West Side Mural

The Fine Arts and Art Education departments partnered with Young Audiences of Western New York and the City of Buffalo this summer to create a mural illustrating the growing diversity of Buffalo’s West Side. “Global Voices,” located on the south side of Lorigo’s Meating Place, 185 Grant Street, half a block south of the college’s Community Academic Center, features historical images of the West Side juxtaposed with portraits of current residents. Funded through a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant and created by Buffalo artist Augustina Droze, the 32-by-80-foot mural was composed in 4-by-8-foot panels in the Larkin Building downtown by Buffalo State students enrolled in a mural-painting class under the supervision of Fine Arts Department chair Philip Ogle and assistant professor of art education Candace Masters.

Neighborhood schoolchildren and students from Lafayette High School and PS 45 International School contributed to the mural’s images. Community sponsors, including the Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, the West Side Business and Taxpayers Association, the New York State Council on the Arts, Niagara District Councilman David Rivera’s Office, the Buffalo History Museum, and Lorigo’s Meating Place, matched the $75,000 NEA grant to cover the cost of the mural and accompanying workshops.

Entrepreneurship in the Arts

Buffalo State has initiated a certificate program for creative artists called “Entrepreneurship in the Arts.” Through five intensive workshops held at the Burchfield Penney Art Center, participants gain essential knowledge for creating their own arts enterprises. This spring, an initial class of 30 students learned how to develop a creative business in the studio arts, graphic design, digital design, animation, film, music performance, audio technology, theater, dance, creative writing, communication, and other areas. Presenters included experts in strategic planning, taxation and legal requirements, finance and insurance, trademark and copyright law, and e-commerce and marketing, and panels of successful entrepreneurial artists. The program is a collaboration of the School of Arts and Humanities, Buffalo State’s Small Business Development Center, the Continuing and Professional Studies Office, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center.

Art Education Juried Exhibition

The Art Education Department recently partnered with the Albright-Knox Art Gallery when Holly E. Hughes, curator at the Albright-Knox, served as curator for the department’s juried student exhibition. The show featured diverse student works, including ceramics, paintings, photographs, textiles, sculptures, and multimedia. Hughes worked as an intern at the Albright-Knox for nine years after finishing her undergraduate work in photography and art history at Buffalo State in 1996. After she was hired as a full-time employee, she began work on her master’s degree at the University at Buffalo. Her job has taken her on an exploratory journey all over the world.
Online Master’s Degree in Music Education

Buffalo State’s Music Department recently launched an online Mus.M degree in music education, the fourth such program in the United States and the only program of its kind in New York State. This is the college’s second online degree, after adult education. This highly selective program will admit only 15 graduate students a year. The online format opens the door to highly qualified out-of-state applicants and working professionals who can complete the master’s degree in just five part-time semesters. Courses will include Graduate Music Theory, Graduate Music History, Research in Music Education, Curriculum and Assessment, and Conducting and Ensemble Leadership. Applications are available on the Music Department’s website.

Digital Acoustics

The sophisticated acoustics and technological abilities of the new Louis P. Ciminelli Recital Hall, Jacqueline V. LoRusso Recording Studio, and refurbished music computer lab in Rockwell Hall are enriching opportunities for Buffalo State music students while attracting national attention. The facilities have been featured on the cover of Yamaha Commercial Audio and in Front of House magazines, and will be highlighted in an upcoming issue of Wired magazine. Ciminelli Hall boasts 56 independently controlled speakers, each with its own web address, and has the astonishing capacity to duplicate the acoustics of any space, from Carnegie Hall to Yankee Stadium. In addition, composers from remote locations can compose for each speaker independently. Installed by Yamaha, the system was tuned, seat by seat, by a team from Japan.

From College to Career for Music B.A. Students

In an initiative to help B.A. students make the transition from college to career, the Music Department has helped students land internship experiences where they can experiment with applying their skills in a variety of work settings. In just three years, the program has grown to 10 site locations covering multiple aspects of the arts industry. Current placements include the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, GCIR Audio, a recording studio owned by Buffalo rock bassist Robby Takac of Goo Goo Dolls fame; the Great Lakes Guitar Society, headed by adjunct lecturer Evan Drummond; and the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame.

Stephen McLean, ’14, on trumpet (Music major)
Asian Lacquer International Symposium and Exhibition

Buffalo State hosted a weeklong international symposium this spring on the art of Asian lacquer, organized by the Art Conservation Department, the Design Department, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center. Bringing together artists, art historians, conservators, curators, and scientists, the event explored lacquer as a living art. The symposium featured historical examples of lacquerware by region and culture, examined technical aspects of the craft through history, discussed the cultural differences in conservation approaches, and provided a venue for dissemination of recent scientific findings.

Distinguished guests included three artists designated “Living National Treasures” in Japan, individuals who are certified by the Japanese government to preserve and protect cultural properties. It was the first gathering of its kind. Other experts in the field traveled from China, Korea, and Myanmar, as well as from across the United States and Canada.

Barbara Brennan Ford, retired curator of Japanese art from New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, was the keynote speaker. Other attendees represented London’s Victoria and Albert Museum; the Department of Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum für Lackkunst in Münster, Germany; the Institute of East Asian Art History at Heidelberg University; the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, California; and Heri Gahbler Atelier in Cologne, Germany.

The symposium’s program combined formal illustrated lectures, demonstrations, and workshops by experts. The Burchfield Penney Art Center also hosted a stunning exhibition of Asian lacquer that drew scores of visitors to this nationally and internationally acknowledged event.
Research and common sense suggest that student learning is enhanced significantly through experiential education beyond the classroom. Arts and Humanities (A&H) students regularly participate in Buffalo State Learning Communities, collaboratively advance individualized research projects with faculty members, and work with community organizations through service-learning course components. In addition, the faculty is frequently able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Stand-up comedian Thom Tran, B.A. ’86 (broadcasting), approached associate professor of Communication Paul DeWald for assistance in preparing a high-quality production video for submission to Comedy Central. DeWald formed a team of media production majors to provide professional-level video, lighting, and sound support for Tran and his two collaborating comedians. Thirty communication majors worked for weeks with Tran’s small professional production team and Performing Arts Center staff to record the Gil of Comedy Task Force: Funny Year in the Performing Arts Center before a lively full-house on November 1. Including Buffalo State in the credits, Tran plans to edit the video in January and submit it to Comedy Central in February for national airing on Memorial Day or Veterans Day 2014 and distribution to military personnel worldwide.

Also in October, theater students joined prolific film and television actor Robert Forster as he rehearsed and performed a one-man show, The Lifeguard: Ronald Reagan and His Story, during a weeklong residency with the Burchfield Penney Art Center (BPAC) and the Theater Department. A star of Quentin Tarantino’s Jackie Brown and recently seen in Breaking Bad and Last Man Standing, Forster shared his talents and experiences with students while polishing his role as Ronald Reagan for future performances. Classes observed rehearsals and discussed acting, careers, and professionalism with Forster, while theater majors created set, light, image projection, and sound design and provided stage management for public performances on November 1 and 2. The residency was arranged by BPAC executive director Anthony Bannon, with student involvement orchestrated by Theater Department chair Donn Youngstrom and theater faculty members Carlos Jones and Shaun McLaughlin.

The participating students, faculty, and professional artists eulogistically praised the value of these exemplary experiential projects. We are proud of the transformative opportunities our A&H faculty brings to students, and we appreciate your special contributions that help make the excellence of a Buffalo State education even better. It is a delight to share student creativity with our community. Please join us as frequently as you can!

Sincerely,

Benjamin C. Christy
Dean of Arts and Humanities

Math and Dance: Celebrating the Year of the Teacher

The dance faculty hosted a kickoff event to Buffalo State’s “Year of the Teacher” celebration with a series of unique math and dance workshops this fall with Karl Schaffer, Ph.D., of De Anza College in Cupertino, California, and Erik Stern, M.F.A., of Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. The pair founded a dance company in 1987, building on the idea that mathematical ideas become more exciting, tangible, and memorable when physically acted out. After an initial workshop, the team rehearsed a new work with students who will continue to develop the piece during the academic year. The resulting choreography will represent this kinetic way of teaching.

Plans are underway for students to perform the piece in Buffalo State’s spring dance concert and to submit the piece for presentation at the Dance and the Child International (daCi) USA gathering in Seattle, Washington, in June 2014. Schaffer and Stern’s residency was a collaboration among Buffalo State, SUNY Brockport, the University at Buffalo, and Tapestry Charter School in Buffalo.
The Front Yard Turns On 'Forever'

The School of Arts and Humanities partnered with the Burchfield Penney Art Center this fall for the opening of The Front Yard, the world's first permanent, environmentally responsive, 24/7/365 outdoor new media gallery. Located on Elmwood Avenue and projecting onto the front of the museum, the installation premiered with newly remastered pieces by the late Paul Sharits and Hollis Frampton; a piece by Communication Department technical assistant Brian Milbrand, Afterglow Arrangements (2013); and works by Steina, Barbara Lattanzio, associate professor of communication Meg Knowles, Chris Gallant, and other artists. An ever-expanding collection of works will be unveiled in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

The opening also featured a community street party including an electronic musical performance by assistant professor of music and inventor J. Tomás Henriques and the student Digital Music Ensemble. Then at sunset, the trio of projection towers turned on “Forever.”

Photos by Bill Wippert

Illuminating Engineering Society
IGNITES Buffalo State

The Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) Buffalo section and the Buffalo State Interior Design Department presented “Illuminating Gab Nite” this spring. The event, designed to bring the professional practicing design community into Buffalo State for interaction with the department’s students, was the inspiration of Paul Mercier, owner of Lighting Design Innovation and president-elect of IES. Mercier teaches lighting design for the Interior Design Department as an adjunct faculty member. Students attended IES Buffalo section events in the spring, and student projects for the class were judged by Ray Soto, lighting designer with Cannon Design, and Mark Nestorowich from Wesco Distribution. The winning entry was designed by Raelyn Woltz, ’14, who was awarded a $1,000 scholarship from IES.

PR Students Get Professional

Buffalo State’s Public Relations Student Society of America chapter organized two panel discussions featuring local public relations practitioners in a program titled “Meet the PR-offessionals Evening.” The chapter also assisted Buffalo State’s student newspaper, the Record, in promoting its 100th anniversary with a special event in April, bringing in guest speakers to its weekly meetings and taking a group of its members to the Public Relations Society of America Northeast District Conference in Troy, New York.

TFA Semester in New York City

Buffalo State’s television and film arts (TFA) program has launched a new “Semester in New York City” initiative that pairs students with internships at high-profile networks such as MTV, Comedy Central, and Nickelodeon. Students develop strong entertainment industry relationships to help them jump-start careers.

The New York City semester includes two courses, The Business of Television and The Business of Film, taught by Buffalo State alumni Marcia Mulé, ’81, and John Bobey, ’91.

Mulé, who co-created Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List and was one of the executive producers of The Real Housewives of Atlanta, among other projects, is introducing students to iconic TV shows such as I Love Lucy and The Mary Tyler Moore Show and allowing them to draw parallels to today’s television formats.

Bobey, a writer and producer who has worked for David Letterman, Dana Carvey, Bill Maher, Glenn Beck, and others, noted that he and Mulé are sharing their firsthand knowledge of the New York entertainment world.

VH1 president Tom Calderone, ’85, who facilitated internships at Viacom, was instrumental in the program’s development as well.

The TFA program, which accepts 15 aspiring filmmakers each year, prepares students for a variety of careers in the entertainment industry, including screenwriting, producing, and directing.
Professional French

A recent revision to the Buffalo State French curriculum is designed to accommodate the needs of today's professionals. More inclusive of the culture, civilization, and history of the more than 30 countries where French is spoken regularly, coursework includes opportunities to study in Francophone Africa, the Caribbean, North America—and, of course, France! The revision also expands opportunities for students to learn to use French in a professional or business context with an eye toward either business or graduate school. The revised cultural component will also better prepare French secondary education majors to handle the history and geography components of the French Content Specialty Test for teacher certification.

New Publishing Components in the Writing Major

The writing major at Buffalo State continues to grow, with increasing numbers of students and an expanded curriculum. Two courses that will debut next year—Literary Publishing and Senior Seminar for Writing Majors—are designed to give students practical exposure to the world of literary publishing. Literary Publishing will focus on the publishing and history of literary journals. Students will work on Buffalo State’s own literary journal, Elm Leaves Journal, which is enjoying its 65th anniversary (it was founded in 1948). Their work will include corresponding with submitters and authors; editing, design, and layout; and marketing and distribution. Students will also closely examine other literary journals to learn about the journal as a literary form.

In addition, the course will study contemporary trends in publishing, including blogs and writers’ web pages. Students will become familiar with practical matters such as querying agents and publishers. In short, students will focus on publishing their work, learning the etiquette of the publishing world, and gaining a better understanding of what is involved in being a writer.

Stakes and Kidneys

“Why Markets in Human Body Parts Are Morally Imperative” was the topic of the annual Ethics Bowl lecture, sponsored by the Department of Philosophy and Humanities, the Grant Allocation Committee, and the Ethics Bowl Club in April.

The Ethics Bowl Club is a United Students Government organization that allows students to engage in intense debate on ethical and often contentious issues of contemporary significance.

James Stacey Taylor, associate professor of philosophy, religion, and classical studies at the College of New Jersey, argued that consenting rational adults should be allowed to buy and sell kidneys. He cited the case of Peter Randall, who famously posted his kidney for sale on eBay in 2003. When selling organs is illegal, as it is now in the United States, he said, everyone in a transplant operation is paid except the donor. According to Taylor, this is morally wrong, and the sale of human organs should be allowed just as the sale of other medical products and services are.

Professional Social Networks in English Education

The Western New York Network of English Teachers (WNYNET), a teacher-led professional network designed to support and encourage teaching in the secondary English language arts (ELA), sponsors an ongoing speaker series at Buffalo State, inviting experienced teachers to present on areas of ELA instruction. The free events are attended by teachers and English education students from across the region.

In addition, the English Education Student Association (EESA), founded this past year, is a student-led professional network that supports Buffalo State’s English education students. EESA connects new students and alumni to more experienced members of the English education program, provides students with volunteer opportunities working in local classrooms, and holds monthly meetings to engage students in conversations about the profession.

Theater Students Take Fight

The first Society of American Fight Directors skills test came to Buffalo State this spring when J. Allen Suddeth, a legendary fight director, visited campus to direct action scenes performed by 15 theater student-combat performers. Suddeth has staged fights throughout the entertainment industry, including for the Broadway productions of Newsies, Gem of the Ocean, Saturday Night Fever, Jekyll & Hyde, and Angels in America. On campus, he taught a master class sharing his own style of knife fighting and assessed students on their ability to assimilate new information and techniques.

Nine students received a basic pass certification, and six were awarded the examiner's recommendation of excellence. Buffalo State now joins the ranks of the select few universities and conservatories that offer this opportunity to their students at the undergraduate level.