realizing a long-range master plan as the physical manifestation of the university's emergence as a premier 21st-century public research university. Across its three campuses, UB has developed and modernized facilities to support the growth of research, to enhance the student experience and to connect more closely to the surrounding communities.

In addition, UB has been recognized as No. 1 in the world in addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal in climate action (according to the 2021 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings) which is fueled by our award winning 10 in 10 Climate Action Plan.[95] This strategy is a roadmap of innovative, engaging and digestible steps we are taking to increase climate action throughout the university and put us on a path to net zero emissions by 2030. These initiatives represent a synthesis of ideas expressed by a diverse array of stakeholders and form a framework for our implementation efforts with each of the ten categories corresponding to a working group advancing action within the area. These efforts have already led to a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions largely through the purchase of 100% renewable electricity (on and off campus), which is fueling new gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) buildings, electric fleet vehicles, energy efficiency projects and a host of other initiatives.

## CAMPUS ENHANCEMENTS

**North Campus:** On the North Campus, the Heart of the Campus (HOTC), a transformational physical

master plan initiative, is designed to build community and a sense of place at the center of the campus. In 2016, UB opened Phase 1 of HOTC, the renovated Oscar A. Silverman Library, a $7.2 million project that transformed the 45,000 square-foot space into a vibrant, state-of-the-art, intellectual hub for the campus. The renovation of Silverman Library has inspired a libraries master plan that is reinventing UB's campus libraries into technology-rich spaces tailored to educational experiences and cross-disciplinary collaboration. These plans include transforming Lockwood Library, UB's primary research library. As the second phase of HOTC, extensive renovations include the innovative 1Capen student support center, accessibility resources, student conduct and advocacy and the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation.

More recently, UB has accomplished the creation of a front door for the North Campus, a major goal of HOTC, through the One World Café, which opened in spring 2022. Designed by the UB community, for the UB community, the three-story, 53,500 square-foot facility creates a welcoming environment and provides study and gathering spaces for our students, faculty, staff and campus visitors. It includes a central gathering and dining space featuring seating for more than 800, a global array of authentic, internationally themed meals, function space and a university club.

To advance UB's research mission and enable the university to be more responsive to emerging research opportunities, $100 million has been allocated to UB for the construction of a new laboratory/research building which is planned for the North Campus. This building will provide faculty and staff principal investigators with adaptable and flexible research environments. The space will include a new lab animal facility, labs of different typologies (wet, dry, virtual, individual, shared), and research support spaces. This building will not be assigned to any one academic unit, but instead will be a facility that can be responsive to a number of scenarios such as providing flexible laboratory space for newly hired established researchers, providing research space for new largescale grants or supporting innovation/start-ups.

To improve the classroom experience for students and enable pedagogical innovation, the Instructional Facilities Steering Committee has developed a classroom master plan to create learning precincts on the North and South Campuses, which includes new and renovated classrooms, study areas and learning landscape spaces. Since 2014, UB has renovated 34 classrooms and added 27 new classrooms.

To improve the experience of UB's student athletes and promote their success in their respective sports, UB opened the Murchie Family Fieldhouse in 2019. This 92,000 square-foot facility for year-round training houses a full-size turf football field, 6,000 feet of rubber sprinting tracks, a triple jump pit, a pole-vaulting pit and motorized suspended softball hitting tunnels. It also contains two multi-level indoor filming/viewing towers. The facility supports university events, expanded student recreation programming and intramurals. UB is among 10 Mid-American Conference schools that have such a facility in the 12-member conference. In 2023, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the 12,000 square foot Brittany Murchie Mulla Sports Performance Center, an addition to the fieldhouse to help cultivate a nationally competitive athletics program with a state-of-the-art training space.

To further UB's sustainability goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2030, the university energized 12.7 million kWh of clean renewable energy in 2022—enough to power more than 1,750 homes or charge over one trillion smartphones on an annual basis. This new capacity makes UB one of the largest on-campus producers of renewable energy in the country. The project is composed of five major ground-mount arrays as well as four rooftop solar installations on UB buildings which has increased on-campus renewable energy generation capacity by 15 times current levels. The initiative is part of an innovative Power Purchase Agreement: UB does not own the panels, nor did it pay for them, but instead has agreed to purchase all the clean energy produced at them over a 20 year period. Financial forecasting and early data show the university is saving money with the onsite renewables (while decreasing our carbon footprint) compared to what the electricity would have cost if purchased from the grid.

In addition to the new onsite solar, the university also opened the GRoW Clean Energy Center in 2021 as a key campus space for students, faculty, staff and students to advance climate action. It was at this location where Vice President Kamala Harris launched the Biden administration's promotion of the recently enacted Inflation Reduction Act in fall 2023, in recognition of UB's leadership in sustainability.

Finally, across all three campuses, to address student requests for more art on campus, a Public Art Committee was formed to develop temporary and permanent public art installations. Currently, UB features nine installations, four of which are in One World Café. In 2021, the Public Art Committee created the Contemplative Sites program, which invites members of the university community to propose thematic ideas for one-year art installations that celebrate the history and diversity of UB. Contemplative Site projects have included "Progress Pride Paths" and a mural marking the 50th anniversary of Title IX on the North Campus.

**South Campus:** UB is in the process of implementing the Facilities Master Plan for the South Campus to enhance its beauty and social vitality.[96] UB envisions the South Campus as a home for its professional schools that enables them to fully engage the community. The goal of the plan is to restore the classic beauty of the campus, maintaining the historical integrity of the buildings while bringing them up to current standards and needs, where applicable. UB is proud that numerous buildings on the South Campus have achieved LEED certification and that it has just completed the South Campus Clean Energy Master Plan which provides a pathway for decarbonization.

Among these South Campus enhancements, UB renovated the 120-year-old Townsend Hall to LEED Gold standards as the new home of our human resources. A new café and reading rooms were added to the renovated Abbott Library. Diefendorf Hall has been enhanced with 1Diefendorf, a one-stop shop for student services on South Campus. Crosby Hall has been renovated for undergraduate architecture and planning programs and will be fully opening in spring 2024. Currently, Foster Hall is being restored to house the Graduate School of Education, which currently resides on the North Campus, allowing the school to be more closely embedded in the community it serves. These renovations are in accordance with our master plan and follow the 2016 reopening of the completely renovated and restored Hayes Hall, our iconic South Campus landmark, which houses the School of Architecture and Planning.

Also on South Campus, the School of Dental Medicine is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Once completed, the multimillion-dollar renovation will enhance students' education and patients' treatment at the school's dental clinic. For the School of Dental Medicine and our other health sciences schools, the renovation of the Biomedical Research Building will provide a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary research center. This is Phase 1 of a multi-phased renovation plan for the Health Sciences Complex which is intended to transform this multi-disciplinary complex into an educational, clinical and research center of excellence.

The University at Buffalo Libraries, home to the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of materials by and related to author and poet James Joyce, has received $10 million in funding from New York State for the construction of a UB James Joyce Museum. This proposed exhibition space, to be housed in Abbott Library, will expand access to the James Joyce Collection at UB, with the goal of attracting a broad global audience to discover and experience the achievements of the renowned Irish author, widely recognized as the most influential literary figure of the 20th century.



**Downtown Campus:** In December 2017, UB opened the doors of the new, downtown home of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the location places the Jacobs School in the heart of our region's biosciences corridor, bringing students, researchers, and clinicians together into a collaborative ecosystem. This highly synergistic environment creates space to share new knowledge, test cutting-edge interventions and make life-saving discoveries. It aligns UB's medical education, research and clinical care with clinical and research partners—including Buffalo General Medical Center, the John R. Oishei Children's Hospital, the Gates Vascular Institute, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute, and several practices of the UBMD Physicians Group in Conventus. Also on our downtown biomedical campus, we renovated the NYS Center for Bioinformatics and Life Sciences (CBLS) into a convergence space for innovation and collaboration for new technology and life sciences companies. This was funded through an Empire State Development grant and includes a business incubator to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.



Fall trees with the Medical School Building, home of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Science in downtown Buffalo in October 2022.

The location of the Jacobs School on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus bolsters the city's biomedical sector as a catalyst for regional economic development and the development of medical innovations resulting from increased synergies with clinical and research partners. It makes UB and Buffalo a world-class destination for medical education, research and clinical care, advancing our mission to enhance the quality of life for all people in our community and beyond.

## PLANNING PROCESS

There are many layers to our comprehensive planning process for facilities, infrastructure and technology to address sustainability and deferred maintenance. Through the ARPP there is a direct connection to space and capital needs including deferred maintenance projects. While in the current year we are seeing an increase to UB's capital budget to fund new construction and deferred maintenance, operating dollars are still needed to help subsidize deferred maintenance as those needs compounded over the past decade while our capital budget was flat. A Capital Planning Committee, chaired by the provost and including the vice president for finance and administration; vice presidents for student life, health sciences and research and economic development; campus architect; and the president's chief of staff, guides the university's long-range campus development including all forms of capital infrastructure.[97]

University facilities provides the following processes that are directly linked to the ARPP to support operations:[98] sustainability tracking, future classroom needs, the university capital plan, climate action plans, utilization of space policies, office space standards, South Campus revitalization and residence hall planning, etc.

The Instructional Facilities Steering Committee develops plans and requests funding through the ARPP for the design, construction and rehabilitation costs associated with maintaining centrally scheduled classrooms. In support of the university's Top 25 goal of providing a state-of-the-art educational environment, the university is investing $42.4 million over three years (beginning in 2024), a $23.1 million increase to the instructional facilities budget.

The registrar serves as the facilities planning and management officer (FPMO) for centrally scheduled classrooms and chairs the Instructional Facilities Operations and Utilization Sub Committee (IFOUSC) to support renovations to existing classrooms and the design of new classrooms.[99] Initiatives to support the creation of effective learning environments include:

- A commitment from UBIT to ensure all classrooms have video cameras to allow for different learning modalities.

- An institutional commitment to promote collaborative learning by ensuring classroom furniture is easily moveable. Currently, half of the classrooms allow for this. Since moveable furniture is more difficult to manage in large lecture halls, some include individual seats that allow a 280° rotation. The long-term plan is to equip all classrooms with moveable furniture. The Active Learning Center at the Jacobs School[100] is an excellent example of a large, modern learning space of this kind.

- Construction of a new building for the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences with funding support from the state.[101] Designed as a hub for student activity, the new building will feature an "engineering commons," which will include collaborative spaces for student clubs as well as maker spaces, student support services and programs to support entrepreneurism and student startups. This new building provides an example of how UB is actively working to meet current and future teaching and learning demands.
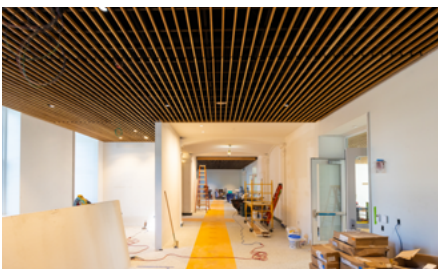


Construction underway at Crosby Hall on South Campus in July 2023. The space is used by the School of Architecture and Planning.

# Heart of the Campus:

## Transforming How Students Experience UB

UB is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where individuals from all walks of life feel welcome; are able to have meaningful interactions; and are valued, respected and empowered to achieve their highest potential. The foundational goal of every phase of the Heart of the Campus (HOTC) project is to provide improved service levels and an enhanced academic experience for our students, enabling their success. HOTC is creating a reimagined, student-centric environment across UB's campuses by transforming key academic, outdoor and social/gathering spaces.

**Oscar A. Silverman Library:** The first phase of the project was the renovation of the third floor of the Oscar A. Silverman Library in Capen into a dynamic 21st-century library to accommodate the different ways that students study and learn. The renovated Silverman Library now includes rooms for individual and group study; a traditional grand reading room; high-tech classrooms; suites for producing, editing, and viewing multimedia; and a café. The first phase of HOTC also included consolidating services offered by accessibility resources to new, upgraded space on the ground floor of Capen.



**One Stop Shop:** The innovative 1Capen Student Services Center was the second phase of HOTC, opened in July 2017. 1Capen aims to streamline essential student services in one convenient location to minimize the related services bounce so students can get on with the business of being a student. It has transformed the way UB students perform such vital tasks as checking on their financial aid package, getting a transcript or registering for a virtual parking permit. Satellite offices for the registrar, financial aid, student accounts, student advising services and parking and transportation are housed in this area. Offices relocating permanently include the Student Response Center, the UB card office and UB medical insurance. UB opened a satellite location, 1Diefendorf Student Service Center to make services more accessible to students residing or taking classes primarily on UB's South Campus.[102]



**One World Café** is the third phase of HOTC. One World Café is the new front door to the North Campus. In addition to serving as a new, signature gathering place on the North Campus, One World Café meets the growing dining and gathering needs of the expanding, evolving and diverse UB community. When guests enter One World Café on Level 1, they find five food platforms—or stations— offering them options for authentic internationally-themed meals. These currently include: Indian, North American, Mediterranean, Asian (Chinese, Thai, Korean and Burmese) and Japanese, which serve our very diverse student and campus community population.

# Information Technology

The UB Information Technology (UBIT) division reflects the complexity and variety of a large research university, providing centralized academic and computing infrastructure as the foundation for school and divisional information-technology organizations throughout campus. In all aspects of its work and vision, UBIT is a highly collaborative organization, working directly with stakeholders to anticipate and fulfill their needs, and providing the university with stable, consistent and reliable services, while enabling responsive innovation at the department level. UBIT develops, maintains and supports information technology, computing services and administrative information systems across the university and serves as the university's principal technology leader with responsibility for UB's overall technology environment. This includes essential support for the research and teaching activities of faculty and students and oversight of all applications and infrastructure related to administration and academics, information security and telecommunications.

In support of technical infrastructure operations, the university periodically updates systems and software solutions to meet changing needs. Switching from Blackboard to Brightspace as the university's primary learning management system (LMS) was a major undertaking allowing for additional features for course creation, delivery and reporting (see Chapter 3 for additional details). The Modern Campus software system replaces curriculum management (course and curriculum creation and approval workflows) and course catalog solutions that were developed in-house and required manual intervention with an integrated system; this will now streamline and automate some processes and make it easier to maintain accurate and up-to-date catalog information for undergraduate and graduate students. The university has begun a multi-year, multi-phase implementation of Salesforce's constituent relationship management (CRM) system with Education Cloud, Marketing Cloud and Blackthorn Advancement. Using a common underlying core technology platform will enable the university to have a 360-degree view of all the interactions the institution has with its students, faculty, staff, donors, alumni and friends and enable streamlined communications and workflows.

Technology infrastructure funding is integrated within the ARPP. The CIO's office conducts an internal planning process[103] to complement the ARPP that includes comprehensive planning for infrastructure and technology; application inventory that tracks technical debt, installation date and last upgrade date for all centrally supported applications enabling financial planning and year-out budget planning; an annual infrastructure comparison report that is used to track changes in resources and future planning for renewals and infrastructure purchases; and multiple infrastructure budget meetings to plan and prepare infrastructure-related purchases. Technology project intake forms help prioritize new projects and align resources to university priorities.

Students are charged a technology fee to help support the technology needs of campus, specifically student-facing technologies and infrastructure. An annual review of the technology fee rate is completed, and a recommendation is made annually to increase the rate to properly support the technology infrastructure of the university. Further investments may be made through the ARPP to supplement the technology needs on campus beyond what the technology fee supports.[104]

# Annual Audit Process

UB's administration takes seriously its financial stewardship responsibility and seeks timely and continuous feedback from audits of its financial-management. Internal and voluntary audits of various academic and academic-support units are conducted routinely to ensure that regulatory and legal requirements are adhered to and that operations are conducted efficiently and effectively. The university is subject to regular audits by SUNY system administration and the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

The Office of Internal Audit examines the financial controls in individual units, including timely and accurate recording of financial transactions; efficient use of university resources; safeguarding of university assets; compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures; and effectiveness in achieving departmental goals and objectives.

The following types of audits may be conducted by the Office of Internal Audit:

- **Operational Audit:** Examines an operating process to determine if resources are being used in the most efficient and effective way to meet the unit's mission and objectives. Activities such as human resource services, cash handling, procurement and equipment inventories generally are subject to this type of audit.

- **Financial Audit:** Reviews the recording and reporting of financial transactions. The purpose of this type of audit is to provide management with assurances that financial information is recorded accurately in the university's financial records and that these records support the information shown in the financial reports.

- **Compliance Audit:** Evaluates the university's adherence to laws, regulations and internal and external policies governing the activity being reviewed. Examples of these requirements include state and federal laws, NCAA and OSHA regulations, as well as SUNY and UB policies and procedures.

- **Information System Audit:** Reviews the internal control environment and use of an automated information and transaction processing system. These audits typically evaluate system input, processing and output; data and physical security; backup and recovery plans; and system administration.

- **Investigative Audit:** Focuses on alleged civil or criminal violations of state or federal laws and alleged violations of university policies and procedures that may result in prosecution or disciplinary action.

As part of the SUNY system, UB does not have an independent annual audited financial statement. Rather the audited financials are done at the SUNY level. In the most recent audit (FY 22) SUNY received a clean opinion.[105] Auditors conduct several campus visits and conduct audit work with additional campuses. Given UB's size and stature within SUNY, the university is selected every year as a campus to have audit work conducted.[106] SUNY is included as part of the state's single audit using the State fiscal year (i.e., 4/1-3/31). Based on the 2021 single audit results, SUNY is considered a low-risk auditee. Under the Federal Uniform Audit Guidance, the financial aid programs only need to be audited every three years. Federal stimulus funding and hospital funding received by campuses was audited for 3/31/21 and 3/31/22 as they are considered major programs. Some campuses will be audited again in 2023 based on remaining federal funds balances. Financial aid programs are not scheduled to be audited until the fiscal year ending 3/31/24. In addition to the audited SUNY financials, UB does produce an unaudited university financial statement, component unit financial statements, IPEDS and supplemental financial activity reporting.[107]

# Summary and Future Directions

The University at Buffalo aligns its planning processes, resources and structures to fulfill its mission and objectives effectively through the Annual Resource Planning Process. Institutional objectives are clear, established and linked to mission and goal achievement, supported by appropriate assessment and utilized for planning and resource allocation. The university engages constituents through transparent planning and improvement processes that integrate assessment outcomes. Ensuring fiscal sustainability and support for programs is achieved through financial planning and budgeting that are evidence-based and aligned with the university's Top 25 Ambition. The university's complex operations and locations are supported by substantial fiscal, human, physical and technological resources.

Decision-making processes are well-defined, responsibilities are clearly assigned, and processes are in place to enforce accountability. The university proactively plans for facilities, infrastructure and technology, considering sustainability and deferred maintenance while aligning these plans with its strategic and financial processes. SUNY's annual independent audits validate financial viability, and multiple layers of audits proactively respond to any concerns. The university continuously measures resource adequacy and efficiency, striving to ensure optimal support for its mission and goals. Annual and periodic assessments validate the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal processes, further enhancing the availability of resources.

While UB is currently growing our faculty and making investments to support faculty research and success, a tight labor market and the national shift to remote work has made staff turnover a concern since the pandemic. One example of downstream impacts has been in facilities and construction. Difficulty in filling and retaining facilities/construction workers and project managers has slowed progress on capital projects even when funding is in place. Faculty hiring, research and improvement to student facilities are all impacted. A fall 2023 meeting of the vice presidents, deans and vice provosts was devoted to a discussion of staff recruitment and retention. The university will continue its efforts to hire facilities planning staff and utilize its existing processes to prioritize projects.



New undergraduates and their families attend an orientation session held at One World Café in July 2023. In the upper right is the mural 'Together We Are' by artist Brendan Fernandes, which was installed in 2022.

# Ethics and Integrity

This chapter outlines UB's policies and procedures to foster a campus that is governed and administrated with ethics and integrity, consistent with the criteria outlined in Standard 2. These policies, procedures and practices ensure that UB's mission and strategic goals will be carried out with integrity.

UB is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct, implementing an Ethics Policy that provides an overarching code of ethics for faculty, staff and student employees.[108] The policy covers honesty, integrity, respect, stewardship, compliance and responsibility. Reinforcing the commitment to ethical activity, the university has implemented a confidential ethics reporting hotline to encourage faculty, staff and students to report unethical behavior.[109] These anonymous reports are investigated by relevant offices, including internal audit; equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI); and human resources.

Academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression and diversity of opinion, and respect for intellectual property rights are central to UB as an institution of higher education. The university subscribes to the Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors, and to the rights established by the SUNY Board of Trustees relating to academic freedom.[110] The principles are also reflected in the shared governance resolution concerning academic freedom and the Policies, Procedures and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions.[111]

In addition, policies and procedures are designed to create an environment where all members of the community are free to peacefully express their views and opinions, consistent with our strategic goal to promote a university-wide culture of equity and inclusion. Policies include SUNY Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order, the UB Student Code of Conduct, Policy on Religious Accommodation and Expression, and Discrimination and Harassment Policy.[112]

The university provides guidance to the campus community, hosts public forums concerning freedom of expression and requires all groups using campus space to comply with university guidelines and applicable laws concerning the exhibition and management of public events.[113]

UB provides guidance concerning the appropriate use of copyrighted material and online materials.[114] Several SUNY policies—including the Patents and Inventions Policy, Copyright Policy and Computer Software Policy—protect intellectual property developed at UB. Improper Distribution of Course Materials policies prohibit students from posting and selling course materials without the author's permission.[115] In addition, UB is committed to the academic integrity and ethical conduct of research, scholarly and creative activities by both faculty and students.[116]

# Fostering a Respectful and Diverse Campus

UB's policies and procedures are designed to create an environment where the community feels comfortable to learn, study, live and work. Further, UB promotes a university-wide culture of equity and inclusion that fosters respect while celebrating the diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives of our faculty, staff and students. Central to UB's values is the acknowledgement that we are learning and can always be better; we improve ourselves, our dialog, and our ability to learn from each other by listening, being present and implementing changes through reflections based on periodic assessment. UB evaluates campus climate regularly with faculty/staff and student surveys. The last institution-wide climate survey was administered in September 2019, through which students, faculty and staff reported positive perceptions in the areas of personal attitudes and behaviors, campus accessibility and visibility.[117]

In 2014, UB founded the Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIX). Led by the vice provost for inclusive excellence, UB's chief diversity officer, the office is responsible for facilitating UB's diversity and inclusion strategies and for supporting UB's efforts to provide an inclusive campus culture. A pioneer within SUNY in launching an office focused on equity and inclusion and in creating a cabinet-level, chief diversity officer position, UB was a model for the entire system when, in 2015, SUNY established the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy[118] to enact SUNY's goal to be the most inclusive university system in the country. OIX promotes excellence in all aspects of UB's operations by facilitating processes that remove barriers to access and advancement on the basis of race, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and veteran status for students, faculty and staff. OIX hosts programs and initiatives designed to promote respect and mutual understanding, most notably the Let's Talk About Race and Difficult Conversations series.[119]

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is responsible for the university's compliance with laws, rules and policies that prohibit discrimination and discriminatory harassment, and that require accommodations based on disability, religion, transgender status, pregnancy, and sexual violence victim status. Any member of the UB community may consult with EDI. UB is also committed to honest reporting about sexual violence through the Enough is Enough report.[120]

The Intercultural and Diversity Center provides a welcoming space for students and coordinates educational programs and cultural events aimed to broaden student perspectives and promote inclusion, equity and social justice.[121] As described in Chapter 1, UB's President's Advisory Council on Race[122] was established in 2020 to guide the university's collective conversations and action items regarding racism and systemic inequality to ensure that UB is equitable in its policies, programs, activities and traditions.

## OVERSIGHT FOR STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Student Code of Conduct[123] provides standards for academic dishonesty, discrimination and harassment. The undergraduate Student Association (SA) By-Laws describe the role of SA, which provides oversight for recognized student clubs and organizations, as well as enacts resolutions related to academic policies and student rights and welfare.

The Bylaws of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) describe the role of GSA in furthering the welfare of the student body, promoting a scholarly atmosphere and working with the university's administration, faculty, staff and other student governments to make UB an exceptional graduate center. GSA policies also address conflict of interest and sexual harassment prevention.

# ENSURING HIGH ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STANDARDS

Following the recommendations of the Academic Integrity Committee, in 2018, UB's Faculty Senate unanimously approved new graduate and undergraduate academic integrity policies, which streamlined and simplified the process of adjudicating allegations of academic dishonesty.[124] These policies were developed with wide input and support from across the campus community and led to the creation of a new Office of Academic Integrity (OAI) during the 2018-19 academic year.

OAI promotes the university's fundamental value of integrity in the academic enterprise. By holding students accountable to honesty in the learning and research processes, supporting faculty in creating academically sound learning environments, working with the campus community to fairly and consistently enforce academic policies, and recognizing students and faculty for their high ethical standards, OAI helps propel students to academic excellence and protects UB's status as a premier research university.

The remediation process for undergraduate students with infractions consists of a pre-meeting with the OAI staff, a three-module course and a follow-up meeting with OAI staff. The process is designed to allow reflection on what happened, prevention of future dishonesty cases, and consideration of how academic integrity will feed into professional integrity. Upon successful completion, the undergraduate student record with OAI is cleared. Data collected from fall 2019 through fall 2022 shows the recidivism rate for students completing the remediation process is 4.2% as compared to 17.2% for those who do not complete it.

OAI served as a valuable resource for the campus community to ensure academic integrity when UB transitioned to a fully remote learning environment in spring 2020 during the pandemic, providing resources and training for instructors. More recently, as artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT become more accessible, OAI is instrumental for helping students and faculty understand how AI tools can and cannot be used in student's academic work. Beyond UB, OAI is a national leader in this space. The office has established a Northeast Regional Consortium of the International Center for Academic Integrity and OAI staff are frequently sought for their expertise.

# GRIEVANCE POLICIES

Committed to fairness and to protecting the rights of students, faculty and staff, UB has an extensive set of policies to address grievances on campus. These policies cover all constituencies and address various contextual circumstances. Grievance procedures are clear, transparent, accessible and quantifiable, making them effective for resolving a broad range of issues.

## Grievance Procedures for Students

Grievance policies and procedures for students are far-reaching, covering academic integrity, discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as general student conduct.[125] Grievance policies feature definitions, examples, information about initial consultations prior to formal complaints and guidance for appeals.[126] These policies and procedures are explicitly shared with the campus community and the public on UB's website.[127] The Notice of Non-Discrimination, which identifies the contact office for addressing discrimination and harassment, is included on UB's website, including the webpages of academic units and departments. As students express complaints to various offices in their academic units or central administration, they are fully informed of the policies, as well as the procedures for filing a grievance. Students may also file complaints with external agencies, such as the New York State Education Department and MSCHE. Links to the complaint mechanisms for these agencies can be found on the Student Right-to-Know website maintained by the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA).[128]

## Grievance Procedures for Employees

UB employes may be covered by one of eight collective bargaining agreements (CBA): Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Administrative Services Unit; CSEA Institutional Services Unit; CSEA Operational Services Unit; Communication Workers of America, Local 1104 Graduate Student Employees Union; New York State Corrections Officers and Police Benevolent Association; Police Benevolent Association of New York State; Public Employees Federation (PEF); and United University Professions (UUP). Pursuant to NYS Executive Order No. 42 (1970), all UB employees have access to established grievance procedures.[129] The scope of the negotiated procedures include all terms and conditions addressed in the respective CBAs and, per executive order, generally, to conditions of employment. Additionally, NYS Civil Service Law Article 14 (the Taylor Law) establishes the Public Employment Relations Board, which addresses resolution of disputes for aspects of employment which are not specific to a respective CBA.[130] These grievance procedures provide employees with thorough due process rights in matters of discipline, promotion, salary increases, evaluation, work location and shift assignment. Given extensive union outreach and proliferation of respective CBAs, UB has strong confidence in employee awareness of these dispute resolution processes.

## Additional Grievance Procedures

UB has several avenues for reporting concerns and complaints. Because individuals who are experiencing issues may fear retaliation, some reporting options are anonymous. Through UB's EthicsPoint system, any member of the UB community can report misconduct or other ethical violations.[131] Under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy, any member of the UB community may report discriminatory conduct and seek redress.[132] Anyone may submit a report of criminal conduct to University Police (UPD) through the Silent Witness reporting form,[133] and they can file a complaint related to interactions with UPD via a police feedback form.[134] Although due process requirements may limit UB's ability to act on anonymous complaints, anonymous reporting is one way of identifying and addressing ongoing and systemic issues proactively.

Grievance procedures are inadequate if individuals do not know how to access them. For this reason, UB mandates Sexual Harassment Prevention training and Workplace Violence Prevention training on an annual basis. UB also monitors issues and trends through annual sexual violence reports and discrimination and harassment reporting trends.[135] There has been an increase in reporting, suggesting greater awareness of reporting options and trust in processes to satisfactorily resolve complaints.

# Conflict of Interest Policies

UB is committed to an ethical, transparent, and objective environment where conflicts of interest (COI) are actively disclosed and appropriately managed. The foundation of UB COI laws is the New York State Public Officers Law,  which dictates that no officer or employee of a state agency should have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business or transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties or has the appearance of such a conflict.[136] For employees above a designated salary threshold, New York State requires completion of an ethics training course every three years and an annual financial disclosure statement through the New York Commission on Ethics and Lobbying (formerly the Joint Commission on Public Ethics or JCOPE).[137]

In addition to state laws, UB specific policies provide additional guidance to staff. For example, the Office of Financial Aid has its own Code of Conduct directing staff that there will be no action that is for their personal benefit or has the appearance of personal benefit.[138] This is reiterated in UB's Student Loan Code of Conduct, where students are assured that university officials do not benefit from administering loans.[139]

Avoiding conflicts also is noted in the nepotism policy that requires employment, academic, research and procurement decisions to be free from the appearance of nepotism.[140]

While the nepotism policy addresses research situations, UB takes additional steps to promote objectivity in research and to maintain high ethical standards to ensure that the design, conduct and reporting of research is not biased by financial interests. The responsibilities and obligations of investigators must be clearly separated from their personal financial interests.[141] Each investigator must disclose his or her significant financial interests and any non-university significant obligations, including those of immediate family members. The disclosure statement includes information about significant financial interests and any sponsored travel related to institutional responsibilities. Financial conflict of interest training is required for all investigators engaged in human subject research activities, those involved in U.S. Public Health Service funded research and other funded research when required by the sponsor.

# Fair and Impartial Processes

Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, UB's Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions (updated and approved by the Faculty Staff Handbook Committee and the provost on March 12, 2018) and the CBA between the State of New York and UUP are designed to ensure that hiring, evaluation, promotion, disciplinary and separation practices are fair and impartial and comply with applicable law.[142] These policies and the procedures adopted to ensure compliance are available on the provost's website.[143] As a result, employees are familiar with, or can easily find, information about their rights and obligations, fairness of employment actions and meaningful opportunities for redress when rights are not respected, or personnel actions are perceived as unfair.

With respect to hiring, the University's Recruitment Policy, last updated in December 2020, applies to all faculty, as well as professional, classified, UB Foundation and Research Foundation staff.[144] This policy outlines the relative responsibilities of hiring and search committee personnel, human resources, EDI, UB immigration services, and faculty affairs. As more fully outlined in the Recruitment Policy, the university conducts competitive recruitment for all positions, save for limited circumstances where there is a compelling justification for an exception (last updated June 2014).[145] UB provides substantial guidance and training concerning best practices for conducting searches, including a course concerning inclusive searches that all search committee members must complete (established December 2020).[146]

The criteria for appointment of faculty or promotion to specific academic ranks, as well as tenure, are outlined in Part I of the UB Faculty Policies.[147] Guidance concerning the specific modes of evaluation for distinct appointments is provided in Part I.C. Although individual departments and schools may adopt supplemental procedures and standards, these processes must be available in writing, specify those who are eligible to vote on the different types of personnel actions, provide basic information concerning the presentation of the candidate for consideration, describe the composition and operations of personnel committees, and describe the method of voting (Part II). With respect to promotion and tenure actions requiring approval of the President's Review Board, UB Faculty Policies provide detailed guidance concerning the timing and sequence of review (Part II.C.2-3). Any faculty member whose promotion or tenure is under consideration has the right to designate an advocate (Part II.C.4). Moreover, the faculty member has certain rights to appeal (Part II.C.6) or request reconsideration of unfavorable determinations (Part II.C.7).

Per SUNY Board of Trustees policy, after seven years of exemplary service, with at least the last two years in the same title, UUP professional employees are eligible for permanent appointment.[148] Exemplary service is determined based on an annual evaluation focused on the employee's specified performance program. To apply for permanent appointment, an application packet is prepared, containing a current vita or resume, with an application letter from the employee, and a recommendation letter from the immediate supervisor. The application must be supported by the immediate and intermediate supervisors, and the relevant dean, vice president or provost. The president provides final campus approval and forwards the packet to human resources for submission to the SUNY chancellor for final approval.

Disciplinary and separation practices for faculty are addressed in the UUP CBA and UB Faculty Policies.[149] Under the UUP CBA, faculty may review personnel files (Article 31), are entitled to minimum advance notice of non-renewal decisions (Article 32) and maintain the right of appeal for certain personnel actions (Article 33). Similar appeal and notice rights are reflected in UB Faculty Policies (Section II.B.2.C). Disciplinary and separation policies for UUP professional employees are addressed in the UUP CBA. As with faculty, professional staff are entitled to minimum advanced notice of non-renewal decisions (Article 32) and maintain the right of appeal for certain personnel actions (Article 33). For professional employees, a final evaluation for termination cannot happen until the employee has been on an annual performance program for at least six consecutive months, and there is a 45-day waiting period between that final evaluation and the start of the contractual notice period for termination (Appendix A-28). Any individual who feels that a hiring, promotion or termination decision is discriminatory may have the decision reviewed through the procedure in UB's Discrimination and Harassment Policy, as described previously.[150]

# Integrity of Campus Communications

University Communications (UC) is guided by divisional shared values, centered on the principles of integrity, honesty, accuracy and ethical decision-making.[151] UC staff are also guided by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Member Code of Ethics and the American Marketing Association (AMA) Member Code of Conduct.[152] The university's principal advertising agency of record is a member of and adheres to the ethical standards of the AMA, the Institute for Advertising Ethics (IAE) within the American Advertising Federation (AAF), and the PR Council Code of Ethics and Principles.[153]

UB has designated senior communicators throughout the university to serve as chief communications officers for their units. These senior communicators work together on a Senior Communicators Council to develop and implement the UB brand and communications strategies, as well as help the university achieve its strategic objectives by building internal awareness, understanding and support of important initiatives, events and accomplishments.[154] These activities are collaborative and transparent.

UBNow[155] is an online publication used to inform stakeholders about major university initiatives, events and accomplishments and to build community through stories about UB students, faculty and staff. UC also develops content for UB's official digital and social media channels. The university recognizes the important role of the news media as a channel of communication with the public and provides timely and accurate information regarding the university's initiatives, programs and activities to qualified representatives of news reporting organizations. For example, in spring 2023, a controversial speaker was invited to campus by a student group. The rationale for allowing the speaker to come to campus (freedom of speech), despite protests by the larger campus community, was distributed to the media.[156]

The university deploys periodic communications surveys to inform the refinement of communications strategies and practices based on stakeholder perception and needs. The most recent survey was administered in 2018 to examine perceptions of internal communications, leadership influence and credibility as well as preferred sources of information for employees.[157]

UB has a process in place by which students, faculty and staff are informed that UC regularly takes photographs and captures video of campus happenings, and that their likeness may be used for a variety of communications and marketing purposes. For scheduled photo or video shoots, participants are provided with a release form and information cards that spell out intended usage and their rights, with participants asked to sign the form to grant the university explicit usage rights. Participants are also apprised of the online photo repository, which contains additional information on intended usage and rights as well as directions on how to request having a photo of one's likeness removed.[158]

UC collaborates with colleagues in the Office of Enrollment Management to develop and execute media recruitment campaigns that authentically reflect the excellence of the university and its future aspirations. The Enrollment Management Strategic Content and Marketing Team maintains statistical proof points to allow for more streamlined and accurate updates of admissions materials and websites under its purview. These statistical proof points are updated annually by the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA), the unit responsible for institutional research and external reporting. In addition, the team completes an annual review of top-level web content, providing feedback to UC on necessary content updates. Similarly, the Office of Marketing, Communications and Digital Engagement within academic affairs provides support for all academic affairs websites, including the Office of the Registrar, the Graduate School, and undergraduate education.

During a crisis or incident that disrupts normal university operations, UB has procedures in place to communicate quickly and clearly with the campus community, as well as with external stakeholders. UC has developed a strong issues and crisis communications and response infrastructure, including formation of a team of trained crisis communicators, knowledgeable about well-documented policies, procedures, and best practices, and manages the university's official website for emergency planning and procedures.[159]

## COMMUNICATIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

UB offices relating to admissions, financial aid and course enrollment work to maintain clear and accurate websites with up-to-date information.[160] In addition, accepted students complete a Financial Aid Orientation,[161] explaining the FAFSA process, along with indirect and direct costs of attendance. All new undergraduate students who have applied for financial assistance receive the SUNY Smart Track Financial Aid Plan, a college financing plan outlining projected costs over the four-year period.[162] In addition, students are educated on financial literacy to empower them in making informed decisions about the long-term implication of incurring debt.[163] UB encourages students to pledge to Finish in Four (FIF) to promote affordability and decrease debt.[164] Additional advising support is provided to help students in meeting the four-year commitment.[165] UB recognizes that unexpected financial challenges may arise and provides a financial appeals process for extenuating circumstances.[166]

# External Reporting and Compliance

## REPORTING

**Consumer Information:** UB is committed to publicly disclosing consumer information in a timely, efficient and truthful manner. Financial Aid publishes disclosures of financial assistance and institutional information to the public through the consumer information website. OIA maintains the Student Right-to-Know webpage that also links to consumer information.[167]

**Student Enrollment, Retention, Completion Rates and Outcomes:** OIA maintains the University Factbook, posted on a public-facing website, to provide information about admissions, enrollment, credit hours, retention rates, completion rates and degrees conferred.[168] In addition, OIA transmits required data to SUNY, completes the Common Data Set and is responsible for IPEDS reporting.[169] OIA also maintains a public-facing webpage to share results from student surveys relating to academic outcomes and satisfaction, for example, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).[170]

**Clery and SaVE ACT Reporting:** UPD compiles data for annual Clery and SaVE Act reporting, maintained by OIA on its Student Right-to-Know webpage.[171]

## COMPLIANCE

### Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

UB ensures compliance with the MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation through the following:

- Submission of accurate annual institutional update reports.
- Submission of substantive change applications when there are significant changes in operations that require MSCHE review.[172]
- Annual meetings with relevant senior leaders and staff members to review the institution's status in relation to the Standards for Accreditation.[173]
- Development of the reaccreditation self-study, documentation of compliance with the Requirements of Affiliation, and the Institutional Federal Compliance Report.[174]

### Student Privacy and Information Security

UB is committed to student information privacy and complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). A summary of students' FERPA rights is included within the Student Code of Conduct. The Office of the Registrar, as well as registrars within professional schools, comply with FERPA and university information security policies, ensuring consistency across the institution. A summary of FERPA, as well as the definition of directory information, is published by the Office of the Registrar. Students may block the release of directory information, as well as grant or revoke the release of non-directory information to third-party entities.[175]

To ensure compliance with FERPA and information security policies, faculty and staff must complete the Handling Data Safely course[176] prior to receiving access to the student information system (HUB). The course outlines the types of data that are of concern and the regulations in place to maintain privacy and data security. In addition, all enterprise-wide software applications and systems must be reviewed not only to verify that they meet accessibility requirements, but also that they maintain data securely.[177] The Information Security and Privacy Advisory Committee (ISPAC) develops and recommends information security and privacy policies, procedures and operations. The membership of ISPAC is appointed by the provost and vice president and chief information officer (VPCIO), ensuring representation of those responsible for information security.[178]

**Athletics Compliance**

The University at Buffalo is committed and obligated to the principle of institutional control in operating its athletics program in a manner consistent with the letter and the spirit of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Mid-American Conference (MAC) and university rules and regulations.[179] The Athletics Compliance Office directs this effort and acts as a resource center concerning NCAA regulations and compliance issues. The primary functions of the Athletics Compliance Office are to oversee and verify the accurate and timely completion of NCAA-required procedures. Information about NCAA compliance is available on the Student Right-to-Know webpage.[180]

In addition, the Athletics Compliance Office provides educational programming and interpretive support to ensure that all individuals involved with the athletics program fully understand the university's compliance expectations. It is the responsibility of the Athletics Compliance Office to ensure that the demands of the NCAA's and the university's compliance efforts and expectations are properly supported. Our core values and areas of focus are integrity, honesty, communication and education. In all day-to-day activities, the Athletics Compliance Office strives to protect the university and our coaches and student athletes.

# Assessment of Ethics and Integrity

The university follows a consistent and transparent process for policy development, review and approval.[181] Approved policies are available to the campus community in a central policy library hosted on the Administrative Services Gateway.[182]

In addition, the Faculty Senate provides an independent faculty-focused approval and review of institutional policies that are maintained in the Faculty Senate Resolutions library.[183] Internal Audit provides an annual report[184] to the president's cabinet based on audit reports that assess compliance with policies and recommends updates based on this review. Audits are performed in accordance with the Institute of Internal Audit International Auditing Standards and regularly assess the adequacy and effectiveness of existing policies, while recommending opportunities for improvement.

The University Police Advisory Committee, chaired by a faculty member, provides feedback regarding fair, equitable, and effective police practices and provides guidance when policing concerns arise. In May 2021, the advisory committee conducted a survey of the campus community regarding interactions with UPD. Based on the survey results, recommendations for policy changes were developed and implemented. Additionally, updates were made to the Student Code of Conduct regarding gender-neutral language and consistency with Title IX final rule, and language adjustments were made to the Discrimination and Harassment Policy. These policy revisions were approved by the UB Council in December 2021.[185] In September 2022, focus groups were conducted with subsets of the campus community, including women, students, international students, staff, faculty, university police and members of the LGBTQ and BIPOC communities.[186] The data from these focus groups are still being compiled, and the advisory group will use these results to inform policy revision to promote the safety of all members of the campus community.

# Summary and Future Directions

Chapter 3 demonstrates how UB meets the criteria addressing ethics and integrity (Standard 2). UB senior leadership and administrative offices strive to achieve our mission and goals with the utmost of integrity, and UB's policies and procedures comply with SUNY regulations, policies and procedures. We strive for truthfulness and transparency in communications with constituents and work to ensure that members of the administration, faculty and staff are free of conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest. There are several mechanisms in place for members of the campus community to file grievances when necessary. Looking to the future, we will continue to uphold our high standards for ethics and integrity.

# Curriculum, Learning Assessment and Program Effectiveness

UB has the widest range of academic programs in the SUNY system, including over 140 undergraduate majors with more than 70 combined undergraduate/graduate, more than 80 undergraduate minors, and more than 340 graduate, professional and advanced certificate programs. Six undergraduate degree programs are offered overseas at the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) and two graduate programs are offered at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in downtown Buffalo. Concordant with UB's mission and our strategic goal to provide transformative, innovative and research-grounded educational experiences, UB's academic programs and courses are designed to be rigorous and to promote a coherent and meaningful learning experience. With support from key offices in academic affairs, our expert faculty engage in the design, delivery, and assessment of programs and courses. Processes related to curricular development, approval and assessment of program and teaching effectiveness are described in this chapter. Evidence presented here corresponds to Standards 3 and 5.

# Curricular Development and Approval

The university takes multiple steps to ensure the quality and rigor of academic programs, including online programs and those offered at our two additional locations. Course and program proposals, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels,[187] are initiated by faculty and governed through faculty oversight bodies and university, SUNY and NY State Education Department (NYSED) policies and regulations.

At the undergraduate level, the UB Faculty Senate has oversight of the curriculum and degree requirements. The Undergraduate Associate Dean's Council (UADC) is charged by the Faculty Senate with developing the vision and policies that shape the undergraduate experience at UB.[188] This council is convened by the dean of undergraduate education. Membership includes the undergraduate associate deans from all academic units that offer undergraduate programs, along with representatives from academic support units (e.g., Office of the Registrar, undergraduate admissions) and the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate representative serves as the liaison to the Faculty Senate Academic Grading and Policies Committee. For new program proposals, the dean of undergraduate education adheres to the curricular review policies delineated by SUNY.[189]

At the graduate level, the Associate Graduate Deans Council (AGDC)[190] is convened by the dean of the Graduate School and includes the graduate associate deans from all academic units that offer graduate and/or professional programs. In addition, there are representatives from international education, University Libraries, and the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT). The associate dean for academic services in the Graduate School also sits on the council and serves as the liaison to the Faculty Senate Academic Grading and Policies Committee. All graduate and professional programs must adhere to the curricular review policies delineated by SUNY.

Academic units also have curricular oversight bodies according to their bylaws. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Undergraduate Curriculum Committee[191] is composed of faculty from across CAS departments. The committee reviews undergraduate new course proposals, changes in undergraduate degree requirements, and new undergraduate degree proposals for submission to the UADC. The Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Education provides an example of unit-level course review and approval in graduate programs.

New course and degree program proposals, as well as course and curriculum revisions, originate at the faculty or program level. Proposals are first reviewed at the department level and approved by curriculum committees within the academic unit. Approved proposals are forwarded to the undergraduate or graduate associate deans council for university-wide approvals. Course proposals must include appropriate learning outcomes, mapping of content and assignments to these outcomes, and must conform to campus, SUNY and NYSED syllabus requirements. The councils meet monthly to review and approve proposals. In addition to ensuring that proposals contain the elements required by SUNY, they also look for redundancies with existing programs and courses. Additional considerations include the qualifications of the proposer(s) to develop, deliver and assess new programs/courses. They also ensure that the sponsoring unit/department has the resources to effectively deliver the program/course. Courses and minor curricular changes are approved at the campus level. New programs or programs with significant change (for example, a third or more of the minimum credits for the award) and licensure-leading programs require additional approvals by SUNY and the NYSED.

New programs are approved through a multi-stage process that begins with a program announcement/letter of intent to SUNY. After SUNY approval, a formal program proposal is submitted that includes results from a visit and external evaluation by faculty from peer institutions that offer similar programs. New program proposals include program learning outcomes (PLOs) and a curriculum map of how those learning outcomes are met via the program's academic requirements, as well as a list of all participating faculty and their academic credentials to ensure they meet minimum qualifications as dictated by New York State education regulations. Course syllabi must adhere to university,[192] SUNY and NYSED requirements.[193]

When necessary due to significant changes or licensure requirements, program change proposals are also submitted to SUNY and include similar elements to new program proposals, but without the need for external review. Any new courses associated with the program since last registration are included in the vetting process. Once new program or change proposals are approved by SUNY, they are sent to the NYSED for final approval and program registration. In the case of some licensure programs, NYSED review includes review by the appropriate state board of professions.[194]

In 2022, UB finalized a contract with Modern Campus, formerly DigArc, for a new catalog and curriculum management system. Acalog and Curriculog replace our homegrown systems and manual process with an enterprise-wide solution to:

- Improve overall catalog management;
- Become a one-stop solution for curriculum management;
- Ensure consistency and transparency to the curriculum creation and revision processes for faculty and administrators; and
- Provide catalogs for undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, supporting students' academic journeys.

The first undergraduate catalog developed in the new system was launched on March 20, 2023. During the 2023-24 academic year, the platform is being used to improve the transparency and efficiency of the curriculum review process for both undergraduate and graduate courses and programs.

## ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

UB leads the SUNY system in the depth and breadth of micro-credentials. The Office of Micro-Credentials has shepherded the expansion of experiential learning beyond stand-alone experiences to an achievement-based model, facilitating the creation of more than 86 micro-credentials.[195] Credit-bearing and non-credit options are available to both undergraduate and graduate students and can be proposed by both academic and non-academic units. Each micro-credential is unique. Completion of non-credit opportunities is recognized with a digital badge, while credit-bearing micro-credentials are noted on the transcript. They are vetted within the Office of Micro-Credentials as well as the appropriate associate dean's councils. Since the first micro-credentials were offered in 2019, 3,582 have been awarded. Of students who have completed micro-credentials, 81% indicate that their micro-credential has or will improve their job prospects, 97% reported satisfaction with the amount they learned in their micro-credential, and 91% believe their micro-credential allowed them to gain knowledge or skills aligned with their long-term goals.[196]



Students participated in a two–day bootcamp event, hosted by Blackstone LaunchPad in August 2019. The experience was facilitated by two local entrepreneurs, David Thiemecke and Elijah Tyson. It took place on north campus as well as at the Innovation Center in downtown Buffalo. The Startup and Innovation CoLab powered by Blackstone Launchpad is addressed in detail in Chapter Five.

# General Education - The UB Curriculum

The UB Curriculum (UBC), implemented in fall 2016, is our innovative, student-centered approach to general education for all undergraduates. UBC was created to align with MSCHE, Liberal Education and America's Progress (LEAP) and Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) recommendations and learning outcomes, and meets all SUNY requirements for general education.[197] The program utilizes AAC&U proven high-impact educational practices, such as a first-year seminar and global learning, and provides opportunities for students to actively integrate and reflect upon their learning by means of a signature capstone course. UBC is a universal program for every undergraduate, including transfer students, that provides a common student experience and therefore serves as a core educational framework for all UB students.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The UB Curriculum consists of four components (40 credit hours):[198]

- **UB Seminar:** The UB Seminar is the entryway to a student's UB education. All new students must take a UB Seminar in their first term of matriculation. With over 100 topics from a variety of disciplines, students in most majors can engage in a topic of their choosing as they begin their academic journey. First-time students take a 3-credit seminar, while transfer students take a 1-credit seminar.[199] In some academic units, students complete a seminar specific to their majors.

- **Foundations:** All students complete courses in four foundational areas: diversity, communication, quantitative reasoning and scientific literacy. These courses promote critical thinking, creative problem-solving, enhanced communication skills, cultural competencies and ethical and analytical reasoning.[200]

  » **Communication Literacy Sequence (7 credits):** Communication Literacy is a two-course writing sequence. The first course establishes strong foundations in writing, rhetoric, and oral and visual communication, while developing strategies to organize, evaluate and manage enormous quantities of information.[201] The second course adopts a "writing in the disciplines" model focused on the skills required to develop a professional voice through opportunities to write on substantive issues arising from the major.[202]

  » **Math and Quantitative Reasoning (4 credits):** This requirement provides a basis for developing skills in mathematical and quantitative literacy. Students choose one course from over 20 options.[203]

  » **Scientific Literacy and Inquiry (2 courses totaling at least 7 credits, including a lab):** This sequence promotes scientific literacy through a basic understanding of the sciences covered, along with an active exploration of how scientific discoveries are made, how they are subject to forms of manipulation, how they have impacted society in the short and longer terms, and their ethical and cultural implications.[204]

  » **Diversity in the United States:** Cultural competence is a foundational skill that every student should be able to demonstrate prior to graduation. As such, Diversity in the United States courses, fulfilled through the Pathways, serve to equip students with the cultural knowledge and awareness necessary to live, work and create with the diverse groups that characterize the United States.[205]

- **Pathways:** Students complete a Thematic and a Global Pathway to develop a deep knowledge base in a chosen topic and learn how different disciplines approach a similar line of study.[206] Global Pathways offer tracks in Global Reflection, Language and Culture (including study of languages other than English) or International Experience (allowing students to apply study abroad courses).

The Thematic Pathway offers five broad topics: environment, health, humanity, innovation and justice. Each Pathway requires a minimum of nine credit hours. The Pathways are built on the broad disciplinary areas that serve as the building blocks of a liberal arts education. These "UB Areas" correspond to the knowledge areas of the SUNY general education requirements (SUNY-GE). The undergraduate catalog includes an approved list of Pathway topics.

- **Capstone:** This signature element of our general education program supports holistic reflection of UBC learning experiences. It is a one-credit course for which students create a reflective and integrative Capstone ePortfolio based on their UB Curriculum coursework and lived experiences outside of the classroom.[207]

## ASSESSMENT OF THE UB CURRICULUM

The learning outcomes for each component of the UB Curriculum align with, and map to, the overall program learning outcomes of the UB Curriculum.[208] In accordance with the UB Curriculum Assessment Plan, mandated by the Faculty Senate, Middle States and SUNY, data on student achievement of the component learning outcomes are collected and reviewed regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of each component overall and inform adjustments that might be necessary as we strive for continuous improvement. The current assessment plan is based on a four-year cycle, with two or more components being assessed each year.[209] Faculty oversight is provided by subcommittees[210] that oversee each component and determine and develop the assessment plan, associated faculty rubrics and any relevant student surveys in consultation with the office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT), and the UB Curriculum office. The UB Curriculum office collects data and provides them in summary form to the related UBC subcommittee for review. The committee then writes a report and makes any relevant recommendations to the UBC Steering Committee.

For example, the relative success rates of transfer students who were placed into a 3-credit first-year seminar (due to their having completed fewer than 45 credits at transfer) was lower compared to those transferring with more than 45 credits who completed the 1-credit transfer seminar. To explore this finding more deeply, focus groups were conducted with faculty teaching both versions of the seminar, as well as with transfer students enrolled in the 3-credit version of the class. Focus group results and a review of best practices in the field led to an adjustment to the placement guidelines for transfer students entering with fewer than 45 credit hours. Beginning in fall 2023, all transfer students (regardless of credit hours) are taking the 1-credit seminar.

# Instructional Faculty

Highly qualified faculty are at the center of each student learning experience at UB, and they are responsible for developing, delivering and assessing academic programs in support of the university mission and goals in the areas of teaching, research and service. As of fall 2023, the undergraduate student to undergraduate instructional faculty ratio was 12 to 1, evidence that UB has sufficient instructors to meet the instructional needs of the institution (average student to faculty ratio among AAU public institutions is 18 to 1).[211]

UB employs a mix of full-time/part-time and tenure/non-tenure track faculty. Of the 2,785 faculty members (totaling 2,025 full-time equivalent, or FTE, faculty) employed at UB in fall 2023, 43.9% (1,223) were tenured or on the tenure track, 46.5% were female, and 26.5% were non-White (9.5% URM, 16.3% Asian, 0.7% two or more races). The University Factbook, maintained publicly by the Office of Institutional Analysis,[212] provides breakdowns by title, rank and demographics.

In addition to employing sufficient faculty, the university ensures faculty are qualified to carry out their work: 95% of full-time faculty have earned terminal degrees, while 88% of *all* faculty have earned terminal degrees.[213] Faculty hiring follows university and state procedures, and typically involves vetting by committees of qualified faculty as well as approvals by unit and university administration.

Faculty at UB are recognized for their extraordinary accomplishments in research, scholarship, teaching and service as evidenced by the number of faculty promoted to the highest rank of SUNY Distinguished Professor,[214] and the growing number of faculty receiving NSF CAREER awards, Fulbright US Scholar awards, and national and international awards that the Center for Measuring University Performance, National Research Council, and/or UB's academic deans identify as prestigious.[215] The university president recognizes faculty accomplishments across a broad spectrum of categories at the annual Celebration of Faculty and Staff Academic Excellence.[216]

The Graduate Faculty at UB is composed of world-class faculty who have been appointed to direct graduate student theses and dissertations. Annually, academic deans appoint new members; the roster is maintained by the Graduate School.[217] When appointed, faculty may be identified as members or associate members. Both can monitor graduate student research to ensure quality.[218] However, associate members may only serve as either committee members or as major advisors for master's students or for students in the doctor of audiology or doctor of nursing practice programs, and additional committee members for dissertation committees. Members may serve as committee members or as major advisors for both master's and PhD students and participate in Graduate School governance, including serving on the Graduate School's executive, area and divisional committees.

As described in previous chapters, in support of our Top 25 Ambition,[219] the university is poised to substantially grow the ranks of tenured and tenure-track faculty over the next two years in areas of great societal importance and university strength.

In addition, UB has made a strategic and concerted effort to increase faculty diversity to reflect the diverse student body. Among the innovative initiatives underway to improve faculty diversity are:

- The Visiting Future Faculty Program (VITAL),[220] which launched in spring 2022 with 22 VITAL scholars and has since grown to 35 scholars in the third cohort, on campus in fall 2023. The program is designed to help build faculty pipelines, enhance departmental recruitment networks, and increase the visibility of the cutting-edge research conducted by dissertation stage graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.[221]

- Launched in 2018-19, the year-long Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program,[222] in the College of Arts and Sciences, brings a cohort of highly accomplished scholars and artists to campus whose work elucidates social inequality and advances social justice for the university and Buffalo community.

- The President's Advisory Council on Race[223] developed comprehensive recommendations and a roadmap for implementation of steps to build faculty and staff diversity through recruitment, mentoring and retention. Resources have been developed for search committees to promote inclusive searches.[224]



Melissa White, a professor of music, leading a chamber music lesson with students (Baird Hall, Nov. 2022)

## FACULTY REVIEW, RE–APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE

While all faculty are reviewed annually by their department chairs and/or deans, review processes vary across academic units. Policies and procedures for promotion and tenure are established by the SUNY Board of Trustees[225] and are overseen by the vice provost for faculty affairs (VPFAC). Evaluations of faculty dossiers occurs at the levels of the department, academic unit, President's Review Board (PRB),[226] provost, president and SUNY chancellor. Parallel procedures are in place for the promotion of faculty in qualified ranks (non-tenure track); here the process, except for promotion to the rank of full research professor, ends with a decision by the dean.

Criteria and policies for promotion and tenure,[227] as well as relevant forms and templates,[228] are provided on the faculty affairs website. The former Faculty and Staff Handbook was reviewed and updated by a committee reporting to the provost in 2018 and has been made available online as University Policies & Guidelines for Faculty & Staff[229] on the Office of the Provost website. This document includes requirements and modes of faculty evaluation, as well as the criteria, expectations and procedures for re-appointment, promotion and tenure as applicable for tenure-track faculty, as well as faculty in qualified ranks (non-tenure track [NTT]). The Office of Faculty Affairs hosts annual workshops, open to all faculty, on tenure and promotion, the role of the PRB and post-tenure success for mid-career faculty. In addition, the role of the department chair in tenure and promotion is a regular workshop topic of the department chair leadership program conversation series.[230] New members of the PRB also are provided with onboarding and training about the policies and procedures connected to the tenure and promotion process, including access to the unit guidelines shared with the Office of Faculty Affairs.

A 2019 task force, charged by the provost, surveyed the landscape for NTT faculty on the path to promotion, opportunities for professional development and integration into the department or unit. The resulting report indicated that all units provide information to their NTT faculty regarding the path to reappointment and promotion, albeit with varying levels of detail and public availability. Exemplary online pages hosted by the units include those from the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the Graduate School of Education and the School of Public Health and Health Professions.[231]

Initial analysis of the 2022 Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey[232] indicates that, from the perspective of faculty members, UB has made progress in the clarity of tenure policies, as well as clarity of expectations for tenure and  for promotion to the rank of full professor since 2017, which are areas of institutional strength in comparison to our peers and the 2022 cohort. However, NTT faculty have lower satisfaction ratings in the areas of clarity of expectations for reappointment and promotion in ranks, compared to tenure-track or tenured faculty. Additional communications and outreach have been undertaken to increase understanding of the criteria and expectations for reappointment and promotion for NTT faculty.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH AND INNOVATION

To support faculty on their path to success through excellence in scholarship and teaching, and to help them achieve national and international recognition, UB provides a wide range of services, resources and opportunities through a variety of offices and partnerships. In 2016, a revised mentoring policy was promulgated by the provost and, based on the COACHE survey results from 2017 and 2022, mentoring is perceived to be a strength of the institution.[233]

The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is the central hub for information on policies, faculty development resources, awards and recognition, mentoring and faculty-related events, and has used COACHE results to inform improvements to services. Since 2014, the office has increased its engagement with faculty, made possible by the addition of two full-time staff members.

The office website has been restructured to make pertinent information for faculty more readily available. In addition to providing direct communications to faculty, the office:

- Organizes and hosts annual events, including New Faculty Orientation,[234] which takes place the week before fall semester starts and now includes specific panels for NTT faculty. The New Faculty Academy[235] program includes a fall track related to effective teaching practices and a spring track related to scholarship, writing and publishing.

- Provides workshops on promotion and tenure for ladder faculty and on pathways to success for mid-career faculty. Examples of new initiatives supporting faculty development and success include: a portal for faculty mentoring; regular workshops to raise awareness and increase participation in the US Fulbright Scholar Program; the UB Academy for Higher Education Leadership; a series of monthly conversations with department chairs; and participation in (and 2019 hosting of) the MAC Academic Leadership Development Program.[236]

- Support faculty in applying for and receiving national and international recognition for their scholarship through a new full-time position, the director for faculty recognition, that was created and filled in 2022. The director aids in strategically identifying award opportunities that will allow faculty to grow as scholars and teachers and helps to facilitate applications and nominations, including analysis of award pathways, writing support, training workshops and management of the application process. A comprehensive web-based awards and recognition portal provides faculty with resources and celebrates faculty recognized for their excellence in research, teaching and creative activities.[237]

Based on COACHE Faculty Survey results,[238] UB faculty perceive mentoring as a strength of the institution. Nevertheless, further revisions have been made to the Faculty Senate mentoring policy, and additional mentoring initiatives have been developed in the academic units and through Faculty Affairs in response to these results. Similarly, many new initiatives launched by Faculty Affairs have been created with an eye to faculty needs as expressed through their responses to the COACHE survey. In addition to generating new development opportunities, faculty affairs is increasing communication about these programs and resources, especially at the school and college level.

The Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT) in academic affairs provides comprehensive development opportunities for faculty in course design and delivery, teaching skills, educational assessment and review, and incorporation of innovative pedagogy and educational technology into their instruction.[239] Staff engage with faculty through online and in-person workshops, conferences, individual consultations and just-in-time online resources. CATT also supports university initiatives related to teaching and learning. In August 2023, the EDJI Faculty Fellows program was launched with 15 fellows from across the academic units to support the curriculum and pedagogy recommendations of PACOR. Through this program, faculty not only review their own courses for inclusivity but also work within their units to train and support other faculty. In addition, they work closely with the Graduate School to support the revision of the new course proposal/approval process to ensure that inclusive pedagogy is included.

# PROMOTING **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** AND EFFICIENCY

In 2021, UB merged the Center for Educational Innovation (CEI), which provided pedagogical support for instructors, and the Office of Educational Effectiveness, which provided support for educational and program assessment, into the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT). With expertise in curriculum and instruction, learning spaces and environments, and assessment and reporting, CATT serves as a comprehensive resource for instructors, academic units and academic support units to support educational excellence, program effectiveness, and student success.

CATT combines complimentary assessment and programmatic review strengths with instructional and pedagogical expertise into one efficient office. This structure enables the office to better support academic units and instructors in gathering and leveraging data to enhance curricular and instructional design, create and support learning outcomes, incorporate technology into courses, and design and use effective learning spaces.

Among the office's broad responsibilities, CATT oversees UB's comprehensive program review process, annual program assessment, and course evaluations; provides a range of instructor development courses for faculty and teaching assistants; promotes inclusive pedagogy and ensures that educational technologies are accessible to all learners; and oversees the UB learning management system, managing the transition from Blackboard to Brightspace. During the pandemic, CATT was instrumental in enabling UB to transition quickly to fully remote instruction by providing training and resources for instructors, many of whom had never taught online. By enhancing UB's educational programs and promoting student success, CATT is critical to advancing UB's mission of academic excellence and achieving our Top 25 aspiration.

The University Libraries provide a broad array of resources and services[240] to support UB faculty and teaching assistants in the areas of instructional technology, teaching, research and scholarship, and publishing. The LINKT center (Learning, Instruction, Knowledge, and Teaching), created in 2021, supports instructors and students with the integration of technology and digital materials into the learning process, as well as in the creation of podcasts and instructional videos, and provides training in the use of instructional technologies.

UBIT supports faculty with their computation and technology needs for teaching and research and, where available, through additional services in the departments and units.[241] In response to the pandemic, UBIT, University Libraries, and CATT created the Teach Anywhere website[242] to house information and resources related to online, hybrid and HyFlex course delivery.

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development provides research services, information on policies, compliance and IP/tech transfer, as well as training opportunities to support faculty in launching and growing their research endeavors.[243]

**Support and Recognition of Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs)**

CATT provides resources to support TAs in their teaching. Each fall, the week before classes start, new TAs are invited to the TA Orientation. This orientation focuses on the key aspects of teaching that they will need to know at the beginning of their first semester. Topics include training in the learning management system (LMS) and classroom technology, active learning approaches and assessment and grading. The orientation ends with a panel of experienced TAs who share their own experiences and respond to questions from the participants. Beginning in fall 2023, the TA Community of Practice is providing an ongoing mechanism of support. Through this initiative, TAs have the option of participating in regular, informal discussion sessions to ask questions and share ideas. In addition, special workshops are offered when specific needs arise. TAs are welcome to participate in any workshops offered by CATT.

When TAs are listed as a primary or secondary instructor for a course, they are subject to student evaluations of teaching.[244] In many departments, such as history and sociology, graduate faculty provide mentorship and support to promote development of effective teaching skills.[245] There have been some concerns expressed in evaluations regarding the English communication skills of international TAs. As a result, the Graduate School is considering changing the processes by which international TAs, GAs, and RAs establish language proficiency. Rather than requiring a minimum score on the SPEAK test, the Graduate School is considering requiring a minimum TOEFL score for non-native English speaking graduate students to become TAs. CATT performed an analysis to correlate ratings from student evaluations with TOEFL scores to inform consideration of a minimum TOEFL score.[246] The data are currently being reviewed, and changes to existing Graduate School policies may be forthcoming.[247]

The Graduate School provides a variety of professional development opportunities for all graduate students (described in Chapter 5). In addition, the Graduate School sponsors the Excellence in Teaching Award for TAs. This award is given in recognition of exceptional ability in teaching by graduate TAs. Recipients are selected based on superb and creative performance in the classroom or laboratory, engagement with mentoring and advisement, and a commitment to high academic standards in teaching.

## INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The university provides a variety of resources to accommodate a broad range of teaching needs[248] and to create effective learning environments.[249] One of the primary resources is the learning management system (LMS), branded as UB Learns and powered by Brightspace (as of fall 2023). Support for the LMS is provided by the UB Learns Support Team, housed in CATT. Instructors use UB Learns for in-person and online courses to provide learning materials to students, facilitate communications, collect assignments, deliver quizzes and post grades. The UB Learns support team provides extensive training and support for instructors.[250]

Faculty can reserve classrooms and explore available classroom technologies through the new UB Space Request System.[251] Department schedulers may also request classrooms based on features, such as live streaming capability.

To accommodate different teaching modalities (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid and HyFlex), necessary software, such as Zoom and Panopto, are available and integrated into the LMS. However, in-person instruction is an institutional priority.

As noted in Chapter 2, the university registrar serves as the facilities planning and management officer (FPMO) for centrally scheduled classrooms, and chairs the Instructional Facilities Operations and Utilization Subcommittee to support renovations to existing classrooms and the design of new classrooms.[252] Initiatives to support the creation of effective learning environments include the provisioning of all classrooms with the technologies needed to support different teaching modalities. As discussed in Chapter 2, UB is also committed to collaborative learning experiences and is working to ensure that classroom furniture is easily moveable.

## PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

UB has established a variety of processes to communicate with students regarding their degree requirements and their progress in meeting those requirements, along with necessary supports to promote academic success. Programmatic and co-curricular supports, as well as extracurricular support for both graduate and undergraduate academic success, are described in detail in Chapter 5.

### Undergraduate Students

There are several mechanisms through which progress in the degree program is communicated to students. When students first select a major, they can find program requirements and a four-year curricular plan in the Undergraduate Catalog.[253] Through UB's student information system (PeopleSoft), students can access their Academic Advising Report (AAR).[254] The AAR shows university, general education and program requirements, indicating those that have been satisfied and those that have not; the cumulative GPA; total credit hours taken; repeated courses and those taken S/U; notation of incomplete courses; test scores and credits granted for Advanced Placement (AP) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations; and all completed courses, including transfer courses.

Each academic unit has a centralized advising office[255] that provides guidance to students on academic choices and helps them understand academic policies and requirements. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Student Advisement Services has discipline-specific advisors who provide direct consultation to undergraduate students as they work to achieve their academic and career goals.[256] Within the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), each student has a professional academic advisor[257] and a faculty advisor in their chosen major. Students use a program flowsheet[258] to help them navigate their program requirements (For more information about undergraduate advising, see Chapter 5).

In addition to helping students understand the requirements of their academic programs, UB also provides resources to help students understand their achievement and success in individual courses and in the major. Mid-semester evaluation[259] takes place between the fourth and seventh weeks of each fall and spring semester. All undergraduate instructors are asked to post midterm grades into the student information system to provide students with an indication of their progress in each course, allowing students sufficient time to seek assistance if they are struggling. In addition, mid-semester grades are accessible by academic support staff, who reach out to struggling students. Within select first-year courses (i.e., the UB Seminars and first communication literacy course), the early alert system (EAB Navigate) allows instructors to raise an alert during the third week of the semester if a student is showing behavioral signs of being at risk for failure, such as multiple absences from class, missing assignments or lack of engagement in the class discussion. When an alert is raised, students receive an email with information about existing resources and supports, and a case is launched for the relevant advisor to initiate contact with the student.[260]

The university academic standards review is a bi-annual process through which every student receives an academic status communication at the end of fall and spring terms (i.e., good standing, warning, probation or dismissal).[261] Several academic units also complete a similar review for students in their majors:

- SEAS has a well-established academic review process where students receive feedback at the end of each regular semester.[262] The first time a student is placed on "academic notice," a hold is placed on their record requiring them to meet with an academic advisor and complete a self-reflection worksheet.

- The School of Management has a similar process of reviewing students for success in the major requirements at the end of each fall/spring semester.[263]

- Students are reviewed on their progress within the pre-professional bachelor of science in architecture program on a semesterly basis.[264] This review determines the student's eligibility to continue onto the next level in the undergraduate preprofessional program and is based on specific course grade thresholds, as well as program GPA.

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

As with undergraduates, there are several mechanisms through which graduate and professional students are apprised of their program requirements and progress in the degree program. The Graduate School hosts academic program pages on its website,[265] with links to each individual program's webpage where specific degree requirements are outlined. These webpages are publicly available and, thus, available to both current and prospective students. In fall 2023, UB developed a comprehensive catalog for graduate and professional students with the implementation of Modern Campus and Acalog. Once admitted, each student is assigned an advisor who helps them navigate program requirements.

Departmental handbooks provide students with information about opportunities and support specifically for their degree programs. For example, within CAS, each department annually distributes a Graduate Student Handbook to the newly admitted cohort. These handbooks summarize the unique rules and policies of the graduate program and the department and conform to the graduate division's rules established by the Graduate School.[266]

All students have access to the student center inside the student information system, through which they can track their progress and achievement. Within the student center, they can see a record of completed courses, as well as grades for those courses and cumulative GPA. The AAR is available for students in master's and advanced certificate programs to communicate progress in completing requirements. The AAR is not available for PhD programs, owing to the wide variability in requirements.

The Graduate School requires an annual academic review of PhD students,[267] completed by the departmental director of graduate studies. This process includes a review of grades, course completion and progress toward degree completion. In addition, progress toward the qualifying exam and dissertation defense are examined. For ABD students, the dissertation advisor also participates in the annual review. Any graduate student who fails to remain in good academic standing is placed on academic probation for the subsequent semester.

Graduate students at UB are afforded opportunities for integrative learning, independent scholarship and creative activities as part of their degree requirements, provided through their academic programs with support from their advisors, who are members of the Graduate Faculty. Evidence and review of graduate student research participation and outcomes are integrated into faculty annual reporting, as well as central reporting by the Office of Institutional Analysis, via Tableau dashboards available to the Graduate School, UB senior leadership, deans and chairs. The metrics tracked are time-to-degree for both master's and PhD students,[268] outcomes and satisfaction through the Survey of Earned Doctorates and a PhD Satisfaction Survey,[269] and PhD student employment outcomes from Academic Analytics Alumni Insight.[270]
These metrics are specifically used to assess the PhD Excellence Initiative, which is focused on attracting high quality PhD students and supporting them, financially and academically, to degree completion.[271] Additional information about this initiative is included in Chapter 5.

# Program and Student Learning Assessment

UB has undertaken a data-informed approach to decision making for many years and has been building a strong culture of assessment since 2011. Assessment of educational effectiveness consists of annual assessment of achievement of institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs), comprehensive program review, student evaluations of teaching, and assessment of the student academic experience via several surveys.

# OVERSIGHT FOR PROGRAM AND LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Oversight for academic assessment is provided by CATT in conjunction with the Institutional Assessment Council (IAC), which CATT convenes and supports. Staff members from the Educational Effectiveness and Learning Analytics (EELA) team within CATT manage academic assessment processes at UB. The two most important academic assessment processes are annual academic program assessment and comprehensive program review. These two processes are described in more detail below, including how they promote continuous improvement of academic programs.

In addition to providing oversight for program and learning assessment, each staff member in EELA is assigned to one or more academic units to provide assessment support. EELA also supports the work of the IAC, which is charged with providing recommendations and guidance regarding the assessment of student learning outcomes in programs across the university, the professional development of faculty and staff in the areas of assessment and continuous improvement, and the recognition of best practices and excellence in assessment work.[272] Each academic unit is represented on the IAC, and these representatives also work closely with the CATT staff liaisons to provide oversight for academic assessment within their respective units.

## Assessing Institutional Learning Outcomes

Core capabilities of UB students were established as goals for student learning in Realizing UB 2020,[273] a strategic planning document developed and disseminated in 2014. These core capabilities guided development of measurable ILOs as proposed by the Institutional Assessment Council and the Faculty Senate Academic Planning and Assessment Committee. These ILOs demonstrate the intersection between teaching, research and community engagement,[274] are aligned with UB's strategic goals, and are consistent with UB's mission. The ILOs were approved by the Faculty Senate on May 14, 2019[275] and disseminated by the president on June 26, 2019.[276]

Over the past 12 years, UB has made a concerted effort to ensure that each academic program has PLOs and a curriculum map to align PLOs with course offerings. As those efforts have come to fruition, UB's focus has turned to mapping PLOs to ILOs thus ensuring that all levels of learning outcomes are consistent with UB's institutional mission.[277]

As we move forward in ensuring that all levels of learning outcomes are fully aligned, the IAC will review and interpret aggregate data relating to the achievement of ILOs and make recommendations for necessary improvements across the curriculum. In addition, the IAC will periodically review and propose refinements to UB's ILOs. Currently, the IAC is reviewing alignments of PLOs with ILOs and engaging in outreach to program coordinators for programs where these alignments are missing.

## Annual Student Learning Assessment

UB has developed centralized processes for supporting assessment of student learning in programs and collecting and tracking the results of these assessments. Given the size of the institution and the diversity of its degree programs, the task of making improvements to programs based on what is learned during the assessment process largely lies within the programs themselves and the units in which those programs are administered.[278]

All programs are expected to have measurable and achievable learning outcomes, with at least one being assessed each year and all being assessed on a three-to-five-year cycle. The focus of assessment is to review student achievement of learning outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

At the end of each academic year, program coordinators are required to complete an annual assessment report.[279] This assessment process is overseen by CATT and the respective IAC representative from each academic unit.

CATT maintains annual reports in the Annual Academic Program Assessment Reporting (AAPAR) system to share with external stakeholders, such as Middle States and SUNY. Deans, chairs, program coordinators and the respective IAC representative determines how assessment results are shared with stakeholders. As noted above, the general education program, UB Curriculum, shares results with Faculty Senate each year.[280]

Within the AAPAR system, PLOs are aligned with ILOs and specific courses. For each learning outcome assessed in a particular year, program coordinators enter information about the data collection method with a description of the criteria that students must meet to demonstrate achievement of the PLO and their findings, interpretation of them, and necessary improvements and/or actions that they have already taken to address the findings. This platform allows for a review of continuous improvement efforts within each program.[281] AAPAR has important limitations, however, in that it is designed primarily to collect narrative data and not to store the evidence on which the narrative reports are based. However, aggregate data on progress is available through customized reports within the system. Based on reporting for the 2022-23 academic year, PLOs for 99% of programs are being assessed. Based on the total number of PLOs (1,747), 84% have been assessed at least once; 76% of programs have mapped PLOs to ILOs, an increase of 20% over the last two years; and 70% of programs have mapped PLOs to CLOs, an increase of 18% over the last two years.[282]

Feedback on the quality of assessment work is communicated to departments through the PLO assessment rubric, which addresses effectiveness in assessing PLOs and students' performance in achieving them, as well as the degree of alignment of PLOs with ILOs.[283] After annual assessment reports have been reviewed and evaluated with the rubric, Tableau visualization dashboards are provided to each department by the respective IAC representative with feedback on assessment progress and continuous improvement efforts.[284] Rubric results are also reviewed by CATT staff members for areas of the report or assessment approaches that may be insufficient. Training and outreach are provided by EELA staff members and the IAC to address any gaps, and the IAC is working with EELA on the development of additional assessment training modules. In addition, they are developing a recognition program to highlight programs doing excellent assessment work. To date, EELA staff have taken the lead on the initial round of rubric completion, but they are also working with the IAC to develop a plan through which IAC members and program faculty can take a more active role in assessing assessment efforts.

## Comprehensive Program Review

In alignment with SUNY-wide policy, each academic program that is not accredited externally by a specialized accreditation agency is reviewed through the institution's comprehensive program review (CPR). The programs with specialized accreditation are reviewed regularly by these agencies to ensure that their practices align with evolving national standards.[285]

The CPR cycle has typically been 5-7 years, but with the large number of non-accredited programs, as well as the impact of COVID, the length of time between reviews has stretched to 8 years. CPR involves the following steps: (1) departments prepare a comprehensive self-study document outlining mission, goals and assessment of students' learning;[286] (2) a team of external evaluators visits UB and meets with students, staff, faculty and administrators at the decanal level and above; (3) the evaluators submit a report on their findings, which includes recommendations to the department and unit and is usually shared among a variety of stakeholders; (4) the department chair, academic dean, cognizant associate dean, associate vice provost for CATT, vice provost for academic affairs, dean of undergraduate education and dean of the Graduate School meet to review the evaluators' report and to establish agreed-upon action items; (5) 18 months later, the department chair provides a report on progress with respect to action items, which is shared with these same administrators.[287] The CPR process ends with a letter from the provost in response to the 18-month follow up, which identifies any additional areas that the department should continue to consider.

## ASSESSING TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Each semester, through the UB Course Evaluation system (UBCE), students at every level are invited to assess their courses and the effectiveness of their instructors. The adoption of a single university-wide course evaluation system and a set of common evaluation items was made after the last Middle States accreditation visit. Core UBCE questions, common to all courses across the institution, address learning outcomes by asking students to provide indirect evidence of the extent to which learning outcomes were conveyed clearly, as well as whether the course content helped students to meet learning expectations. Students are invited to comment on elements of the course they found particularly effective and to provide suggestions for improvement.[288]

Academic units and individual instructors are encouraged to customize course evaluations to obtain feedback from students on unit and instructor-specific goals and initiatives. UBCE results are available to instructors, department chairs and administrators in academic units, with instructors taking the lead on using results to inform course improvements.[289] Some programs also regularly conduct peer assessments of instructors.[290] To further support efforts to measure teaching effectiveness, CATT and the UBCE Advisory Committee have convened an ad-hoc committee to explore alternatives to course evaluations. In addition, in the 2022-23 academic year, CATT piloted a peer observation/peer shadowing program to help instructors improve their teaching with the guidance of a trained teaching mentor.

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered every three years to first-year undergraduates and those with 90 or more credit hours to collect information about the overall undergraduate experience.[291] The learning outcomes section of NSSE specifically asks students about the extent to which they engaged in activities and scholarship tied to the university's ILOs. Survey results are shared publicly, allowing stakeholders, including students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators and the public to review aggregate student responses.[292] These results serve as an indirect source of evidence for student learning that can be referenced in annual assessment reports and the CPR self-study.

To assess PhD students' perceptions of the academic experience, the Graduate School annually administers the Survey of Earned Doctorates and the PhD Satisfaction survey. As noted above, aggregate results are shared by the Office of Institutional Analysis via Tableau dashboards that are available to senior leadership, the Graduate School, chairs, program directors and graduate faculty to promote PhD program improvement.[293] While some academic units and individual programs survey master's students, there is no central satisfaction survey for these students.

## PROMOTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Academic units employ various methods to address assessment results, and how systematic they are in their continuous improvement efforts varies accordingly. Through this self-study process, brief narrative overviews of continuous improvement efforts were requested and provided by seven out of 12 academic units.[294]

CATT assessment liaisons work with all unit assessment liasons to provide additional assessment support as necessary and in response to different identified needs or gaps across the units. This helps ensure that all units are able to engage in high-quality and meaningful assessment of student learning.

In addition to the narratives collected from academic units, the following examples demonstrate how assessment results have been used to promote continuous improvement:

- **Improving student learning:** The primary focus of annual program assessment involves assessment of PLOs and the development of appropriate responses when students are not achieving those outcomes to the expected level.[295] For example, in economics, 70% of students meeting or exceeding the standard set was a baseline criterion for each PLO. This standard was met for each learning outcome, but department faculty feel this criterion could be more rigorous for key learning outcomes, such as "demonstrate the ability to read, evaluate, and interpret general economic information." As an action item, departmental faculty are working on better integrating this outcome into existing courses.

- **Improving pedagogy and curriculum:** UBCE allows for regular feedback to be collected from students for the classes they take, and this information can then be used by instructors to improve their courses. Department chairs and program directors also have access to the evaluations for all instructors in the programs they oversee so that they can address any concerns noted in evaluations.[296] Programs that make use of peer evaluations also provide opportunities for instructors to receive feedback to improve their teaching practices.[297] At the curricular level, annual student learning assessments reported in the AAPAR platform regularly prompt a variety of curricular changes to ensure an alignment of program offerings with learning outcomes,[298] and this is also a potential outcome of assessments connected to external accreditation.[299] The CPR process is especially effective in identifying cases where major curricular changes and updates would improve programs, and, given the number of levels of approvals required for changes and updates to be approved, the 18-month follow-up associated with CPR is an important means to ensure that recommendations arising from a CPR are or will be implemented.[300]

- **Reviewing and revising academic programs and services:** The CPR process, discussed above, is the most significant university-wide process for reviewing and revising academic programs, and, as discussed above, many programs are also reviewed by external accreditation bodies which provide a similar function. In addition, through the CPR and specialized accreditation processes, program needs are surfaced to deans, who can then prioritize these needs in relation to other strategic priorities within the unit. Needs that arise out of CPRs can also be submitted as investment requests through ARPP, described in Chapter 2.

- **Planning, conducting and supporting professional development activities:** At the university-level, COACHE survey data are the primary means for assessing faculty career success and satisfaction and for determining where faculty need additional support. Past COACHE surveys have contributed to the development of a variety of policies and programs, including some relevant to improving the ability of the faculty to teach effectively, such as an expanded New Faculty Orientation and professional development programs for faculty and chairs.[301] In 2022, CATT deployed a faculty needs survey to better understand professional development activities, satisfaction with services and desire for engagement within the instructional development space.[302] For example, one item on the needs assessment was related to the modality of CATT workshops, whether in-person or online via Zoom. Even post-pandemic, most instructors prefer online offerings.

- **Information for key stakeholders about UB and its programs:** Assessment processes include various means for communicating their results to key stakeholders. For example, the UB Curriculum reports to the Faculty Senate on learning outcomes assessment on an annual basis.[303] In addition, the CPR process incorporates a wide range of stakeholders including faculty, students, deans and members of the administration at various stages.

- **Improving overall student success, such as retention, completion, transfer and placement:** The university recently conducted a dedicated assessment on undergraduate student retention, resulting in a final report and significant supporting documents,[304] that has already led to several changes to improve student retention rates[305] and will also positively impact undergraduate completion. Examples include the UB Thrive summer bridge program and the use of student success coaches. At the graduate level, the PhD Excellence Initiative has led to improved support for PhD students and systematic efforts to foster practices that lead to improved PhD outcomes.[306] These programs and their impacts on the student experience and student success are addressed in more detail in Chapter 5.

# Summary and Future Directions

Chapter 4 demonstrates how UB meets criteria addressing the design and delivery of the student learning experience (Standard 3), as well as assessment of education effectiveness (Standard 5). Through well-developed processes and oversight, UB continues to ensure that all students are provided with rigorous and coherent educational experiences, which are designed and delivered by appropriately qualified faculty. Educational programs include a robust, newly designed, general education program for undergraduate students, as well as a wide array of opportunities for graduate student research and scholarship. These opportunities align with UB's strategic priorities in providing students with transformative, innovative and research-grounded experiences, promoting a university-wide culture of equity and inclusion, and achieving greater societal impact. Additionally, the university provides an array of institutional tools, processes and policies to ensure alignment of learning outcomes from course-to-program to institutional-level tools, and consistent processes for assessment and mapping of learning outcomes to university-wide ILOs. The IAC annually reports on continuous improvement efforts based on their AAPAR review, including tracking departments with mapped ILOs.[307] Assessment data for program learning outcomes are submitted annually and tracked through our internal reporting system. Through continued outreach and support from the IAC and CATT, we have made a tremendous amount of progress in student learning assessment since our last accreditation visit in 2014. In light of the variability in student learning assessment across academic units, it has become apparent that some units need additional resources to support assessment work.

Moving forward, the university will continue to support innovations in teaching and learning post-COVID, focusing on leveraging our new learning management system (Brightspace) and classroom technology investments (see Chapter 2) to support instructors in incorporating relevant technologies in mixed mode classrooms. We will continue to focus on updating classrooms and learning environments, as well as teaching labs. Additionally, we will continue to evaluate and improve methods for learning assessment. For instance, although our current, campus-developed assessment reporting system has allowed us to document and report on campus-wide learning assessment, we plan to consider third-party systems which could enhance efficiency, as well as provide more options for reporting to inform curricular decisions. Also, an exit survey for master's students, like the PhD student exit survey, could provide useful information for tracking master's student outcomes. In addition, to help promote consistency in student learning assessment across all units, it is important that all academic units have resources to commit to assessment work, including an assessment officer to oversee and support student learning assessment within the unit.

# Fostering Student Learning and Success

As the largest educational institution in the State University of New York (SUNY) system in terms of total enrollment, UB attracts excellent students who possess the attributes and aptitude for success. The institution has implemented a variety of processes and programs to retain students, enable them to complete their degrees, and promote their success. In addition, to foster a welcoming and exciting climate where students can explore their interests inside and outside the classroom, UB has developed a strong network of co-curricular and academic enrichment programs. Efforts to promote student learning and success, and to provide an engaging and beneficial student experience, are described in this chapter, which corresponds to Standard IV: Supporting the Student Experience.

## Student Recruitment and Admissions

The vice provost for enrollment management oversees strategic enrollment planning and recruitment, admissions and enrollment activities for undergraduate and international students, and graduate enrollment operations services. Graduate and professional admissions are handled at the department or school level. Policies and procedures related to recruitment and admissions, as well as policies related to transfer and alternative credit, costs, aid and scholarships, are described in this section.

# UNDERGRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

The Enrollment Management Strategic Content and Marketing Team oversees undergraduate admissions recruitment and enrollment materials, marketing and communications. This team works directly with other offices throughout campus that support the academic journey and campus experience of undergraduate students to ensure the messaging shared during the recruitment process accurately reflects the services and experiences delivered to students. Content is developed and delivered through multiple channels/media throughout the recruitment process. Messaging is reviewed throughout the cycle and is updated annually or as needed.[308] To support students through their college search and enrollment process, the offices of admissions and financial aid hired shared staff serving as enrollment services advisors. These advisors assist prospective students and their families with the college search and selection process and provide information regarding admissions policies and procedures, academic programs, scholarships, the financial aid process, and the overall enrollment process.[309]

The Office of Admissions hosts multiple events in support of the university's mission of fostering a diverse and inclusive campus of student scholars. Programs include UB Live, an overnight program that brings accepted students from the Metro NY region, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo to the university to visit and participate in the annual Accepted Students Day, alumni panels, faculty and staff panels, and current student panels that feature panelists from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, and as a result of COVID-19, the university began integrating virtual programming to reach students who could not visit campus. The university has continued this virtual programming, which aids in information distribution and transparency. Virtual financial aid sessions allow prospective students to learn about applying for financial aid and important deadlines, needed tax information, types of available aid and how to find scholarships. There are also live virtual visit UB sessions, where prospective undergraduate and international students learn more about the admissions process, along with regular on-campus tours and prospective and admitted students' visit days showcasing academic and campus life.

Undergraduate students can apply using the SUNY, Coalition for College SCOIR or Common applications.[310] In 2016, UB invested in the Slate Technolutions customer relationship admissions management system to strengthen communication with prospective students during the college search and application process. As a result of our efforts, the university has seen a steady increase in applications for undergraduate students since 2014.[311] While the number of applications has increased, the university has intentionally held undergraduate first-year enrollment, domestic and international, to between 4,000 and 4,200 over the past six years. The university continues to look to improve the overall profile of the undergraduate cohort and enroll a diverse class of student scholars.

As described on the undergraduate admissions website, admission to UB is based on a holistic approach that considers all aspects of a student's application, including both academic and noncognitive factors.[312] The high school average, class rank and strength of the high school record are reviewed. A personal essay, recommendations, documented evidence of exceptional creative talent, demonstrated leadership, community service, socio-economic environment, family unit and special life circumstances are also considered. The university supported SUNY's decision to be temporarily test-optional in the fall of 2020 as well as its May 2023 decision to allow campuses the flexibility to remove this requirement.[313]

## EOP Recruitment

UB hosts an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), offered by SUNY, which provides access to higher education and academic and financial supports for students who have not yet reached their academic potential due to educational and economic barriers.[314] EOP and the Office of Admissions work closely to recruit and enroll eligible students, through targeted outreach including presentations at large campus events, virtual information sessions offered in English and Spanish, EOP pop-up programs in the Metro New York Region, and personalized communication to EOP applicants from EOP and enrollment services advisors.

## Undergraduate Transfer Admissions

As one of the nation's leading public research universities, UB is a compelling choice for transfer students from institutions around the world. In 2014, the university hired a director of transfer student experience in support of these students. In 2016, the university expanded the transfer enrollment team to include an assistant director and in 2017 the team added a transfer counselor. Transfer students can also apply via the SUNY or Coalition for College SCOIR applications.[315] Students who have completed 12 or more college-level credits after high school graduation are considered transfer students for admissions review. Transfer applicants who have completed 24 or more college-level credit hours at the time of application are reviewed for admission based on their previous college record. For transfer applicants with less than 24 college-level credit hours at the time of application, the admissions team also will review applicants' high school course work for the admissions review. Transfer specific programming is offered to prospective and admitted transfer students, including on campus and virtual transfer information sessions.[316] Students transferring from other SUNY institutions are supported through system-wide seamless transfer policies as well as predetermined "transfer paths" which specify common first and second-year degree requirements across SUNY campuses.[317] Prospective students can use the Transfer Articulation and University Requirements at UB System (TAURUS) tool to see how their transfer courses will be articulated at UB.[318]

Since 2019, the university has experienced significant declines in transfer enrollment.[319] Factors attributed include declining enrollments at local and state community colleges, as well as in Western New York institutions, capacity in popular majors such as nursing, declining international student transfer enrollment and the increasing costs of college. To address transfer enrollment challenges, the campus has embarked on refining and rebuilding admissions and other pathway programs, increased opportunities for admitted transfer students to visit the campus and build community connections, invested in new transfer student transition awards and transfer student lead generation services, and is at the conceptualization phase of a transfer student center. Starting in spring 2024, UB is participating in a SUNY initiative that provides targeted support for transfer students. UB TrACE (Advancing Completion through Engagement for Transfer Students) provides up to 150 eligible transfer students with support to finish their degree on time, including fee assistance, textbook expenses, comprehensive personalized advisement, academic support and career development.

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS



Graduate and professional student recruitment and admissions processes are decentralized because of the specialized nature of graduate programs. Enrollment targets are decided and agreed upon by the academic units and university leadership. UB has seen an increase in graduate enrollment since 2018, with a large increase from 2019 to 2020.[320] While the Graduate School (within central academic affairs) establishes and upholds the minimum standards for admissions for master's and doctoral degrees and advanced certificates, some programs also set stricter admission requirements. Academic units are responsible for the recruitment of graduate students and review of applications, with support from the central graduate enrollment services office, which reports to the vice provost for enrollment management. Faculty admissions committees review admissions applications and decide which students to admit and which will receive internal funding. Each academic unit is responsible for establishing, publishing, enacting and maintaining professional program admission standards in accordance with the specialized accreditation expectations and requirements of their professional program(s).

The Graduate School Executive Committee voted in 2022-23 to permanently waive the university's requirement of submission of a national standardized exam (primarily the GRE) for PhD programs, leaving the decision to individual departments and programs. Additionally, academic units have received training on holistic admissions since 2021.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS

UB's Office of International Admissions manages marketing, recruitment, admissions processing, transfer credit evaluation and yield follow up to the point of enrollment for all international undergraduates. Typical international recruitment events include attending college fairs sponsored by agencies (such as Council of International Schools, Fulbright and Education USA) and government and non-government offices, as well as visiting key high schools, US embassies and consulates and hosting and presenting to alumni and parent groups. Information regarding admission requirements and processes as well as immigration-related requirements, tuition, and fees are available on the international admissions website.[321] The application review process is very similar to the domestic review process. It is based on a holistic approach that accounts for both academic and non-cognitive factors. International students are not required to submit SAT/ACT test scores, in part because SUNY/UB are currently test optional, and also because these tests are not available in all countries. International applicants are required to demonstrate English language proficiency; English language proficiency tests do not fall under the 'test optional' policy. Foreign transfer credits are accepted if they are college-level credits from an institution accredited by an equivalent foreign accreditation body (such as a Ministry of Education).[322]

For international graduate/professional student populations, the international admissions office reviews all accepted student academic credentials to ensure that they hold a degree/credential determined to be equivalent to a US bachelor's degree. The international admissions office reviews both undergraduate and graduate financial documentation, immigration-related documents, and issues the I-20 Certificate of Visa Eligibility. All academic and financial documents are reviewed in-house; students are not required to utilize external evaluation agencies. The international admissions office adheres to all federal and state regulations that impact international students. The office also adheres to the policies and best practices of professional membership organizations (such as NACAC and NAFSA) for international recruitment, admissions review and immigration-related functions.

In August 2020, the international recruitment and international admissions offices were moved from the Office of the Vice Provost for International Education to the Office of the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. While the domestic and international admissions staff are in separate units, they work together collaboratively and anticipate integrating certain functions over the coming years.



Image from International Fiesta 2019 with the theme 'Human Nature.' The event is organized by the International Council of the UB Student Association.

# TOP 5 COUNTRIES: INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

2.7% Canada

4.5% Bangladesh

7.3% Korea

22.1% India

China 35.1%

# TOP 5 COUNTRIES: INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

Korea/Bangladesh 1.4%

2.0% Iran

2.6% Canada

10.7% China

India 71.7%
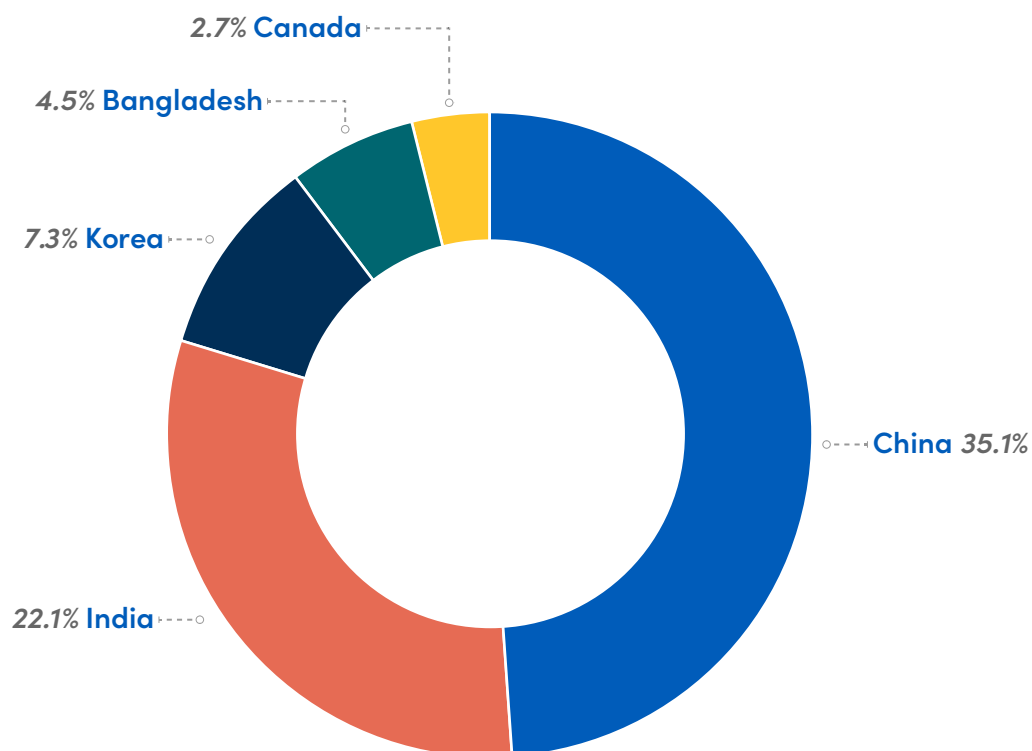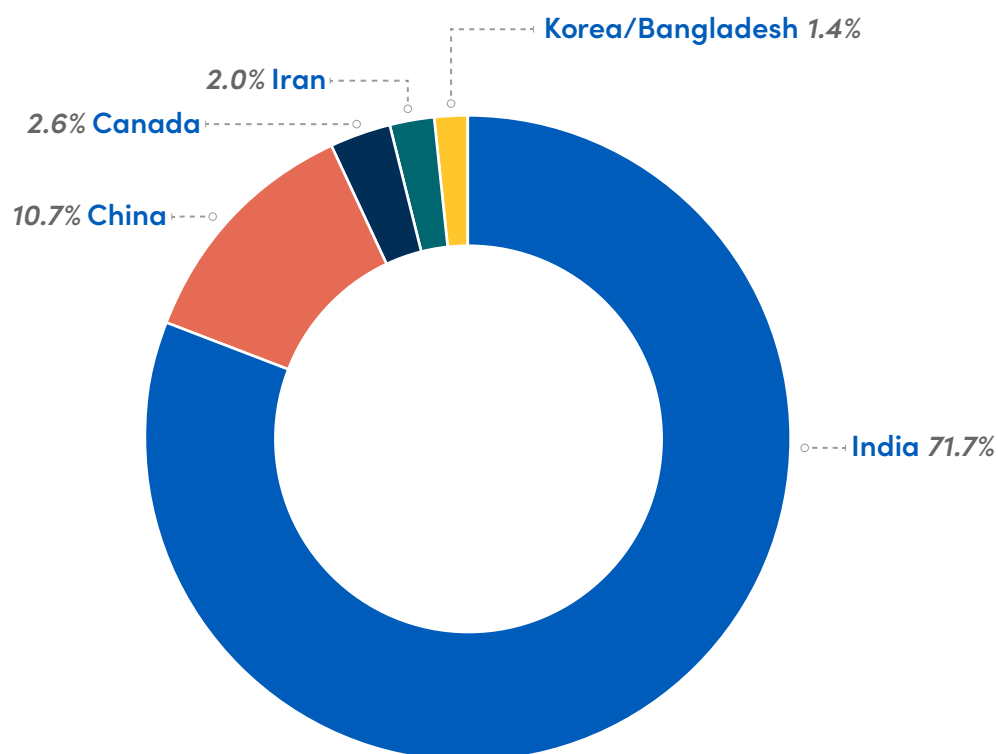
# TRANSFER AND ALTERNATIVE CREDIT

## Undergraduate Transfer Credit and Articulation Process

At the undergraduate level, UB accepts all college-level credits from regionally accredited two-year and four-year degree-granting institutions and has dual admissions partnerships for select undergraduate programs with local community colleges. Course articulations are guided by university policies and managed by the Office of the Registrar in alignment with SUNY policy.[323] All course articulations are approved by faculty with disciplinary expertise. Once a course has been reviewed and approved for articulation, the Office of the Registrar creates a course articulation that can be viewed through the Course Equivalency Guide in TAURUS. Students can search TAURUS by UB course or by external institutions.[324]

## Graduate Transfer Credit

Within each program, the director of graduate studies or department chair determines the applicability of proposed transfer coursework toward a UB graduate program. Among other Graduate School policies, only graduate courses completed at accredited or recognized higher education institutions and with grades of full B or better are eligible for transfer credit.[325]

## Methods for Alternative Credit

After enrollment at UB, undergraduate students may be awarded credit toward their degree through methods other than completing UB coursework including through standardized examinations (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate), military credit, and UB administered examinations. Methods for alternative credit are detailed in the undergraduate catalog.[326]

## Transfer to Other Institutions

The university facilitates transfer to other institutions through our "Leaving UB" process.[327] In addition, UB encourages students to discuss their plans with academic and financial aid advisors so they can fully understand potential impacts of remaining at UB or transferring. Students can also use resources available on the SUNY website (including Transfer Paths that ensure transfer of general education and major coursework) and UB's TAURUS website to understand how courses completed elsewhere would articulate to UB courses should they decide to return in the future.[328] When students decide to transfer, the Office of the Registrar provides easy access to transcripts, the cost of which is already covered under a semesterly transcript fee.[329] Per New York State law, transcripts are not held due to a student account balance, which facilitates transfer for students who are experiencing financial difficulty.

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN TRANSFER PROCESSES

The Office of the Registrar and School of Engineering and Applied Sciences collaborated on the development of an online course articulation submission, review and workflow process. Eliminating the use of PDF forms and physical signatures in favor of the online platform has significantly decreased review time, improved transparency in articulation decision-making, and removed accessibility barriers that were possible with PDF forms.[330]

## Data Security and Privacy

As noted in Chapter 3, UB is committed to student information privacy and complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). A summary of students' FERPA rights is included within the Student Code of Conduct. The Office of the Registrar, as well as registrars within professional schools, comply with FERPA and university information security policies, ensuring consistency across the institution. Students may block the release of directory information, as well as grant or revoke the release of non-directory information to third-party entities.[331]

To ensure compliance with FERPA and information security policies, faculty and staff must complete the Handling Data Safely course[332] prior to receiving access to the student information system (HUB). The course outlines the types of data that are of concern and the regulations in place to maintain privacy and data security. In addition, all enterprise-wide software applications and systems must be reviewed to verify not only that they meet accessibility requirements, but also that they maintain data securely.[333]

## COST OF ATTENDANCE AND STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

UB is recognized as one of the most affordable US public institutions for both in-state and out-of-state students, and as such, promotes affordability and accessibility in recruitment materials. Recognized as a best value college in Kiplinger's Personal Finance,[334] UB is a member of the Coalition for College,[335] an organization designed to improve access to higher education. Each year, UB awards $370 million in scholarships and financial aid.[336] UB provides numerous types of aid, including grants, loans, scholarships and work study for undergraduates and graduate students.[337] For the 2023 aid year, 7,488 matriculated students were Pell eligible.[338] UB demonstrates a strong commitment to first-generation students and students with economic or social barriers through the Educational Opportunity Program.[339]

Further, all prospective and current students are provided with several comprehensive resources regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds. Accurate and comprehensive information on cost of attendance is found on the admissions website and in printed materials.[340]

The Office of Student Accounts website also includes an overview of costs,[341] and the financial aid website includes an overview of costs, types of aid, and links to eligibility, resources and advising assistance.[342] Financial aid information is shared during admissions presentations and during large events. Since the pandemic, financial aid information sessions have also been held virtually. SUNY Financial Aid Days also provide students with a brief financial aid overview and assist students with FAFSA and TAP applications.

In addition, the SUNY Smart Track letter is sent to admitted students who submitted financial aid applications. To help students make informed decisions about college costs, the Online Net Price Calculator is available to compare basic aid.[343] The federal student Loan Simulator linked from our financial aid website helps students calculate student loan payments, choose a loan repayment option or decide whether to consolidate.[344] Finally, the UB Scholarship Portal provides a comprehensive source of scholarship opportunities for students, including eligibility and application information.[345]

## Graduate Student Funding

Funding for graduate education is primarily provided at the program level. Some programs admit with full funding packages, including tuition, stipends and waived fees, while others admit with partial or no funding packages. Funding packages are explained to students in their offer letters. PhD students are typically funded through teaching, research or graduate assistantships for at least some portion of their degree programs.[346] Traineeships (supported by federal training grants from agencies such as NIH or NSF) and competitive university or unit fellowships are also available, and the Office of Fellowships and Scholarships works with students to apply to nationally competitive programs. Students may also access financial aid in the form of federal loans and grants and through some state programs.[347] Recently, the Graduate School developed a comprehensive website to clarify funding methods and recruitment opportunities for graduate students.[348]

Centrally funded fellowships are made available to units for use in recruiting top graduate students, including the Presidential Fellowship program for outstanding new graduate students and the Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Program, which provides support to students who contribute to the diversity of the UB student body, especially those who have overcome a disadvantage or other impediment to success in higher education.[349] The WNY Prosperity Fellowship program supports entrepreneurially focused graduate and advanced undergraduate students preparing for careers in the region, through scholarships and paid internships.[350]

In 2019, based on input from across the campus, the university made a $10 million dollar investment to ensure competitive stipends for all full-time, fully funded PhD students through the PhD Excellence Initiative.[351] Funding packages include tuition and fee waivers along with a stipend of at least $23,000 for 10-month appointments and $29,900 for 12-month appointments. A process was instituted to reevaluate and adjust stipends every three years to remain competitive. $2 million dollars in recurring funds were earmarked to support the cost of broad-based fees for full-time, fully funded PhD students. More recently, UB instituted The Graduate School Fellowship, a new million-dollar investment in PhD student stipends. At least twenty students per year will receive a $10,000 top-off per year, renewable for five years, for a total value of $50,000.[352]

# Student Enrollment Trends

Total enrollment at UB comprises regular and external enrollment. Regular enrollment is funded by a prescribed state-tax appropriation and income from a prescribed tuition price specified in the State Education Law. Regular enrollment generally reflects students at UB's three Buffalo area campuses. External enrollment is funded through special contractual arrangements negotiated between a third party and the university and is generally off-shore. The majority of UB external enrollment is associated with UB's programs at Singapore Institute of Management (SIM). Fall 2023 total enrollment headcount was 31,889 with regular enrollment headcount at 30,381. Since 2013, UB's total enrollment has increased by 2,039 students (6.4%), the undergraduate level growing by 633 students (3.1%) and graduate level by 1,406 students (12.3%) (Table 5.1). The diversity of the university's student body has increased over the past 10 years with domestic students identifying as Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino and two or more races all showing increases in their share of the student population.

## TABLE 5.1: TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY LEVEL

| | Fall 2013 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2023 | 2018–23 Change | | 2013–23 Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | # | % | # | % |
| **Total Enrollment** | 29,850 | 31,503 | 31,889 | 386 | 1.2% | 2,039 | 6.4% |
| Undergraduate | 19,830 | 21,607 | 20,463 | –1,144 | –5.6% | 633 | 3.1% |
| Graduate & Professional | 10,020 | 9,896 | 11,426 | 1,530 | 13.4% | 1,406 | 12.3% |

## TABLE 5.2: TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY IPEDS RACE/ETHNICITY

| Race/Ethnicity Group | Fall 2013 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2023 | 2018–23 Change | 2013–23 Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 14,463 | 14,748 | 13,905 | –6.1% | –4% |
| International | 6,471 | 6,219 | 6,502 | 4.4% | 0.5% |
| Asian | 3,145 | 4,000 | 4,550 | 12.1% | 30.9% |
| Black or African American | 1,689 | 2,142 | 2,452 | 12.6% | 31.1% |
| Hispanic / Latino | 1,519 | 1,887 | 2,361 | 20.1% | 35.7% |
| Unknown | 2,010 | 1,747 | 1,038 | –68.3% | –93.6% |
| 2 or more races | 449 | 659 | 923 | 28.6% | 51.4% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 89 | 88 | 142 | 38% | 37.3% |
| Native Hawaiian | 15 | 13 | 16 | 18.8% | 6.3% |

# TABLE 5.3 TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY HIGHER EDUCATION HISTORY

| | Fall 2013 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2023 | 2018–23 Change | | 2013–23 Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | # | % | # | % |
| First-Time Undergraduate | 3,671 | 4,271 | 4,331 | 60 | 1.4% | 660 | 15.2% |
| Transfer | 1,957 | 1,900 | 1,334 | –566 | –42.4% | –623 | –46.7% |
| New Graduate | 3,512 | 3,319 | 3,608 | 289 | 8.0% | 96 | 2.7% |
| Continuing Returning | 20,710 | 21,958 | 22,562 | 604 | 2.7% | 1,852 | 8.2% |
| Total Enrollment | 29,850 | 31,503 | 31,889 | 386 | 1.2% | 2,039 | 6.4% |

To help plan for campus enrollment, UB submits an annual rolling enrollment plan to SUNY. The overall themes of the current SUNY enrollment plan are to enhance incoming student quality and maintain regular enrollment at current plan levels (30,000); maintain external enrollment levels; increase graduate admissions to offset declines in transfer students with a relatively stable freshman class size; and continue diversification of the student body through aggressive recruiting nationally, internationally, and throughout New York State. To help manage enrollment challenges and opportunities, UB continues to evolve its enrollment management tactics and organization.

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RETENTION AND DEGREE COMPLETION

At the undergraduate level, there has been a strong focus on designing initiatives to increase persistence and completion rates. Each fall, the Office of Institutional Analysis prepares a series of public and internal reports and dashboards that show the retention and graduation rates for various groups of students. UB has focused on student success and degree completion for many years. The target six-year graduation rate was achieved for the 2011 entering cohort in 2017. The target four-year graduation rate was achieved with the 2009 entering cohort in 2015. The Finish in Four program helped reduce the gap between 4-year and 6-year graduation rates from 20.4% for the fall 2007 entering cohort, to only 15% for the fall 2016 entering cohort (UB Factbook).[353] Even while the university made progress on improving graduation rates, retention rates have decreased, from 88.1% in fall 2014 to 84.5% in fall 2023 and have not risen to our target 91% rate.[354]

To address this concern, in 2020, university leadership charged a task force of faculty and staff from across central and academic units with improving the campus understanding of factors impacting retention, as well as developing recommendations to meet retention goals. The task force reviewed literature, best practices, UB and national data, and current efforts, producing a preliminary report. Subcommittees were then formed to deepen research questions and findings. The task force made recommendations in five broad areas: academics, barriers and paths; community building; data and assessment; and governance and communications.[355] Work to implement the recommendations is ongoing and includes:

- appointment of a senior-level retention coordinator jointly reporting to the vice provost for academic affairs and the vice president for student life;
- external evaluation of campus advising practices;
- gateway course improvement process;[356]
- strengthen ties between academic affairs and student life in student onboarding activities;

- implementation of student success coaches (see below for additional details); and

- launch of UB Thrive, a summer bridge and peer mentoring program for incoming first-generation and STEM students who need additional support (see below for additional details).

UB also participates in multi-university initiatives and consortia with a focus on student success and retention (University Innovation Alliance, APLU's Powered by Publics).[357] Shared best practices and funding through these consortia have supported campus programs including for first-generation students and students from historically underserved groups.

### Table 5.4 Four Year Undergraduate Retention (%)

|  | Retained Year 2 | Retained Year 3 | Retained Year 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Matriculated Fall 2017 | 86.8 | 76.9 | 69.0 |
| Matriculated Fall 2018 | 86.3 | 79.0 | 69.9 |
| Matriculated Fall 2019 | 86.7 | 75.7 | 66.7 |
| Matriculated Fall 2020 | 83.3 | 73.6 | 64.6 |
| Matriculated Fall 2021 | 83.5 | 74.6 | N/A |
| Matriculated Fall 2022 | 84.5 | N/A | N/A |

### Table 5.5 Five Year Overall Undergraduate Graduation Rate (%)

|  | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4–Year Graduation Rate | 56.7 | 60.4 | 59.3 | 60.8 | 59.9 | 59.0 |
| 5–Year Graduation Rate | 72.1 | 72.9 | 71.8 | 72.8 | 71.2 | 71.0 |
| 6–Year Graduation Rate | 75.3 | 75.5 | 75.2 | 75.1 | 73.6 | 73.5 |

## GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT RETENTION AND DEGREE COMPLETION

UB graduate and professional student retention and degree completion are primarily addressed by students' academic programs with additional support from central units. As noted in Chapter 4, graduate students can track progress to degree within the student information system, and the Graduate School requires an Annual Academic Review of PhD Students.[358] For master's students in the fall 2016 through fall 2021 cohorts, the two-year completion rate is 74% (92% earned degrees within 5 years). For professional students in the 2010-14 cohorts, 93.2% earned a professional degree in 7 years.[359] For students in PhD programs, the average eight-year degree completion rate is 58.7%. On average, master's students are completing degrees within 2 years (4 semesters), while PhD students are completing degrees within approximately 5.8 years (11 semesters). Time to degree and completion rates for PhD students differ across degree programs; for example, degree completion in eight years ranges from 100% for the School of Architecture and Planning to 53% for the College of Arts and Sciences. Time to degree along with other key metrics related to PhD students are collated and provided to units via a centrally produced dashboard.[360]

The dean of the Graduate School reviews time to degree and completion data annually with each academic dean and their graduate education leadership team; additionally, these metrics are reviewed with programs during the comprehensive program review process (see Chapter 4).

Per policy, master's degrees must be completed within four years from the student's first registration date in that master's degree program. Doctoral degrees must be completed within seven years of the student's initial formal matriculation in that doctoral program. Departments frequently work closely with students who are approaching the time limit for degree conferral, and can assist them in obtaining Graduate School approval to allow more time to complete degree requirements if reasonable progress is demonstrated. UB provides numerous academic support services for graduate students, as described below. Finally, UB continues to evaluate and increase financial support available to graduate students.

# Services to Promote Student Success and Retention

UB provides a comprehensive suite of services in support of all students' success and retention.

## ORIENTING STUDENTS TO UB

UB provides a comprehensive and coordinated orientation experience for new undergraduate students, conceptualized as "New to UB" programs and initiatives. Primary components of New to UB include summer orientation, Welcome Weekend, and year one support, as well as a strategic communication plan that begins at the point of students deposit and extends through the first semester.[361] All New to UB initiatives are guided by program goals and student outcomes that center on welcoming new students to UB, introducing them to expectations, strategies and resources that support their success as students; helping them identify and connect with supportive peers, faculty and staff; helping them manage the adjustment to life as a UB student; and guiding them in navigating the processes necessary to begin at UB.[362] New to UB is led by the Office of Orientation, Transition and Parent Programs with regular communication and input from campus stakeholders including advisement, undergraduate education and academic units.[363]

New to UB initiatives and outcomes are assessed in a variety of ways, both directly and indirectly, and data are used to inform decisions. For example, UB directly surveys a sample of participants for feedback when we update an individual session; in summer 2022, the "adjusting to academics" and the "our UB community" sessions at summer orientation were changed, so we asked students for feedback to determine achievement of outcomes and suggestions for improvement. In addition, UB examines participation data, disaggregated by categories such as race/ethnicity, first-generation status and Pell eligibility, and identifies trends to inform decisions.[364]

Orientation for new graduate students is provided by their academic programs and departments.[365] The Graduate School coordinates a collection of orientation videos for new graduate students from university service offices, which are incorporated into program and department orientation programs. Additionally, upon admission and during the second week of the term, newly admitted students receive a welcome email from the dean of the Graduate School providing them with information about graduate student support services provided by the Graduate School and other UB offices. For international students, the orientation office and International Student Services (ISS) work collaboratively to assist students with adjusting to a new academic and cultural environment.

## ADVISING SERVICES — UNDERGRADUATE

Academic advising is integral for student success and retention. UB offers a full range of advising services. All undergraduate students are assigned a professional academic advisor based on their major and/or affiliation with a scholarly community, program or student-athlete status.[366] Academic advisors are based in each academic unit, as well as in university-wide units serving specific populations (see below), with coordination provided by a central director of campus advising.[367] UB adheres to the National Academic Advising Association's (NACADA) core values of academic advising and participates in ongoing annual advisor training via NACADA, the Undergraduate Advisement Council and other professional development opportunities to continue to expand advising knowledge and skills and to further enhance the educational development of students.[368]

As per UB's academic advisement vision, mission, values, goals and student learning outcomes, advisors teach students to value the learning process, apply decision-making strategies, and develop thinking and learning skills to make informed decisions.[369] UB's Academic Advising Syllabus denotes advising best practices for an advisor to be responsive and available; to provide a welcoming environment; to have knowledge of courses, majors, graduation requirements and planning tools; and to build ongoing professional partnerships with students.[370] UB additionally incorporates a robust annual academic advising assessment process, which aligns with NACADA best practices.[371]

In 2022 and in response to the Student Retention Task Force, undergraduate advising undertook an external evaluation and self-study through NACADA. Recommendations included restructuring oversight and the physical locations of advising services, improving consistency in advising practices and services across campus units, promoting and improving the culture of advising as one of supporting student learning, creating a communication plan across advising and students, co-developing and sharing support technologies, and improving professional development and regularizing career pathways for academic advisors. Implementation of several of these recommendations is underway including reorganizing so that the director of campus advising now reports to the dean of undergraduate education and creating consistent processes such as continuing student major change. Communication planning and creating advising spaces are being considered as part of larger campus initiatives.

In 2014, UB invested in the Navigate student success system. Navigate combines workflow tools, student success markers, and coordinated feedback modules that allow advising, the Office of Student Success and Support Services and academic units to share an integrated view of student progress markers, raise alerts and track communications.[372] All undergraduate students are encouraged to use Navigate through a free mobile app that allows access to various university services and targeted notifications, emails and text messages from the university. Navigate permits students to instantly schedule a meeting with their academic advisor as well as other student support staff (such as tutors); stay on top of alerts, reminders, to-do lists and important deadlines; locate and connect to campus resources; sync their class schedule with their phone calendar; find study buddies (join a study group with other students in their classes); and explore best-fit majors and career information.[373] Navigate additionally allows advisors, faculty and other campus offices to raise alerts, cases, and progress reports on students to provide targeted intervention and resolution to address student needs and risk indicators. Since 2017, over 661,000 appointments have been recorded, serving over 63,000 distinct students. Additionally, student support staff have logged over 1.7 million messages in Navigate. This extensive network of information creates transparency across campus, helps to build a deeper understanding of the student experience, and better prepares student supporters for appointments and interactions with students. It also provides a holistic view of students, allowing for collaboration among all offices working to support individual students.

Academic advisors across campus provide targeted, collaborative outreach to students throughout the year in support of educational, career and life goals. Support and intervention occurs during crucial weeks each semester, including the promotion of key academic planning tools to students, as well as other resources to guide informed decision-making and timely degree completion.[374] Crucial weeks of undergraduate outreach include, but are not limited to the submission of faculty progress reports and mid-semester grades (weeks 4 - 8); next semester advising planning, including reminders about timely selection of major and winter or summer enrollment strategies (weeks 6 - 14); and outreach to students not enrolled in a timely manner for the upcoming term (weeks 14 - 21). Additionally, advisors promote and demonstrate several academic planning tools and resources to assist students with successful course planning, registration and timely graduation. These tools provide students with critical information on understanding UB Curriculum (general education) requirements; major requirements, including criteria for acceptance to their major; and courseloads necessary to make timely progress toward degree. Such tools include the undergraduate degree and course catalog, four-year curricular plans, HUB, HUB academic advisement report, the HUB transfer credit report and the Path Finder Tool, to name just a few.[375]

# STUDENT SUCCESS
## COACHES

As of 2022-23, based on recommendations from the Student Retention Task Force, UB has committed to developing a student success coaching program for first-year students.[376] The role of the student success coaches is to complement academic advising by offering one-stop support that addresses such areas as readiness, transition, and social and financial barriers to success and retention.[377] Nine coaches and a central coordinator were hired in winter 2023 and began working with first-year students experiencing academic difficulty and/or at risk for non-retention. Additional coaching hires are planned for 2023-24. Incoming students with risk factors for non-retention, who are not served by other special programs, will be assigned coaches who will remain with the students until the start of the second year, regardless of any changes to the students' majors.

## ADVISING SERVICES — GRADUATE

Academic advising for graduate students is provided through a combination of faculty and program support professionals in departments and academic units. As detailed in Chapter 4, master's and advanced certificate students can review progress towards degree in the academic advising report, and the Graduate School requires an annual academic review of all PhD students by their academic department.

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

### Tutoring and Related Support

UB's centralized tutoring center, Tutoring and Academic Support Services (TASS), provides comprehensive tutoring and academic support to all undergraduate students through one-on-one and group tutoring, academic coaching, peer mentoring, success workshops and more. The comprehensive TASS training program for tutors, coaches and peer mentors meets accreditation standards and is accredited through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). TASS collaborates with tutoring and learning centers across the university, including the Center for Excellence in Writing (CEW), The Math Place, the Department of Chemistry, the Mathematics Help Center, Athletics Tutoring, the Learning Hub in the School of Management, the Learning and Community Center, and the Academic Success Center for biomedical sciences students. All centers have a uniform approach for on-boarding tutors, offer extended training opportunities, and meet regularly to discuss best practices and determine other ways they can partner to best serve students. Services offered through TASS are also available in designated residence hall areas.[378] TASS offers a student success course (LAI 203) that is designed for first-year students going into their second semester and second-year students who are placed on academic warning or probation to correct and improve their academic situations. While not mandatory, students who have been identified as not meeting academic standards requirements are recommended to take the course. Assessment of LAI 203 has shown that students who complete the course make positive connections with resources and understand academics at UB relative to their success. In addition, those who complete the course show higher aggregate overall GPAs after course completion as compared to aggregate overall GPAs when entering the course.[379]

## Supplemental Instruction

To better support students' academic needs, TASS has launched a supplemental instruction initiative called Peer Assisted Learning (PAL). PAL is a peer-facilitated learning enhancement model designed to impact the way undergraduate students learn difficult content in specific courses. In addition to TASS, the CEW provides in-person writing assistance across all levels and all sectors of the UB community, as well as workshops targeting specific writing skills.[380] The CEW also supports international students whose first language is not English in understanding and writing assignments. The Math Place offers free drop-in tutoring for any undergraduate students taking intermediate algebra and precalculus, intermediate algebra and trigonometry and calculus courses.[381]

## Unit Based Academic Support

Academic units also offer specialized academic support consistent with their programmatic needs. For example, the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences convenes academic small groups to help students master core curriculum courses, while learning to approach problem solving in a manner that prepares them for upper-level courses. Academic small groups keep pace with weekly course content, assignments and exams, and are led by a professional faculty member with support from junior/senior-level engineering student leaders.[382]

## Academic Support Specific to Graduate Students

A variety of professional development opportunities are offered through the Graduate School, including the Network for Enriched Academic Relationships (NEAR), a transdisciplinary online mentoring directory to help students find faculty mentors and allies beyond their research area, and the Three Minute Thesis and Write Through programs to help with the dissertation process and communicating research broadly.[383] An institutional membership to Beyond the Professoriate, an online training platform for career development, supports graduate students as they assess their skills and apply them in both academic and non-academic careers.[384]

The Office of Fellowships and Scholarships provides support to graduate students applying for nationally competitive external funding (see p. 74).[385] A new addition to graduate professional development offerings is a series of grant writing workshops.[386] Twice a year, outside consultants teach one workshop for STEM students and one for students in the social sciences and humanities. In addition to external grants and fellowships, the Mark Diamond Research Fund and Graduate Student Association conference funding are two critical sources of support for graduate student research and scholarly activities.[387]

The CEW provides support to graduate and professional students across the institution who are writing their theses or dissertations. For those students serving as teaching assistants (TAs), as well as those who aspire to become TAs or find jobs in academia, the Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation (CATT) offers an annual TA orientation that takes place the week before fall classes start.[388] In fall 2023, CATT launched a new program to support development in teaching, the TA Discovery Series. This program includes a community of practice, as well as workshops on pedagogy and course design offered throughout the academic year. CATT is also available to TAs for individual consultation and instructional support.

The eighth annual Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT), hosted by the Graduate School and Blackstone LaunchPad, took place in March 2023. Economics PhD candidate Sandipa Bhattacharjee presented "'Approaching a New Era?' Impacts of India's Right to Education Act on Women's Family Planning Decisions" and earned second place and the people's choice award.

## Academic Support for Subpopulations and At–Risk Students

UB realizes that some subpopulations of students may benefit from additional resources and provides strategic programs that promote equity and access. Several of these programs are described below.

The **Cora P. Maloney Center's (CPMC)** mission is to provide a dynamic network of services and opportunities that promote access and academic excellence, ensuring that talented UB students persist and actualize their academic and professional potential.[389] CPMC offers academic and cultural programs and is also the home of the university's pre-college programs (Liberty Partnerships Program, Science and Technology Entry Program and Upward Bound), serving over 1,500 low-income and first-generation students as well as Buffalo middle and high school students. CPMC uses a nationally recognized model for access, opportunity and persistence to graduation and beyond and hosts the following undergraduate programs:

- The **Access to College Excellence (ACE)** program provides students with academic and holistic support during their transition from high school to college and their first two years of study at UB.

- **Student Support Services (SSS)** serves undergraduate students who are first-generation, low-income, and/or students with disabilities, helping them overcome academic, cultural and social barriers so they can succeed in higher education.

- The **Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)** supports talented underrepresented students pursuing STEM programs, licensed professions or health-related professions.

- The **Daniel Acker Scholars Program** supports high-achieving students with financial need, first-generation college students and underrepresented students. The program provides access to merit-based scholarships, individualized academic advisement, free tutoring, personal and career counseling, undergraduate research and internship opportunities, community service opportunities, community-building and academic enrichment activities, preferred housing for first-year students, sophomore shared-interest housing, guidance in preparing for graduate or professional school and support for successfully entering the workforce.

- The **McNair Scholars Program** serves low-income, first-generation students and underrepresented undergraduate student populations from all disciplines along their path to earning a PhD. McNair Scholars have access to a robust network of year-round support that includes graduate school preparation, funded research opportunities and the academic and personal development needed to excel in the highest levels of education.[390]

The **Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)** provides access to higher education and academic support for eligible students who have not yet reached their academic potential due to educational and economic barriers.[391] The EOP Summer Bridge program supports students' adjustment to the university and allows them to earn college credits. Each EOP student is assigned an EOP counselor who functions as an academic advisor, mentor and coach. First-year EOP students are encouraged to enroll in a First-Year Experience Seminar (CPM 101) taught by their EOP counselor, and they meet with their counselor once a week. EOP also offers sponsored classes, which provide a smaller class environment. In addition to any federal or state tuition assistance they receive, EOP students receive financial support in the form of direct aid.[392]

Students who are exploring majors or transitioning between majors benefit from the **Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center (EPAC)**, where dedicated advisors and targeted programming guides students in developing their academic goals.[393] First-year exploratory students take UE101: Major and Career Exploration, taught collaboratively by the Career Design Center and EPAC advisors, to increase their self-awareness of interests, values and academic strengths as well as to learn about campus resources to help make informed major decisions.[394] EPAC also provides specialized advising and support to students who plan to apply to medical or law school after graduation.

**UB's First-Generation Initiative** was launched in 2019 to support the academic, social and professional development of UB's first-generation, first-year students.[395] The program provides connections to campus resources, including peer mentors, events and celebrations and networking opportunities with faculty and staff. In summer 2021, in response to the Student Retention Task Force, the program expanded to include an optional summer bridge component (UB Thrive) in which incoming first-year, first-generation students along with STEM students needing additional support can complete courses for credit and participate in programming to aid in their transition from high school. About one-third of students invited to participate in UB Thrive enroll in and complete the program.

The **Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)** program seeks to diversify the STEM workforce by significantly increasing the numbers of students successfully completing high quality degree programs in STEM disciplines.[396]

The **Honors College** is a diverse learning community of high-achieving students who crave challenges and seek opportunities to express their intellectual curiosity.[397] Admission to the Honors College for most students is based on a holistic review of high school transcripts, extracurricular activities and honors-specific admission essays. High-achieving current UB students (first-time and transfer) can gain admission through a streamlined Advanced Honors program. All honors students benefit from an honors advisor, priority registration, faculty mentors, unique funding opportunities, honors programming and honors living communities. In 2023, the Honors College worked with program directors in the SIM program to expand program opportunities to students in Singapore. Since 2021, students from historically underrepresented backgrounds are invited to participate in Generation Honors, a unique summer bridge and continuing program that provides academic support and helps foster community and belonging among the cohort. Additionally, the Honors College has partnered with UB's graduate Schomburg Fellowship Program to provide peer mentors for undergraduate Black and Latinx honors students. Generation Honors Scholars from the 2021 and 2022 cohorts were surveyed about their experience and 100% of respondents indicated that they felt welcomed, connected, supported and prepared.

New to campus in 2023, the **Creating Undergraduate Learning Through Unity, Resources, and Equity (CULTURE) Program** supports historically underserved students, including Black, Latinx and Native American students at UB who are not affiliated with any special campus program. CULTURE aims to foster a welcoming campus environment and timely degree attainment. The program engages students through peer mentoring, specialized affinity groups, workshops and a living learning community, prioritizing a sense of belonging and connection to empower and support students on their academic journey.

A comparison of recent cohorts of eligible students who participated in UB Thrive, the peer mentoring/summer bridge program for first-year, first-generation and STEM students, to eligible students who did not participate, shows that the program is positively impacting student retention: for 2022 participants, retention rates were 3% higher for first-generation students and 4% for STEM students compared to eligible, non-participating students.[402] Students provided strong endorsements for the program, with 93% of first-generation respondents indicating that they would recommend the program to future students.

## International Student Services and Support

The **Office of International Student Services (ISS)** plays a critical role in assisting UB's large international student community with timely guidance throughout their UB careers, from pre-arrival orientation through graduation and, in some cases, through post-graduation Optional Practical Training (OPT).[398] Using Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) compliance software, international advisors can monitor student compliance and communicate with students individually to maintain federally mandated compliance requirements through student submission of electronic forms. Similarly, UB has streamlined and simplified processes for new international students. This shift toward a paperless environment, along with a more robust virtual advisement regime necessitated by the pandemic, has made immigration compliance easier and more efficient for students.[399]

ISS also provides orientation programming to assist international students in adjusting to a new academic and cultural environment at UB, which might put them at risk depending on how different the pedagogies, course expectations, assessment practices, etc. at UB are from their academic systems at home. ISS programs are regularly assessed using survey instruments as well as student focus groups.[400] The International Student Advisory Board serves as an additional resource for assessment purposes. The board is comprised of international students from various levels, majors and cultural backgrounds.

The **English Language Institute (ELI)**, within the Graduate School of Education, offers English language instruction, cultural orientation and pre-academic training to international students. Undergraduate students are placed into first-semester English as a second language (ESL) courses and/or first-year general education communication courses taught by ELI, appropriate to their proficiency level.[401] Additionally, a course in spoken English is available for both undergraduate and graduate students. ELI administers an English-speaking proficiency test required for all international graduate students receiving research or teaching assistantships. Students who do not meet benchmarks may take the spoken English course.

## Academic and Student Services in UB's Offshore Programs

The Office of the Vice Provost for International Education works closely with host institutions on student and academic support services such as academic advisement, local library collections, IT support, class scheduling and provision for class texts and other materials. The spectrum of support services depends on the nature of the offshore/overseas program.

UB's undergraduate programs in Singapore are supported by the full range of student and campus services provided by the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM). When the undergraduate programs at SIM were evaluated by Middle States in 2004, one of the major recommendations was that SIM enhance its nonacademic student services to strengthen UB's program. Since then, the range of activities and services—both academic and non-academic—available to support students has increased substantially, aligned with growth in enrollment of the UB program (from 50 in 2004 to a current enrollment of approximately 1,300).

In the case of the dual-master's programs with Amrita University in India, course instruction is delivered in short, intensive modules by visiting faculty from UB, and the students are working professionals with full-time jobs; hence, support services typical of undergraduate programs are minimal. The students do not live on campus or engage in campus life, and thus their need for support services is limited.

# SUPPORT FOR OFFSHORE STUDENTS: SIM

**Learning Support:** The Learning Development Department offers resources to support the academic performance of students in UB and other partner university programs,[403] including a formal series of workshops in academic writing, study skills, critical thinking and presentation skills, and a walk-in Student Learning Center where students can seek help with essay writing and other academic assignments. SIM's Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program assists senior students in becoming mentors to their junior classmates in a structured student-to-student support network. In the UB program, PAL mentors have been deployed in such challenging classes as statistics and biopsychology.

**Career Services:** SIM operates a comprehensive career services office offering workshops and other support.[404] The staff has enhanced several UB course offerings, including Career Connections 1 and 2, which are required for the BS in Business Administration program.

**Centre for Micro-Credentials:** This center allows students to enroll free of charge in short, skills-oriented courses to earn stackable digital badges to supplement their academic programs.[405]

**Student Care:** SIM has also built up an extensive array of student care programs, including counseling services, a peer mentoring program and a wellness program.[406]

**Clubs and Organizations:** SIM supports students by sponsoring nearly 80 different co-curricular activities, including clubs and organizations, and SIM-UB student councils.[407] The SIM Psychological Society and Data Analysis Club were both founded by UB students.

SIM student services are subject to ongoing review and assessment not only by the SIM administration, but also by UB resident staff and administration. Surveys and focus groups are used to obtain student feedback so that services can be improved to better meet student needs.
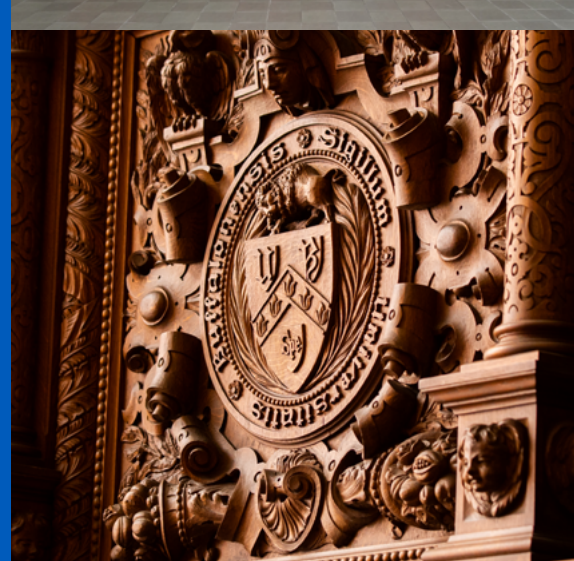
## Student–Athletes

All student-athletes receive specialized advising and academic support services through Department of Athletics Learning and Development Center staff prior to their first semester at UB. Individualized academic plans include a unique combination of weekly advisor check-ins, learning specialist meetings, academic performance specialist (APS) meetings, tutor sessions and an objective-based study table. Weekly check-ins are used to monitor course progress and assess academic support throughout the semester. APSs teach college-level academic skills and learning strategies and assist in development of organization and time management skills, tutors provide content focused supplemental instruction, and the study table supports the growth of student accountability and learning.[408]

UB Athletics offers supportive services to all student athletes in the areas of mental health, wellness, tutoring and career support. Through the Passport to Pro program, specific job fairs, resume writing workshops and money management workshops are offered.[409]

## Accessibility Resources and Students with Disabilities

The Office of Accessibility Resources (AR) provides equitable access for students with disabilities through a variety of services.[410] Accepted students are invited to meet with AR staff to establish an accommodation plan. AR provides and supports students one-on-one to assist with learning and applying new technologies, to increase their access to their course materials, and to support navigating the university and its demands. Students can meet weekly or as needed. AR's largest service is for students needing testing accommodations; AR provides proctoring and support for over 10,000 exams per year.

AR participates in all prospective student events, accepted student days, and new faculty orientation to introduce the office to students and faculty, as well as community events for high school students and their families, to provide education about the transition from high school to college for students with disabilities.

## Veteran and Military Students

The Office of Veteran Services helps student veterans (and their dependents) transition into civilian life. Services include assisting students with completing benefits paperwork and connecting students to local and national groups that support veterans. In 2018, UB's Efner "Lucky" Davis Veterans Lounge was opened for all student veterans, serving as a safe space for students to build a strong campus community. UB's excellent support for veterans has earned the university numerous accolades. In 2022 alone, UB was named a "Military Friendly" school, recognized as a "Military Spouse Friendly" school, and designated as a "Best for Vets" school by the Military Times.[411]

# Preparing Students for Life Beyond UB

UB offers a variety of experiential learning opportunities to support students' educational goals and prepare them for the future. A number of these opportunities are described below.

## GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

UB's Office of Study Abroad Programs provides a broad range of support services to undergraduate and graduate students who want to participate in credit-bearing, education abroad programs.[412] The office also provides support to inbound undergraduate and graduate exchange students (non-degree) who want to study at UB for a semester or academic year as part of a bilateral exchange agreement. Approximately 700 UB students participate in education abroad programs each year during the spring, summer, fall and winter terms. Students have access to approximately 80-90 UB-administered programs (faculty-led, exchange and partner programs) and an additional 600 programs administered by other SUNY campuses. The office actively promotes these opportunities through classroom presentations, study abroad fairs, special information sessions, and participation in a range of UB campus-wide events throughout the year. Students are assisted with all aspects of education abroad, including program selection and advising support, application, financial aid and scholarships, visa and passport guidance, cultural adjustment, travel logistics, health insurance, and academic support related to course applicability for majors and general education.

In addition, the office provides full support while students are abroad, including 24/7 emergency assistance and help with academic and cultural challenges. All study abroad programs are subject to a comprehensive set of policies, procedures and practices governed by both the campus and SUNY.[413]

Post-program support includes re-entry orientation, preparation of supplemental transcripts and assistance with course articulation issues, as well as opportunities for students to participate in the study abroad alumni student ambassador program—a volunteer group that assists with program promotion at various campus events.

Current strategic initiatives within the office include the new First-Year Global Experience program, increased efforts to expand student participation in education abroad through various diversity and inclusion efforts, development of an enhanced education abroad risk management strategy, and creation of a new program assessment tool that can be used to assess student learning outcomes and overall program quality for UB-administered and faculty-led exchange programs. The office is also increasing its efforts to engage more UB faculty in education abroad opportunities with the overall goal of expanding the number of programs.

## Celebration of Academic Excellence at UB - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ->

Students are recognized annually for exceptional achievements in research, creative and scholarly activities through the Celebration of Student Academic Excellence.
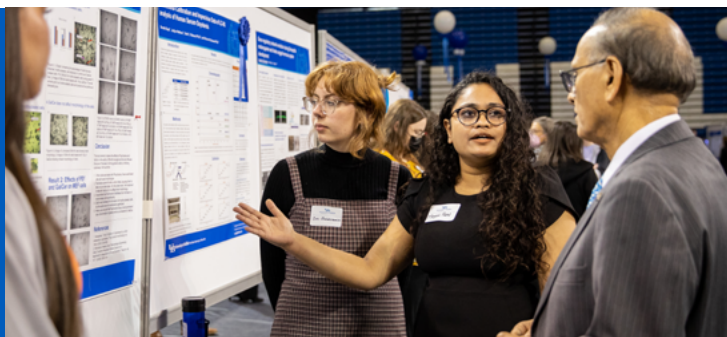


## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

For years, UB has supported entrepreneurial learning across undergraduate, graduate and professional education. Among UB's numerous entrepreneurial programs, the **Startup and Innovation CoLab** powered by Blackstone LaunchPad introduces entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Students develop entrepreneurial skills and mindsets through individualized coaching, ideation and venture creation support.[414] The CoLab also hosts the WNY Prosperity Fellowship which supports undergraduate and graduate students as they learn and create an intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship environment to bring more economic prosperity to the region.[415]

Established in 2017, UB's **Experiential Learning Network (ELN)** is a central experiential learning hub. The ELN connects students with high impact mentored projects via the Project Portal. As students engage in mentored projects, they earn digital badges designed to help them build skills and competencies for their careers. Badges can be earned in the areas of community engagement, creative work, global collaboration, innovation, mentored research and sustainability. ELN staff also work with faculty and departments to incorporate experiential learning projects within existing courses. Since launching the ELN project portal in 2019, UB has distributed $109,960 in project awards to 225 students and student groups. During this time, approximately 3,000 students have engaged in mentored projects and over 1,700 students have earned badges, with 43 courses further integrating ELN projects and badges within their syllabi. Assessment focuses on growth in NACE competencies, transformational learning and retention.[416]

## OFFICE OF FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Office of Fellowships and Scholarships provides support for undergraduate and graduate students applying for nationally competitive awards and external funding. Staff are available to meet with students one-on-one to discuss the range of opportunities available to help support their scholarly and research activities. In addition to one-on-one consulting, the Office of Fellowships and Scholarships offers regular workshops on major awards and an undergraduate development program (SPARK).[417] Outcomes demonstrate success—for example, in the 2021-22 academic year, the office assisted 31 students in obtaining nationally competitive awards and recognition, including NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowships, Fulbright awards and others.[418]

## CAREER FOCUSED SUPPORT

The Career Design Center provides all UB students with services to prepare for and identify post-graduation careers.[419] Through the Bullseye Handshake System and supportive programming such as networking and job fairs, students are connected to employment opportunities as well as paid internships. Connections are further enhanced and enabled through UB's online mentoring platform, available to all students, that matches students within their fields of interest with career support and connections. Career communities, launched in 2020, enable students to explore their career interests in a number of sectors that are not aligned specifically with their major.[420] Finally, the PeopleGrove platform is an enterprise-wide resource available for UB students and alumni starting in fall 2023. This collaborative launch by the Career Design Center and the Office of Alumni Engagement increases students' awareness of industries, jobs and internships with employers and alumni through mentoring programs.

Based on the UB Next Survey, which is administered to undergraduates six months after degree completion, 90% indicate that they are employed or in graduate school, with nearly a third reporting that they are enrolled in a graduate program. Of the students enrolled in graduate programs, 69% are enrolled at UB. Most students surveyed in the post–graduation survey indicated that UB prepared them for life after earning their degree from UB.[430]

Some academic units, such as law and management, have their own career services. For instance, the Career Resource Center within the School of Management promotes and tracks student engagement and has a dedicated Internships and Experiential Learning Team to support applied learning within the school. The Career Passport Program is designed to provide undergraduate business students with comprehensive and coordinated opportunities for professional development, emphasizing interaction with real world business. The Career Passport program features career connections courses required for all undergraduates in the school.[421]

For all UB students, Here to Career has enhanced the on-campus employment experience for students making student employment both a financial asset and also a learning and development opportunity for students. On-campus employers are guided in developing a high impact learning experience for their student employees along with a focus on skill and competency development.[422]

## FOCUSED OFFERINGS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

In addition to the many programs described above that serve both graduate and undergraduate students, the Graduate School has expanded professional development opportunities for graduate students and appointed an assistant dean for graduate professional development to support these efforts.[423] Graduate professional development programming is supported centrally by the Graduate School, as well as by key campus partners, and these programs are designed to help students acheive UB's seven institutional learning outcomes. Signature programs include the Three Minute Thesis Competition, communication micro-credentials, workshops on productivity and financial management for graduate students as well as a mentoring program. The Network for Enhanced Academic Relations (NEAR) provides graduate students with the opportunity to connect with faculty and staff with doctoral degrees and feel supported in their own careers.

Opportunities for graduate students are also provided by academic units. For example, the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences 360° Certificate of Professional Development is a cost-free program available to graduate students. Through this program, students can earn a certificate by completing 25 hours of training. Training is aligned with the eight NACE career readiness competencies. UB's Social Impact Fellows program (operated by the School of Management and School of Social Work) is designed to promote collaboration, interdisciplinary exchange and an understanding of social innovation among students

through collaboration with nonprofit community partners.[424]

Other examples in the School of Management include the nonprofit board fellowship and LeaderCORE, a personal and professional development program focused on core competencies considered vital for effective performance and successful leadership.[425]

# IT and Library Support

## COMPUTING SERVICES AND IT SUPPORT

UB Information Technology (UBIT) provides extensive services and robust support of the student experience in addition to faculty and staff support for the teaching and learning mission of UB (as described in chapters 2 and 4).

All UB students have access to a wide variety of general and specialized software in campus computing sites and for use on their personal devices (Microsoft 365, Zoom, etc.); cloud file storage and sharing; email; robust campus Wi-Fi; distributed print anywhere kiosks; virtual computing for statistical, GIS and mathematical applications; as well as learning management software. UBIT classroom technology standards include enhanced audio/video and automated course capture. UB's HyFlex and hybrid classroom technology allows for real-time instruction to both on-campus and remote learners. Remote students can be heard through the in-room speakers, while on-campus students are heard through in-room microphones. UBIT provides support for incoming students in terms of hardware standards and set up, access to device discounts and a loaner laptop program. UBIT also provides all students with extensive UBIT help center and tech squad support for their devices.

UBIT solicits feedback from the campus community in a variety of ways. Now in its 26th year, UBIT conducts an annual survey of all UB students every fall. A bi-annual survey of faculty on classroom and teaching technology tools and methods is also conducted.[426] UBIT has an advisory council of students that provides input on software and services each semester, and the organization relies on the Faculty Senate IT Committee for regular input from instructors. UBIT also hosts focus groups with faculty and students every semester and conducts usability studies when rolling out new services or large-scale changes.

## LIBRARY SERVICES

University Libraries is a key resource in advancing students' journeys of intellectual discovery by connecting them with knowledge. UB students have access to over 430 academic research databases, 250,000+ scholarly e-journals, two state-of-the-art recording studios, computing and printing stations, a wide range of multimedia equipment, and comfortable spaces for individual or group study.[427] Through the libraries' delivery and service, students can access materials from UB or any library in the world. From expansive digital and print collections to innovative programs and partnerships, the libraries accommodate the many diverse ways that students learn. Students can access one-on-one consultations with over 26 subject librarians who guide them through the research process and who also offer a variety of workshops focused on enhancing information literacy skills. With over 334,000 sq. ft. of space across seven locations and three campuses, the libraries are vibrant gathering places that offer an outstanding array of information resources, technologies, services and people to support the academic and creative achievements of UB students.[428] Recently, the UB libraries embarked on a $1,000,000 upgrade to facilities and study spaces within the Lockwood and Abbott Libraries in support of students. Findings from the SUNY Student Satisfaction Survey suggest that over 74% of respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the libraries.[429]



The Level Up Esports Arena featuring 52 Alienware gaming PCs with computer monitors and a four screen Jumbotron.

# Student Wellness and Counseling Services

Student wellness (counseling services, health promotion and student health services) facilitates the wellbeing and success of UB's diverse student body by providing quality medical, mental health, prevention and health promotion programs and services. Student wellness utilizes a "stepped care" model that provides students with the most effective, least-intensive type of intervention that will best meet their individual needs. When appropriate, student wellness can connect students to other campus services related to their academic success (e.g., the Career Design Center, academic advisement, or accessibility resources). Counseling services promotes the personal well-being and academic success of students by providing mental health services, educational programs, crisis intervention and campus community consultation.[431] To ease access to services and reduce stigma, counselors are embedded in athletics and five schools (law, medicine, dental, engineering and pharmacy). Students who do not need or want counseling but who would like to focus more on their emotional well-being can use online self-help resources for peer support, online mental health screenings and interactive educational modules and practice tools.[432]

Counseling services, along with the health promotion office, offer several educational programs designed to prevent the development of problems that could negatively affect students' ability to succeed academically. These programs equip students with the skills needed to live more healthy lives. On campus, the health promotion office supports student well-being and academic success by building a healthy campus culture. Program areas include healthy eating, stress management and prevention, alcohol and other drugs harm reduction as well as sexual violence prevention. In response to UB student needs that were identified through the National College Health Assessment, health promotion now offers wellness coaching, which helps students set and achieve meaningful goals related to their academic success, active living, eating habits, financial wellness, self-care, sleep habits, social connections, stress management and time management.

Student health services treats many non-emergency medical concerns, including proactive care (annual exams, well visits and screenings), as well as care for injuries and illnesses, including chronic illness management. Board-certified doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and registered nurses deliver quality health care to UB students. Specialized services, such as travel clinics (immunizations, prophylaxis education), gender affirming hormone therapy and sexual and reproductive care are offered. In summer 2022, student health services relocated to a new facility, which brought health care adjacent to the North Campus, something that students have long wanted. The new facility has additional exam rooms and an expanded laboratory.

Students complete satisfaction and learning outcomes surveys to evaluate services received at both counseling services and student health services. In addition, every three years, health promotion administers the National College Health Survey to students and uses the data to help identify specific student groups or student health issues that need more attention. Plans are currently underway to build a comprehensive wellness center on the North Campus that will house the three student wellness units and campus recreation. Clark Hall is being renovated to provide a similar service on the South Campus.

# Support for Student Life

## DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

The **Office of the Dean of Students** provides direct support to students and advises faculty, staff, parents and partners in student success. The office aids and supports students in navigating a complex university life so that they can flourish during their time at the university. The dean's office also provides leadership to five student life units that each offer distinctive help and care to UB students: student support and resources, Intercultural and Diversity Center, student conduct, accessibility resources (described above), and veteran services (described above).[433]

The **Office of Student Support and Resources (SSR)** manages emergency funds, students in distress, hospitalizations and victim assistance. This office also implements student death protocols. SSR staff assess risk and implement intervention strategies to mitigate risk though the behavioral intervention or the students of concern teams. SSR looks at case data annually to identify trends. In addition, data directly related to emergency funds show that this program directly supports student persistence.[434]

**Student Conduct** helps maintain a safe campus by enforcing rules and regulations, managing conduct and assisting students with navigating questions or concerns. The multidisciplinary team facilitates resolution and helps maintain a safe community by enforcing the Student Code of Conduct.[435] The student conduct office conducts an annual review of the Code of Conduct and other policies such as Title IX hearing polices in consultation with the Title IX coordinator and SUNY counsel.

The **Intercultural and Diversity Center (IDC)** supports all students at UB by creating a sense of belonging and celebrating differences as well as commonalities. The IDC works to create an inclusive campus climate that prepares students to thrive in increasingly diverse communities by planning and implementing a host of cultural, educational and social programs, workshops and trainings. It provides a welcoming space for students and coordinates educational programs and cultural events aimed at broadening student perspectives and promoting inclusion, equity and social justice. Various immersive learning experiences help all students engage in meaningful dialogue, increase cultural awareness, and cultivate social responsibility to nurture individual growth and a more just and inclusive campus environment. The IDC is currently assessing its work through a self-study and has also recently added a staff member to enhance programming and further support student retention.

Finally, The **Blue Table Food Pantry** allows students experiencing periodic food insecurity to submit online forms and pick up bagged non-perishable food items. Usage of the food pantry is assessed each semester.[436]

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS

The **Division of Student Engagement** within student life supports athletic bands, community and civic engagement, eSports, fraternities and sororities, leadership development, mentorship initiatives, student governance and organizations, as well as student programming.[437] Each area delivers high-quality programming, which is open and available to all students regardless of major or class year and serves UB's diverse student population. Activities range from educational workshops, to immersive community service, to large-scale, campus-wide programming. As one example, the Students in Organizations Understanding Leadership (SOUL) Bootcamp is a day-long training, where student leaders from a variety of recognized campus organizations (student governments, fraternities and sororities, and recognized student organizations) are provided the opportunity to learn and develop skills relevant to their leadership experiences. The learning outcomes for this program center on personal and professional development including awareness of personal leadership styles, resiliency, strengths-based leadership, collaboration, crisis-management and inclusive leadership.

To determine if program offerings meet the educational and social needs of our students, student engagement employs a variety of assessment techniques to capture learning and programmatic outcomes such as satisfaction surveys, pre and post assessments, reflection papers, and analysis of demographic data of the students who attend specific events. This multifaceted assessment approach ensures that UB students receive relevant and quality co-curricular programming that enhances the student experience.

Student engagement provides fiscal and governance oversight for UB's seven student governments (undergraduate and graduate student associations, and governments for medical, dental, law, pharmacy and graduate management students), and it also sponsors and oversees over 400 student clubs and organizations, and exercises oversight of mandatory student fees, per UB and SUNY policies.[438] Student clubs and organizations must be officially recognized to utilize services and participate in campus events. An organization can be recognized by one of UB's seven student governments, a university department or the Campus Ministries Association. In addition to this oversight, student engagement provides student government leaders with education and training on these policies as well as best practices for the management of their student governments, so that they may best serve the needs of the students they represent.



Residential life host **FOCUS (Festival of Cultures Uniting Students)** during Welcome Weekend. The event consists of a parade from the Student Union to Greiner Hall's back patio. The celebration includes food from local restaurants, student club performances, activities, tables from campus offices, giveaways and a live DJ. The program is open to all UB community members, but specifically targets newly arrived first–year students as we embrace UB's rich cultural diversity.

UB recognizes 23 Greek-letter, social and fraternal organizations that contribute to the student experience through service, philanthropy, academic and social activities. The Office of Student Engagement ensures that each recognized fraternity and sorority abides by the rules and regulations set forth by the university including recruitment, academic standards and risk management policies.[439]

## CAMPUS LIVING

**Residential life** is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive living environment that promotes academic success, personal growth and social engagement through a residential curriculum. Identified priorities are exploration and engagement, empowering students to discover their identities, develop relationships and acquire the skills necessary to succeed as a UB student and beyond.

The residential curriculum is structured around four residential student learning domains: academic success, community, interpersonal and self. These intentional strategies are used to engage residents and include built-in learning assessments to gather data that can inform efforts to provide a dynamic living environment and meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of our residential community.

To continually improve residential life programs and services, regular assessments and surveys are used, such as semesterly community evaluations, facilitated resident conversations with all students, and the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I) Skyfactor benchmarking survey, which is administered every two years. Feedback is used to identify areas for improvement and develop new initiatives.

Additionally, student input is actively sought through the Residence Hall Association (RHA) student government, which represents residents' interests and serves as a liaison between students and the administration.

## CAMPUS DINING AND SHOPS

The **Faculty Student Association Inc. (FSA)** is a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that contracts with UB to provide a variety of services, such as dining, catering, concessions and convenience stores.[440] The FSA has no state support and is responsible for generating revenue to support its services and fund major capital improvements. The FSA is governed by a 12-member board that includes at-large directors, students, faculty and staff.

The FSA oversees campus dining and shops (CDS), which has a mission to offer a variety of high quality, high value, and innovative dining options and services, designed to fit the varied lifestyles and nutritional needs of the UB community. CDS supports the university mission and enriching dining experience by providing exemplary customer service, expanding our dining options, striving for sustainability and supporting local farms, manufacturers and artisans. CDS includes regular special events to enhance the dining experience for students, including a FIFA World Cup Dinner, Welcome to Buffalo Dinner, Welcome Weekend Smoothies and Fender Blenders (students ride cycles to blend their own smoothie), product samplings and promotions (e.g., National Hot Chocolate Day, Opening Day at the Ballpark).

Students are regularly surveyed with respect to CDS operations through e-comment cards and texts, secret shopper programs, product and service surveys, and the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking Survey.[441] For example, student input regarding Kosher food options led to expanded options in campus dining areas. In support of the design of the One World Café dining experience, a student advisory committee along with information from student surveys, information sessions and menu sampling were used to ensure student input was considered.[442]

# Assessment of Programs and Initiatives that Support the Student Experience

UB has a multi-layered strategy to assess the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience that includes university-level and program and department-level surveys, as well as participation tracking and focus groups. For instance, the first-year student population is surveyed each fall at the six week point in the semester, to broadly understand students' initial experiences and concerns (academic, engagement, financial, and wellness—among other topics).[443] Information gathered through this survey has been instrumental in informing student success and engagement initiatives such as the recommendations of the Student Retention Task Force (p. 66), implementation of early academic progress warnings and development of the student success coach program. The university also participates cyclically in the National Survey of Student Engagement and the SUNY Student Satisfaction Survey. Student life units undergo departmental self-study review centered around the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education framework, where student feedback is a key component to improve programs and services and inform strategic planning efforts.[444] Other benchmarking efforts include Skyfactor,[445] NACUFS survey, and the National Collegiate Health Assessment. UB has a robust, annual assessment process for academic advisement that is aligned with NACADA best practices. Assessment plans, data collection reports (surveys, student feedback and advisor feedback) and clearly defined assessment cycle timeframes are incorporated and measure student satisfaction and to what extent learning outcomes are being achieved by students.[446]

Offices providing student services regularly collect time-of-service feedback that is used in operational improvements. For example, students are surveyed about their advising appointment experiences using the Navigate platform; this feedback is regularly shared with unit advising administration for use in professional development and operational improvements.[447]

Similarly, students are asked to complete post-wellness coaching feedback forms, and the Office of the Registrar website contains a link to a nine-question, post-call survey that students can submit about their service experience with the office. This website also utilizes a chatbot to assist students with answering basic questions. The back-end system that supports the bot can be pre-loaded with answers to common questions, allows for embedded multi-media and provides utilization reports that can be reviewed to assess changes needed to website content or services.[448]

Other periodic or project specific assessment activities are also common. For instance, 1Capen, the university's one-stop shop for essential student services, opened in fall 2017. In 2018, a comprehensive review of its management, staffing and service providers as well as customer service was conducted, and a student satisfaction survey was also administered. Following assessment, changes in the management structure were implemented, additional services were added during peak times and a new queueing system is currently being procured. Post-service survey options will be available with the new queueing system. In another example, as part of a significant upgrade to the student information system in 2019, UBIT staff conducted student usability testing to assess the ease with which students could complete basic tasks—register for classes, pay a bill, review their account and financial aid, etc. This testing provided critical feedback to the development team and resulted in improved usability at launch. Ongoing usability testing and student feedback is recommended to support decision making for future enhancements and upgrades.

# Summary and Future Directions

Chapter 5 demonstrates how UB meets the criteria addressing support of the student experience (Standard 4). Across central and academic units, UB provides a wide array of processes and services in support of the student experience that correspond to our strategic priorities of providing students with transformative educational experiences and promoting a university-wide culture of equity and inclusion. UB is committed to recruiting and admitting students in line with our institutional mission and academic offerings, as well as providing a comprehensive set of services in support of student academic and personal goals, including for specific subpopulations of students. Additionally, the university engages in regular assessment and feedback-based improvement of programs and processes at the university, office and program levels.

UB plans to continue forward progress across areas in support of the student experience from enrollment to completion. With the development of a campus culture of strategic enrollment management that will provide a plan to achieve campus diversity goals, broadening international pipelines to more locations, and managing demographic shifts, the university will continue to emphasize the alignment of its enrollment goals with the campus mission. Beyond enrollment and following recent investments in the student success initiatives described in this chapter, the university will focus on student success, retention and degree completion by enhancing and adapting services to meet an increasingly diverse student body. This includes initiatives to facilitate transfer student success, supporting specific needs and enhancing experiences and connections for first-year students, enhancing services and fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for underserved students through the new CULTURE program, and providing academic supports consistent with needs of our incoming students.

# Endnotes

1    I.1b, f, 2 UB Mission, Vision and Goals

2    I.1a, c UB Top 25 Strategic Goals with Development Timeline

3    I.1c, f, g Summary of Senior Leadership Retreat 2022

4    I.1b Top 25 Ambition Overview; I.1b Top 25 Ambition-Strategic Goals

5    I.1a, g UB Leadership Retreat Follow Up Presentation; I.1a, g 2019 Leadership Retreat–President Tripathi Remarks; 1.1a 2019 State of the University Address

6    I.3 Top 25 Ambition Academic Excellence; I.3 Top 25 Ambition Campus Master Plan; I.3 Top 25 Ambition Accomplishments

7    I.4 President's Advisory Council on Race Report Executive Summary

8    I.1d, VII.1, 4e Annual Resource Planning Process

9    I.1d, 4 Annual Operating Budget Report Online

10   VII.1, 3e, 5 NYS Education Law Article 8

11   VII.1 Role and Authority of SUNY Councils Memo, August 2004

12   VII.1 BOT Powers and Duties

13   VII.1, 3e, 5 NYS Education Law Article 8

14   VII.1 SUNY Campus List

15   VII.1, 2a, c, d, e, f BOT By-laws; I.4, VII.1, 2i, 3a, c SUNY-BOT-Policies-Jan2023; VII.2a, b, c, d, e, f BOT General Summary

16   VII.1, 2a NYSED BOR

17   VII.1 SUNY Leadership

18   VII.1 SUNY University Faculty Senate

19   VII.1, 3e, 5 NYS Education Law Article 8; VII.4e UB Council Student Representative

20   I.1a, c; VII.1 UB Council By-laws

21   VII.1 ACT Handbook 2022

22   I.1e, VII.1 SUNY Research Foundation

23   VII.1 UB Foundation

24   I.1d, 4, VII.1 Bylaws of the Voting Faculty - Faculty Senate; VII.1 Charter of the Faculty Senate

25   I.1a Faculty Senate Committees

26   I.1a Faculty Senate The Five Pillars of Shared Governance; I.1d Standing Orders of the Faculty Senate; I.1d Resolutions - Faculty Senate Webpage; I.1d, 4, VII.1 Bylaws of the Voting Faculty - Faculty Senate; I.1d Meetings - Faculty Senate; 1.1d Meetings - Faculty Senate

27   VII.5 Report of the Ad-hoc Senate Review Committee 09-27-2022

28   VII.1, 4e Inaugural Shared Governance Day; VII.1, 4e Shared Governance Activities; VII.1 Shared Governance Award

29   I.1a Professional Staff Senate – About; I.1a PSS Shared Governance

30   I.1d Graduate Student Association Bylaws; I.1d Graduate Student Association About Us

31   I.1d Student Association Bylaws

32   VII.1, 4e Broad-Based Fee Consultation; VII.4e New Academic Calendar UB Now

33   VII.1 LMS Review Process Completed 2022; VII.1, 4e LMS Student Invitation Email

34   VII.1 UB Leadership Searches webpage

35   VII.4b Examples of position profiles for senior leaders

36    I.1a, VII.1, 3d, 4b UB Leadership Webpage; I.1a; VII.1, 3d, 4a, b, c UB Leadership Organizational Chart

37    VII.1, 3c, 3d UB Office of the President website; VII.1 UB Office of the Provost website

38    I.4; VII.1, 2i, 3a, c SUNY-BOT-Policies-Jan2023

39    VII.3a President-Position Profile

40    VII.3b, 4b, c, d President Satish K. Tripathi CV

41    VII.3d, 4b, c, d A. Scott Weber CV

42    I.4 2022 State of the University Transcript

43    I.4, VII.1, 2i, 3a, c SUNY-BOT-Policies-Jan2023

44    I.1d, 4, VII.1 Bylaws of the Voting Faculty - Faculty Senate

45    I.4 UB Council Agenda October 3, 2022

46    I.1a, VII.1, 3d, 4a, b, c UB Leadership Organizational Chart; I.1a, VII.1, 3d, 4b UB Leadership Webpage

47    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Mark Alnutt CV

48    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Brice Bible CV

49    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Allison Brashear CV

50    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Beth Del Genio CV

51    VII.3d, 4b, c, d John Della Contrada CV

52    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Kathleen Heckman CV

53    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Venu Govindaraju CV

54    I.1e Office of Research and Development

55    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Brian Hamluk CV

56    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Graham Hammill CV

57    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Laura Hubbard CV

58    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Stacy Knapper CV

59    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Christopher Connor CV

60    VII.3d, 4b, c, d Seval Yildirim CV

61    VII.4f CAS Governance and Committees

62    VII.4f Committees - Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

63    VII.4f Fostering Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) – SEAS

64    VII.4f Faculty Committee DEI – School of Management

65    VII.3d, 4b, c, d, e Decanal Leadership

66    I.1a, VII.1, 3d, 4a, b, c UB Leadership Organizational Chart

67    VII.2c, g, h BOT Code of Conduct

68    VII.2c, g, h BOT Public Officers Law § 74

69    VII.1, 3e, 5 NYS Education Law Article 8

70    VII.2f September 2019 SUNY Chancellor Evaluation Letter

71    VII.5 Evaluations of the UB Cabinet Information

72    VII.5 Important Notes about the Five Year Decanal Review Process; VII.5 Review of the Academic Deans-Procedure; VII.5 Review of the Academic Deans-Potential Interview Questions

73    VI.1, 2, 3 ARPP Resource Planning Guide 2022-23; VI.1, 2, 3, 5 ARPP Kick-Off Presentation 2022-23; VI.1, 8 Investment Outcomes Workbook 2022-23

74    VI.1, 2, 3 Annual Resource Planning Process Planning Memo 2022-23; VI.1, 2, 3, 5 ARPP Outcome Letter SAAP 2022-2023; VI.2 Annual Resource Planning Process Calendar 2021-22; VI.2 Presentation Topics SAAP FY2020-21

75    VI.1, 2, 3 ARPP Resource Planning Guide 2022-23

76 VI.1, 2, 3, 5 ARPP Kick-Off Presentation 2022-2023; VI.1, 3, 5 ARPP Outcomes Presentation 2022-23

77 VI.1, 2, 3, 5 ARPP Kick-Off Presentation 2022-2023

78 VI.5 Three Year Plan Master Template ARPP 2021-22

79 VI.1, 2, 3 ARPP Resource Planning Guide 2022-23; VI.1, 3, 5 ARPP Outcomes Presentation 2022-23; VI.1, 2, 3, 5 ARPP Kick-Off Presentation 2022-2023

80 VI.5 2015-22 Example ARPP Investment Proposals University View Template; VI.5 2023-24 SPPS Investment Proposal Example

81 VI.1, 3, 5 ARPP Outcomes Presentation 2022-23

82 VI.5 ARPP Outcome Letter SAAP 2022-2023

83 VI.5 UB Operating Budget Change Template-Revised-Feb2020

84 VI.5 Statement of Univ Fin Resource Stewardship FY 22-23

85 VI.5 Investment Outcomes 2015-2022; VI.5 Investment Outcome CAS Faculty Diversity Example

86 VI.1, 8 Investment Outcomes Workbook 2022-23

87 VI.1, 8 ARPP Position and Workforce Planning Master Template 2022-23

88 VI.1, 8 Performance Dashboard School of Architecture and Planning - March 2021

89 VI.9 ARPP Survey 2021-22

90 VI.9 ARPP Agenda 2022-4-7

91 VI.4, 8 Sample Multi-Year Financial Plan 11.14.2022

92 VI.9 2021-6-1-ARPP_Agenda; VI.9 ARPP Agenda 2022-6-13

93 VI.2 CONCUR Travel and Expense Reimbursement System; VI.2 Shop Blue Overview; VI.2 UPlan Presentation Overview of Planning Process; VI.2 Axiom Project Kickoff

94 VI.4 Historic Faculty Hiring (UB Now Story)

95 VI.4, 6 10 in 10 Climate Action Plan

96 VI.4, 6 Facilities Master Plan South Campus

97 VI.6 Planning Board Membership Charge Scope

98 VI.6 University at Buffalo Scorecard Institutions STARS Reports; VI.6 3-Year Plan Pres 2021; VI.6 UB Capital Plan FY 20-21 and 21-22; VI.6 Classroom Needs for the Future; VI.6 Climate Action Plan - University at Buffalo; VI.6 Deans and VP Meeting April 2021; VI.6 University at Buffalo Union Master Plan Report; VI.6 HOTC Phasing Presentation; VI.6 Master Plan Review; VI.6 Office Space Standards; VI.6 Our Guiding Principles - UB Sustainability; VI.6 Planning Board Membership Charge Scope; VI.6 Reduced UB Student Housing; VI.6 South Campus Revitalization Community Rollout; VI.6 Space Policy Document; VI.6 UB Draft Framework; VI.6 UB Library Master Plan; VI.6 UB Recreation and Wellness; VI.6 University at Buffalo Academic Space 2016; VI.6 VPRED Associate Deans for Research

99 VI.6 Instructional Facilities Operations and Utilization Committee Charge; VI.6 Instructional Facilities Operations Roles and Responsibilities; VI.6 3 Year Instructional Facilities Plan Workflow

100 VI.6 Jacobs School Active Learning Center

101 VI.6 Press Release - New Engineering Building

102 VI.6 1Capen Student Services Center; VI.6 1Diefendorf Student Services Center Information

103 VI.6 Annual infrastructure comparison thru 2017; VI.6 Application Inventory Review; VI.6 IT Budget Planning Meetings; VI.6 VPCIO 5-Year Budget Summary; VI.6 Weekly Recurring EIS Operations Meeting

104 VI.6 Broad-Based Fee Calendar Stewards 2022-23

105 VI.7 2022 Annual Financial Report

106 VI.7 CFRP Exhibits 2023 Overview; VI.7 CFRP Exhibits 2023 Workbook; VI.7 Year End Reporting Requirements 22-23

107 VI.7 2022 Annual Financial Report; VI.7 Financial Reporting Webpage; VI.7 IPEDS 2020 Memo; VI.7 University at Buffalo IPEDS June 30 2020 Parts A-N

108 II.9 Ethics Policy

109 II.9 Ethics Point — Frequently Asked Questions

110 II.1 AAUP Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure; II.1 BOR Policies Appointment of Employees (8 NYCRR Part 335)

111 II.1 University at Buffalo Resolution on Freedom of Expression Statement 08312017; II.1, 2 Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions

112 II.1 Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order 8 NYCRR § 535; II.1 UB Student Code of Conduct 2023–2024; II.1 Religious Accommodation and Expression Policy; II.1, 3, 5 Discrimination and Harassment Policy

113 II.1 Freedom of Expression Key Issues Page; II.1 'DifCon' tackles academic freedom, inclusion UB Now 2016; II.1 Use of University Space for Non-Academic Purposes Policy; II.1 Sample Revocable Permit for Non-Commercial Use of University Facilities

114 II.1 Copyright and Fair Use Policy; II.1 Policy for Use of Online Information

115 II.1 SUNY Patents and Inventions Policy, 8 NYCRR § 335.28 & 29; II.1 Computer Software Policy; II.1 Improper Distribution of Course Materials Policy - Undergraduate - 2021-22; II.1 Improper Distribution of Course Materials Policy – Graduate

116 II.2 Responsible Conduct in Research, Intellectual and Creative Activity; II.2 Academic Integrity Gr. Policy; II.2 Academic Integrity UG Policy

117 II.2 UB Faculty-Staff Climate Report 9-16-19; II.2 UB Student Climate Report 9-16-19

118 II.2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

119 II.2 Office of Inclusive Excellence Programs and Events

120 II.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Trainings and Presentations; II.1, 2 Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions; II.2 Academic Integrity Gr. Policy; II.2 Academic Integrity UG Policy; II.1, 2 Religious Accommodation and Expression Policy; II.2, 3 Enough is Enough Final Article Submission 09242021

121 II.2 Intercultural and Diversity Center Welcome Page

122 II.2 President's Advisory Council on Race Implementation

123 II.2 UB Student Code of Conduct 2023–2024; II.2 Student Association Bylaws; II.2 Graduate Student Association Bylaws

124 II.9 Academic Integrity Committee Charge

125 II.3 Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate Students; II.3 Office of Academic Integrity Academic Integrity Process; II.3 The Graduate School Policy Library; II.3 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Discrimination and Harassment Policy; II.3 EDI Reporting Discrimination and Harassment; II.3 UB Student Code of Conduct 2023–2024 Article 7

126 II.3 Academic Integrity 2022–23 Undergraduate Degree & Course Catalog; II.3 EDI Discrimination and Harassment Investigatory Process; II.3 Academic Integrity Policy Consultative Resolution; II.3 Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate Students; II.3 Office of Academic Integrity Academic Integrity Process; II.3 The Graduate School Policy Library

127 II.3 Undergraduate Degree and Course Catalog Policies

128 II.7a, b, 8a Student Right to Know

129 II.3 CSEA ASU Contract Agreement 2021–26; II.3 CSEA ISU Contract Agreement 2021–26; II.3 CSEA OSU Contract Agreement 2021–26; II.3 CWA GSEU Agreement 2019–23; II.3 NYSCOPBA Agreement 2016–23; II.3 PBA Contract Agreement 2018–23; II.3 PEF AFLCIO Contract Agreement 2019–23; II.3, 5 UUP Contract Agreement 2016–22; II.3 NYS Executive Order 42 Grievance Procedures

130 II.3 NYS Civil Service Law Article 14 Taylor Law

131 II.1, 3, 5 Ethics Point FAQ

132 II.1, 3, 5 Discrimination and Harassment Policy

133 II.3 UPD Silent Witness Report

134 II.3 Police Feedback Form

135 II.3, 8a Institutional Analysis Survey Results; II.3 EDI Discrimination Case Numbers 2015–22

136 II.4 NY Public Officers Law Chapter 74 Code of Ethics

375  IV.1c, d Sample Curricular Plan - Accounting BS; IV.1c, d, Sample Academic Advisement Report; IV.1c, d Sample Transfer Credit Report; IV.1c, d Path Finder Tool

376  IV.1c, d 2023-04-17 Student Success Coaches - UGE Due Presentation

377  IV.1c, d Impact of Student Success Coaches on Student Retention

378  IV.1b, d Tutoring and Academic Support Services; IV.1c TASS Year 1 Wrap-Up Report 2019-20; IV1.c TASS Year 2 Wrap-Up Report 2020-21; IV.1c TASS Year 3 Wrap-up Report 2021-22

379  IV.6 LAI 203 Outcomes Report Spring 2022

380  IV.1b, d Center for Excellence in Writing Homepage

381  IV.1b, d The Math Place Thomas J. Edwards Undergraduate Learning Center

382  IV.1b, d SEAS Academic Small Groups

383  IV.1d Graduate Professional Development

384  IV.1d Beyond the Professoriate - PhD Career Training Platform

385  IV.1a, d Office of Fellowships and Scholarships

386  IV.1d Professional Development Events for Graduate and Professional Students

387  IV.1d Mark Diamond Research Fund - Graduate Student Association; IV.1d Conference Funding Graduate Student Association

388  IV.1d New TA Conference

389  IV.1b, c, d Cora P. Maloney Center

390  IV.6 CPMC Question Set for Academic Support Work Team - McNair Scholars Program - 10-26-21; IV.6 McNair Data-Based Narrative Assessment of 2021-22 Goals; IV.6 McNair Unit Assessment Plan July 2022

391  IV.1b, c EOP Eligibility Guidelines

392  IV.1b, c Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP); IV.1d CPM 101 Course Description

393  IV.1c, d Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center

394  IV.1c, d UE 101 Career and Major Career Exploration Course; IV.6 Career Design Center UE 101 FA17 Report

395  IV.1b, c Student Success First Generation Initiative

396  IV.1d Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)

397  IV.1d University Honors College

398  IV.1c, d International Student Services; IV.1c, d International Student Welcome

399  IV.6 ISS Paperless Processing

400  IV.6 ISS Annual Report 2022-23

401  IV.1d ELI English Program

402  IV.1b, c, d, 6 UB Thrive Outcomes - STEM Students; IV.6 UB Thrive Assessment Results

403  IV.1b, d SIM Learning Support

404  IV.1d SIM Career Services

405  IV.1d SIM Centre for Micro-Credentials

406  IV.1d SIM Student Care - Student Wellness Centre

407  IV.4 SIM Co-Curricular Activities

408  IV.6 UB Student Athlete APR 2016-21; IV.6 UB Athletics Historical GPA Since 2013; IV.6 Athletics Exit Survey 2021-22; IV.1c Athletics Advising

409  IV.1d Professional Development for Athletes; IV.1d Passport to Pro Career Fair for Athletes

410  IV.1a, b, c Accessibility Resources Webpage

411  IV.1d Veteran Services

412  IV.1d Study Abroad

413  IV.1d Study Abroad Policies

414  IV.1d Blackstone Launchpad

415  IV.1d Blackstone Launchpad Prosperity Fellowship

416  IV.6 ELN Assessment Report 2020–21; IV.6 ELN Pearl Assessment Data 2019–20

417  IV.1d, 6 SPARK Program Assessment Evidence

418  IV.6 OFS Annual Report 2021–2022

419  IV.1d Career Design Center; IV.1d, 6 Career Design Center Historical Appointments Dashboard

420  IV.1d Career Design Center Career Communities

421  IV.1d School of Management Career Passport Program

422  IV.6 Here to Career Achievements and Insights 2021–22

423  IV.1d Graduate Professional Development

424  IV.1d School of Management Social Impact Fellows

425  IV.1d School of Management Center for Enterpreneurial Leadership; IV.1d School of Management Non–Profit Board Fellowship

426  IV.6 UBIT Student Survey Report 2022; IV.6 Faculty IT Survey Narrative 2023

427  IV.1d Libraries Study Spaces

428  IV.1d University Libraries

429  IV.6 Satisfaction with Libraries

430  IV.6 UB Next Summary Report 2021–22

431  IV.1d Counseling Services Education and Outreach; IV.1d UB Counseling Diversity Initiatives; IV.6 UBCS Annual Report 2021–2022; IV.6 CCAPS National Comparison Pre-Post Change

432  IV.1d Counseling Services Self–Help

433  IV.1d Office of the Dean of Students Services and Supports

434  IV.1d 2022 DOS Student Support and Resource Numbers

435  IV.1c UB Student Code of Conduct 2023–2024

436  IV.1d Blue Table Utilization Report

437  IV.1d Division of Student Engagement

438  IV.4 Student Club University Wide Recognition Policy; IV.4 Club By-Laws Example - African SA Club Constitution; IV.4 Student Association Internal Controls Policy Spring 2022; IV.4 Student Association Travel Policy Spring 2023; IV.4 Student Association Alcohol Policy Spring 2023

439  IV.4 Policies for Fraternities and Sororities

440  IV.1d Faculty Student Association SUNY at Buffalo Inc C001304 Fully Executed

441  IV.6 NACUFS Report – Dining Centers-Retail

442  IV.6 OWC Food Service 030921

443  IV.6 Six-Week Survey Results

444  IV.6 Student Life Self–Study Process; IV.6 Student Life Assessment Plan Guide; IV.6 Here to Career Achievements and Insights 2021–22; IV.6 Campus Living Community Evaluation Report - Fall 2022; IV.6 Counseling Services Client Satisfaction Report Highlights - 2021–22

445  IV.6 Overall Report Skyfactor Fall 2021

446  IV.6 Advising Assessment Plan 2020–21; IV.6 Advising Assessment Plan 3-Year Cycle 2022–25; IV.6 Advising Assessment Report 2021–22

447  IV.6 Changes to Navigate based on Student Feedback

448  IV.1c Office of the Registrar Virtual Vic

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