

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL *of* ARTS *and* SCIENCES

Spring 2025

LETTER *from the* DEAN



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES,

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the School of Arts and Sciences newsletter. As we embrace a new semester filled with promise and opportunity, I'm delighted to share with you the remarkable achievements of our students and the exciting initiatives unfolding across our school.

Our students continue to be our greatest source of pride. In this issue, you'll meet exceptional young alumni from the Class of 2024 who demonstrate the extraordinary talent nurtured at Buffalo State. From groundbreaking research to creative excellence, these graduates exemplify the impact of a Buffalo State education. I'm equally proud of our current students who were recently honored at our Dean's List Reception, celebrating their academic dedication and perseverance.

We remain committed to evolving our academic programs to prepare students for future success. New offerings like the Music Industry concentration in the Music B.A. and the revised B.A. and B.S. psychology programs reflect our responsiveness to student interests and emerging career paths. These innovations ensure our graduates are well-equipped for the challenges ahead.

I'm continually inspired by how our students engage with our community, as demonstrated by the Dean's Student Council's food drive supporting Milligan's Food Pantry and the impressive student participation in the Election Day Watch Party. These initiatives reflect our students' commitment to civic responsibility and community service.

Thank you for your continued support of the School of Arts and Sciences. I hope this newsletter gives you a glimpse of the vibrant intellectual and creative life that defines our school community.

Sincerely,
Kelly M. Frothingham, Ph.D.
Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences



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BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

DEAN'S LIST RECEPTION

Honoring Students on the
Dean's List for Spring 2024 and Fall 2024
Thursday, February 13, 2025
Campbell Student Union Social Hall



ELECTION DAY WATCH PARTY

One hundred forty-five students participated in an Election Day Watch Party hosted by the Political Science, Public Administration, and Planning Department on November 5 in the Campbell Student Union Assembly Hall. Bengals Vote Coalition co-chair Rachele Clark co-hosted, along with department faculty members Dr. Peter Yacobucci and Dr. Adamu Shauku, who educated the group on what and who are part of the Electoral College, how they affect our democracy, and why the electoral college is likely here to stay. This fascinating dialogue helped inform participants about why our individual vote is so critical and aimed to keep students voting in future elections.

Attendees played a fun Kahoot trivia game, hosted by librarian Justin Crossfox, complete with raffle prizes and giveaways—and enjoyed pizza, wings, salad, cookies, little sandwiches, chips, and punch, all generously donated by co-sponsors. It was a safe environment thanks to UPD's presence and the messages from the Dean of Students Office and the Weigel Health and Counseling Center to include supportive statements and resources to anyone feeling stress or pressures from the election results.



Buffalo State University was recognized by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge as a 2024 ALL IN Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting.

Note: As of January 1, 2025, Buffalo State has a new department of Government, Planning, and Philosophy. The Public Administration program has moved to the Economics and Finance Department.



MILLIGAN'S Food Pantry

WHAT WE NEED

- Canned Veggies • Canned Tuna • Canned Chicken
- Boxed Mac and Cheese • Spices • Protein Bars
- Granola Bars • Snacks • Canned Beans
- Peanut Butter • Jelly • Canned Fruit
- Travel Sized Health and Beauty Items

For further information, please contact:

Atta Ceasay, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences
ceesayaa@buffalostate.edu

DEAN'S STUDENT COUNCIL SUPPORTS FOOD BANK

The School of Art and Sciences Dean's Student Council is committed to supporting our fellow students and fostering a thriving university community. This semester, we are tackling the important issue of food insecurity on campus with a dedicated food drive in support of the Milligan's Food Pantry. Many students face challenges affording nutritious meals, impacting their academic performance, well-being, and overall university experience. We believe that no student should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. A representative from each department in the School of Arts and Sciences helps lead this community service project.



MUSIC PROGRAM ADDS MUSIC INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

The **Music Department** now offers three concentrations under its bachelor of arts in music degree. In addition to the previously offered general and performance concentrations, students can now pursue a concentration in music industry, which blends the creative and business aspects of today's evolving music landscape into a new and progressive program.

Students will gain insight into the music industry through myriad course offerings designed to foster the creation and promotion of a professional portfolio. The curriculum prepares students to become well-versed in the skills of a twenty-first-century music maker and includes courses that explore copyright law, music licensing, digital distribution, live performance, social media, artist management, and private instrument instruction. The concentration also emphasizes hands-on experience with industry-standard tools like digital audio workstations, studio time with professional-grade equipment, and portfolio-building opportunities and internships.

The concentration requires an audition, but prospective students who do not yet play an instrument, have formal training, or read music are encouraged to reach out to the department, which will work with them to build prerequisite skills for acceptance into the program.

PSYCHOLOGY REVISES B.A. AND B.S. PROGRAMS

The **Psychology Department** has revised both the bachelor of arts (B.A.) and bachelor of science (B.S.) programs beginning in fall 2024. Any student entering after fall 2024 will matriculate under these new program requirements. Any student admitted prior to fall 2024 will continue under the previous degree requirements unless they request to switch to the new 2024 degree requirements.

The Psychology Department offers a B.A. in applied psychology and a B.S. in psychological science. The two degrees are designed to fit different student needs.

- The B.A. in applied psychology degree requires 36 credit hours in psychology. The B.A. is focused on serving students who would like to pursue applied careers in psychology and related fields. It is designed to give students more experience in the field, greater skill at evaluating

and using scientific data (rather than generating those data), and increased training in professional skills.

- The B.S. in psychological science degree requires 42 credit hours in psychology. The B.S. degree is designed for students interested in a more traditional path in psychology that is geared towards research-focused careers and graduate study. As a result, B.S. students are required to engage in an extra three credits in either research or internship-based courses. In addition, an honors B.S. degree is offered for those who qualify.

All students enter the Psychology Department through the B.A. program in applied psychology. Students may enter the B.S. program in psychological science following the completion of PSY 350 Statistics with a minimum grade of B- (requires a change of major form submitted to the Psychology Department).

Esther Tuyizere, Psychology Major



DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZE SHINING STARS FROM CLASS OF 2024



ANTHROPOLOGY: SALMA AKTHER

Originally from Bangladesh, Salma Akther earned a B.A. in anthropology with a minor in forensic anthropology while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She served as secretary and vice president of the Anthropology Society. Highlights of Salma’s academic career included her honors thesis studying the capuchin monkeys at the Buffalo Zoo and her internship at the International Institute, where she was an employment intern. Her multilingual skills and own experience as an immigrant allowed her to support clients as they navigate unfamiliar environments. Salma’s future goal is to work with local organizations to provide services to immigrants to help them settle into their new lives.

ART AND DESIGN: JULIE BENHOFF



Julie Benhoff graduated with a B.F.A. in painting and a cumulative GPA of 4.0. A frequent award and scholarship recipient, Julie was juried in several Art and Design Department student exhibitions at Buffalo State University. She is interested in painting and other forms of art, specifically representational portraits done in oil. Julie plans to continue her pursuit of painting.

ARTS AND LETTERS:

ARMANDO GIANGRECO-MAROTTA



Armando, who is from Lancaster, New York, studied media production and theater at Buffalo State. He enjoyed being a part of many clubs on campus. He served on the Casting Hall Productions executive

board as the marketing manager, combining his love for theater and creating media. He had a similar role at WBNY 91.3 FM, Buffalo State’s radio station, as the promotions director. In his free time, he enjoys spending time outdoors and creating anything from media to woodworking. Armando, who also interned at WNED PBS, has a strong interest in the media production field and would like to pursue a career working behind the scenes in television or radio.

BIOLOGY: NIKKITA LAIDLAW

A Muriel A. Howard Honors Program student, Nikkita Laidlaw graduated from Buffalo State with a B.A. in biology and a minor in mathematics. Her overall GPA was 3.92. In addition to her outstanding academic performance in traditional classroom and laboratory-based courses, Nikkita completed a biology honors research project titled, “Temperature, soil moisture, and plant growth influence soil carbon dioxide and methane fluxes” with the goal of better understanding how plants and climate influence soil greenhouse gas emissions. To address her research objectives, she conducted a greenhouse experiment to measure carbon dioxide and methane emissions from wetland microcosms she designed

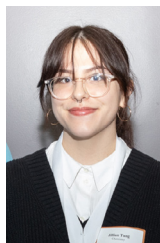
The School of Arts and Sciences includes 19 departments and multiple degree-granting interdisciplinary units covering a vast and diverse array of disciplines. At the 2024 Dean’s Award Ceremony, each department recognized an outstanding 2024 graduate who excelled academically and earned the nomination of the faculty in their departments. These students—now young alumni—represent excellence honed at Buffalo State.

and built. Nikkita presented the results of this research at Buffalo State’s 2024 Student Creativity and Research Celebration. She plans to pursue a career in natural resource management and conservation.



DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZE SHINING STARS FROM CLASS OF 2024

CHEMISTRY: JILLIAN TUNG



Jillian Tung grew up in Wichita, Kansas, and began working towards her degree in chemistry at Buffalo State in 2020. She completed her requirements for both the American Chemical Society (ACS)-certified bachelor of science in chemistry degree and minor in legal studies. Jillian worked on a research project on the characterization of gold particles using Raman and UV/Visible Spectroscopy under the guidance of Dr. Jinseok Heo. She was the recipient of numerous department awards, including the Chemistry Department Equity and Diversity Student Award, Margaret Dupre Award, Dr. Surjit Singh Memorial Award, ACS Organic Award, ACS Inorganic Award, ACS Undergraduate Physical Chemistry Award, ACS Distinguished Student Award, American Institute of Chemists Award, Edward Schulman Memorial Award, Saul Barron Memorial Award, Albert A. Himmel Memorial Award, Iota Sigma Pi Award, and Phi Lambda Upsilon Award. Jillian plans to attend graduate school for her Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry.

COMMUNICATION: MICHAEL MASTERS-HOLLER



Michael Masters-Holler graduated as a media production major with a 3.94 GPA. He transferred to Buffalo State from Niagara County Community College in 2021. Michael is also a six-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and the recipient of an Achievement Medal from the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as both a Commendation Medal and Achievement Medal from Joint Service. He holds

certificates from the U.S. Navy Imagery Interpretation School in interpretation of satellite images and the U.S. Navy Operational Intelligence School in public speaking and presentation of data. He completed an internship in media production at Buffalo Toronto Public Media (WNED), where he worked on the USA Wheelchair Football League Tournament Games and the Brave Spaces Series. He was the co-general manager of WBNY 91.3 FM, and acted as co-host and producer of the Local Show, a live showcase of WNY musical artists. He hosted 25 live-on-air hour-long performances, and additionally live-mixed numerous musical performances for that radio program. He also worked as a producer on the music video, “There is Power,” which was produced in a media production service-learning course along with local musician Michael Solo Farrow and won an Award of Excellence at the Broadcast Education Association’s Student Festival of Media Arts.



ECONOMICS AND FINANCE: ANTHONY DINDERSKI

Anthony Dinderski, who graduated from Lancaster High School with his Regents diploma with honors, chose to pursue a college education at Buffalo State in the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program. Although it took some time, he eventually settled on pursuing his bachelor’s degree in economics with a concentration in finance. Throughout his academic career, he was recognized each semester

on the Dean’s List. He is looking forward to pursuing his career goal of becoming a successful financial adviser.

ENGLISH: TAHYNNIS NEWSOME

Tahynnis Newsome, a student in the English Department’s combined pathways program, earned her B.A. in 2024 and will receive her M.S. in 2025. Tahynnis has worked in the Dean of Students Office as a receptionist, in the EOP Office as a tutor, and in the Writing Center as a tutor. As a peer tutor at the Writing Center, she helps students from majors and programs across campus on a wide range of writing assignments. Tahynnis has always had an interest in psychoanalysis and she is delving further into that subject as the focus of her master’s thesis.



DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZE SHINING STARS FROM CLASS OF 2024

GEOSCIENCES: KELLEY HOFFMAN

Kelley Hoffman completed her B.S. in environmental geography and the geographic information systems (GIS) certificate while maintaining a very high GPA. She prepared an excellent proposal on the impacts and spatial patterns of noise pollution on owls for the capstone Research Methods course. Kelley completed an internship with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning's Office of Geographic Information Services. Her primary internship involved working with the Department of Public Works to create a map of Erie County's stormwater infrastructure, and she also created a map of Brownfield Cleanup Program sites and a contour map of snowfall totals from the Buffalo blizzard of December 2022. In addition to the Dean's Award, she is one of two students who received the 2024 Kathryn T. Whittemore Award for Outstanding Graduate in Geography or Environmental Geography.

HISTORY: EMILY JARNOT



Emily Jarnot graduated from Lancaster High School in 2006 and then attended and graduated from the New York State Academy of Massage Therapy in 2009. She completed her B.A. in history at Buffalo State University. She

was the 2023–2024 recipient of her department's E.O. Smith Scholarship. She served as president of Buffalo State's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the National Honors Society for History. In fall 2023, Emily served a credited internship with Preservation Buffalo Niagara, where she is now a full-time employee.



MATHEMATICS: AVA CARR

In fall 2017, Ava Carr started taking courses at Niagara County Community College. By the time she enrolled at Buffalo State, she had 16 college credits. At the end of her first year at Buffalo State, she received an Achievement Award from the Mathematics Department for her high GPA. During her junior year, she applied for the 4+1 Pathway in Mathematics Education and was able to add graduate courses to her workload. She also completed her student-teaching and was evaluated as outstanding in both of her placements.

**MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES:
JENA KOLO**



Jena Kolo was a Spanish major who transferred to Buffalo State University in 2022 to complete her degree. She participated on the Dean's Student Council for three consecutive semesters, proudly representing the Modern

and Classical Languages Department. She was inducted into the Tau Sigma National Honor Society, the Sigma Delta Pi Spanish Honor Society, and the Honors Society at Buffalo State. Jena plans to continue her studies to reach her ultimate goal of being a court and/or medical interpreter.

MUSIC: MIKAYLA MANKE

Mikayla Manke graduated with a B.A. in music and a minor in digital music production minor, earning an overall GPA of 3.91 and a major GPA of 3.97.

Mikayla composed several original works that were used for numerous projects in her digital music classes, with many more that were performed in an original concert last May. A piano student of Dr. Emily Boyce, Mikayla was an active performer on campus. She is lead vocalist, pianist, and songwriter for her band, Spiria, that has performed at several venues around Buffalo and released an original album in 2023. Mikayla has interned at Mammoth Recording Studio in Buffalo, where she has learned to record and mix music to deepen her understanding of digital production.



DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZE SHINING STARS FROM CLASS OF 2024



PHILOSOPHY: JOSEPH CANNIZZARO

Joseph Cannizzaro, a philosophy major with a minor in English education, participated in the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program and served as a peer mentor. His scholarship was accepted for presentation at three different undergraduate conferences, including the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference, the prestigious Midwest Undergraduate Philosophy Conference hosted by Creighton University, and the SUNY Oneonta Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, at which he was awarded the Spirit of the Conference Award. Joe’s work is at the intersection of Zen philosophy and public education. He was invited to present his work at the Philosophy Department Colloquia. A recipient of the George Hole Scholarship in Philosophy, Joe has future plans that involve education and continuing his research into philosophical theories applied in the classroom.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: DAVID NGUYEN



David Nguyen, a first-generation college student from Syracuse, New York, entered Buffalo State in 2020 and changed his major to international relations that same year. David was very active on and off campus. In his sophomore year, he became a resident assistant and member of the

Criminal Justice Club and Student Political Society. In his junior year, he served as the president of the Criminal Justice Club, a student assistant for the University Police, and a tutor for EOP. Most notably, David worked as an intern for the White House in Washington, D.C., in spring 2023. During his senior year, David was promoted to team lead for University Police student assistants. Now a graduate student at Syracuse University, David hopes to acquire a career in the federal government to create positive and meaningful changes in communities throughout the United States.

PSYCHOLOGY: MORGAN HARRINGTON



Morgan Harrington was an active member of the Psychology Department, consistently making the Dean’s List since fall 2021. She maintained a 3.7 GPA while participating in the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program and the Psychology Club. She gained an impressive research record for an undergraduate, having been involved in multiple research labs leading to local and regional conference presentations as well as co-authorship on a peer-reviewed publication. Morgan also completed an internship at Peaceprints of WNY, where she helped incarcerated individuals transition back into civilian life. This internship led to yet another research project and the Intern of the Year Award from the Psychology Department. In addition, she served as a volunteer at the Center for Integrated Healthcare Laboratory at the Buffalo VA Medical Center, where she received and accepted an offer for a full-time position.

**SOCIOLOGY:
MARIA RODRIGUEZ**



Maria L. Rodriguez transferred to Buffalo State University from

SUNY Plattsburgh in spring 2022 with a modest GPA of 2.65. However, after becoming enamored with sociology and all the possibilities that the field offered as well as bonding with the faculty, Maria blossomed into one the top academic students in the department. Maintaining a 3.86 GPA, she made the Dean’s List her entire tenure at Buffalo State. She interned with Say Yes Buffalo, assisting high schoolers in completing their financial aid and other scholarships applications. After graduation, she was accepted in the sociology graduate programs at Stony Brook University and University at Albany. In graduate school, she plans to focus on urban sociology, race and ethnicity, and cultural studies. Maria aspires to become a professor of sociology.

DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZE SHINING STARS FROM CLASS OF 2024

TELEVISION FILM AND ARTS: JACKSON KUFFEL



Jackson Kuffel impressed faculty with the strong mix of self motivation and organizational skills that fuel his drive to be a creative. Jackson double-majored in television and film arts and business with the goal of developing his own media company. In addition to his business prowess, he has strong instincts and an excitement to learn and develop his cinematic structure and composition. During his time at Buffalo State University, Jackson succeeded in developing his own media business, working as a professional while being active in student projects. He also served as the social media intern for the television and film arts program. Through an application and interview process, Jackson was named the director of photography on his senior class capstone television pilot. His hard work, organizational skills, creative instincts, and reliability make him a shining example of the best of TFA.

THEATER: ZOE GOÑEZ



Zoe Goñez, a theater major with a minor in television and film arts, maintained a 3.90 GPA and was a Dean's List student throughout her time at Buffalo State. She served as the public relations and marketing manager and vice president of Casting Hall Productions before being

elected by her peers as president of the organization for her senior year. She played the title role in the department's production of *Medea* in spring 2023 and starred in the world premiere of Donna Hoke's play, *Teach*, in 2024. She assistant-directed the department's production of Eric Overmeyer's *On the Verge* and wrote a 60-page television pilot script titled *Echoes of Dolls* that she submitted to the Writers Guild of America (WGA), for which she received WGA certification. Zoe worked as script supervisor on *The Wrong Road*, a short film written by Buffalo State alumnus and Emmy Award-winning writer Tom Fontana, and edited the music video, "There Is Power" by musician MYQ Farrow. Zoe successfully auditioned and is now eligible for the highly selective and prestigious summer- and semester-long residencies at the National Theater Institute's Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut. Dedicated to the theater community, she has mentored and inspired fellow students and aspiring actors through her role as a summer teaching artist at Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo. Finally, Zoe was the recipient of Buffalo State's President's Medal for Outstanding Undergraduate Student, as her mother was before her, and she was featured as the student speaker at the School of Arts and Sciences commencement ceremony.

CONTACT US:

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Arts and Sciences

Kelly M. Frothingham, Ph.D.,
Dean

Rockwell Hall 222

1300 Elmwood Avenue

Buffalo, NY 14222

Phone:
(716) 878-6326

Web:
artsandsciences.buffalostate.edu

