

SUNY Buffalo State Communication Department Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Parenthetical numbers indicate related items in the [2022-2026 SUNY Buffalo State Strategic Plan](#).

Mission Statement

The Communication Department of SUNY Buffalo State is:

- A faculty of scholars serving the communication disciplines by creating new knowledge and effectively sharing existing knowledge within a community of scholars and media professionals.
- A faculty of educators preparing students to think analytically and creatively, communicate clearly, act ethically, and succeed professionally. (Adopted 2001; revised 2018)

Strategic Vision

The Communication Department at Buffalo State embraces the tension inherent in offering a quality professional education within a liberal-arts context. The department will continue to provide a comprehensive array of specialties that is reflective of our mission, consistent with our vision and values, and appropriate to our resources.

Core Values

As a collegial and dedicated group of faculty and staff both individually and collectively dedicated to this mission, the Communication Department holds the following values:

Academic Excellence

In its relationship with higher education—at Buffalo State, within the State University of New York, and beyond—the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of academic excellence. We provide opportunities for students to think critically, discern ethically, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively.

Service Excellence

In its relationships with students, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of service excellence. We give priority to student interests and needs in matters such as course development, scheduling, faculty accessibility, and the creation of a climate of encouragement and mutual respect.

Communication Primacy

In its grounding within the communication disciplines, the Communication Department values communication as the essential basis of democracy and as the vehicle for providing information, analysis, and advocacy. We uphold the highest professional standards and practices of the communication professions.

Quality Performance

In its relationships with employers and graduate schools, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of quality performance. We maintain high professional standards and seek to develop graduates who meet and exceed these expectations.

Social Responsibility

In its relationships with the community, the Communication Department values the ideals and best practices of social responsibility. We offer leadership, scholarship, creative work, and service to the communication professions, adding to the quality of life in Western New York and beyond.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1 – Academic Excellence. The Communication Department will offer a transformational educational experience, professionally oriented and rooted in the liberal arts, that is recognized as fostering high academic and professional standards. (Pillar 1, Goals 1 and 4; Pillar 3, Goal 1)

Objectives:

- 1) **Academic Programs.** Protect, enhance, and promote our existing programs and resources for students. (Pillar 1, Goal 3; and Pillar 3, Goal 1)

Strategies:

- High-quality capstone courses in each major and courses with active learning/service-learning experiences. (Pillar 2, Goal 1)
- Internships, which are required for M.S. in Public Relations students and encouraged for students in our bachelor's degree programs. (Pillar 2, Goal 1)
- Our department's annual Fall Forum to recognize students' research and creative projects. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)
- Student media organizations advised by Communication faculty including the student newspaper, The Record; WBNY-FM; Bengal Film and Television Productions; and the Public Relations Student Society of America. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)
- The Rho Psi chapter of the national Communication Honor Society, Lambda Pi Eta. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)
- Student scholarships and awards. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)
- Partnerships with campus entities (e.g., Television and Film Arts). (Pillar 2, Goal 2)

- 2) **Curriculum.** Continue to examine and enhance our curriculum, including faculty-led assessment of teaching and learning. (Pillar 3, Goal 2)

Strategies:

- Develop new courses and programs in areas identified by Communication faculty. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)
- Operationalize key components of the department’s assessment plan (Pillar 3, Goal 2), including:
 - ✚ Assessment of graduating students’ online portfolios by Communication Department Alumni Advisory Board members
 - ✚ Assessment of student learning outcomes in required courses in each major by faculty
 - ✚ A periodic alumni survey of recent graduates
 - ✚ A periodic survey of internship supervisors
 - ✚ Feedback on our curriculum from Alumni Advisory Board members, other alumni, and local non-alumni media professionals
 - ✚ Compilation of data about student and alumni awards from external organizations
 - ✚ “Closing the loop” discussions for enhancements to our curriculum based on assessment data

Goal 2 – Student Recruitment and Retention. The Communication Department is committed to recruiting a well-qualified, diverse student population and to ensuring student success toward completion of a degree. Our commitment to helping students achieve that goal is linked to several endeavors that promote student success.(Pillar 3, Goal 1)

Objectives:

- 1) **Student recruitment.** Increase student enrollment by 10 percent within one year. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)

Strategies:

- Working with Buffalo State’s Marketing and Communications Office, we will enhance branding and messaging for our degree programs (Pillar 1, Goal 1) by:
 - ✚ Developing branding messages that emphasize the Communication Department as an established, first-choice, accredited public university in New York State for students interested in communication degrees. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
 - ✚ Providing content about our degree programs, faculty, and students to Marketing and Communications for its external communication efforts via social media, video, and print communication. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
 - ✚ Increased messaging on the department’s social media platforms, including Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
 - ✚ Hosting a “Communication Student for a Day” event each fall and spring for high school students in the eight counties of Western New York to acquaint them with our programs. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
 - ✚ Visits by Communication faculty to local high schools to speak to classes and assemblies about our programs. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
 - ✚ Outreach to the region’s high school guidance counselors each semester about our degree programs. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)

- ✚ Tabling in the Student Union to reach current students interested in changing majors. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- ✚ Enhancing and updating the Communication Department website to tell stories about students in all of our majors. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- ✚ Participating in existing in-person Open House and virtual Open House events hosted by Admissions. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- ✚ Creating brochures and posters in tandem with the Marketing and Communications Office. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- ✚ Meeting periodically with Buffalo State Admissions staff members to update them on Communication Department degree programs. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- ✚ Identifying better pathways for transfer students through greater engagement with community colleges in the region. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)
- Increase recruitment for the department's certificate program in Sports Communication. (Pillar 1, Goal 1)

- 2) **Student retention.** Improve advisement and communications with current students to increase retention and completion of degrees. (Pillar 3, Goal 3)

Strategies:

- Continue to host an annual Welcome Party for students at the start of the fall semester.
- Continue to host an annual Hall of Fame/Professional Achievement Award/Honor Society Induction ceremony each fall to honor outstanding students and alumni.
- Nominate outstanding faculty advisers for Buffalo State advisement awards.
- Faculty will be encouraged to do a summer review of their advisees' registration for the fall semester, and a winter review for the spring semester, to make sure advisees are on track for graduation.
- Reach out to students to encourage advisement meetings.
- Communication faculty will continue as faculty advisers to student media organizations and the Communication Honor Society.

Goal 3 – Faculty and Staff Recruitment. The Communication Department is committed to faculty and staff success and diversity. We will recruit and retain a high-quality, diverse faculty and staff. (Pillar 4, Goal 4)

Objectives:

- 1) Faculty and staff excellence. We will provide support and recognition for excellence in faculty teaching, research, and service; and excellence in staff service. (Pillar 4, Goals 1 and 2)
- 2) Faculty and staff diversity. We will continue to recruit and make efforts to retain faculty and staff to increase diversity, including by gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. (Pillar 4, Goal 4)

Strategies:

- 1) Promote excellence in teaching and engage full-time and part-time faculty in professional development aimed at improving teaching methods, including innovations and technology in instruction. (Pillar 4, Goal 1)
- 2) Provide support for and promote excellence in faculty research and professional service. (Pillar 4, Goal 1)
- 3) Provide support and opportunities for professional development to department staff. (Pillar 4, Goal 1)
- 4) Increase recruitment of and retention of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds through best-practice search strategies. (Pillar 4, Goal 4)

Goal 4 – Fundraising. The Communication Department is committed to our learning environment and legacy. To serve our educational mission, we aim to maximize revenue opportunities and philanthropic investment in the department, while ensuring that our physical spaces best support our learning environment for our students. (Pillar 2, Goal 2)

Objectives:

- 1) Alumni and professional engagement. Engage on a more regular and more meaningful basis with alumni and non-alumni media professional partners. (Pillar 2, Goal 2)
- 2) Resources. Increase financial resources for scholarships and department needs through grants and donations; improve our physical space. (Pillar 2, Goal 2)

Strategies:

- 1) Working with Buffalo State’s Marketing and Communications Office, we will improve our external communication efforts to promote the department, including targeting brand messaging through digital, video, and print communications. (Pillar 3, Goal 3)
- 2) Working with Buffalo State’s Alumni Engagement Office, develop a comprehensive plan for alumni engagement and outreach, including opportunities for alumni involvement with classes and programs, alumni identification, and one-way and two-way communications. (Pillar 2, Goal 2)
- 3) Increase fundraising to the department, its programs, its labs, and media equipment, including more engagement with faculty, alumni, businesses, and foundations. (Pillar 2, Goal 2)
- 4) Advocate for space and facilities needs as identified by faculty. (Pillar 3, Goal 1)