



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**  
**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

**Project Title: Educational Opportunity Program Alumni Leadership Program**

- 1) **Purpose:** The goal this year of the Alumni Engagement Office was to provide a programming focused on young alumni of the Buffalo State College Educational Opportunity Program. Aside from social events, we wanted to provide an opportunity to expand their communication and leadership skills, as well as empower them to achieve professional milestones. In doing so, a full-day workshop educating alumni many tools they can use in a professional environment was hypothesized as the best tactic to provide this information. The first step was to provide our alumni with two assessment instruments to complete prior. One was the DISC behavior assessment tool which collects an individual's communication and conflict management preference, and Four Sight, a Buffalo State patented instrument the expresses individual's creativity and thinking preferences. Once analyzed, the results would be sent to alumni ahead of the workshop for review. This was a priority of the Alumni Engagement office because many employers and faculty members say our students lack soft skills such as verbal communication, teamwork, problem solving and decision making. We wanted to catch our young EOP alumni early on post-grad prior to their first professional career opportunity in their interested field with the above knowledge.



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**  
**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

2) **Scope:** In order to achieve this, planning was imperative. With the help of trained leadership coaches Tamara McMillan, M.S., CPSC, CLC and Jonathan Hulbert M.S.Ed., both employees of Buffalo State College, we collaborate our strengths in designing the best needs for our EOP alumni. We established the following objectives:

- Create your own individual leadership philosophy
- Develop and understanding of oneself in the workplace
- Enhance critical problem-solving strategies
- Foster effective teamwork techniques
- Understand and work through conflicts constructively
- Learn how to advocate for oneself
- Effective communication with future colleagues
- Network and reconnect from peers
- Feel empowered and more confident in the workplace
- Take it forward

3) **Implementation:** Planning took place over a four-month period. Below in detail is the process between me and the facilitators/coaches, and what was asked from the EOP alumni.

**December 2018-** Pitch the concept of EOP Leadership workshop to potential coaches. Once approved, provide first draft of workshop outline and accept critiques.



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**  
**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

**January 2019-** follow up with costs for assessment instrument costs, recruitment of EOP alumni, promotion, and review of second draft of outline and schedule of the day. In addition, design registration application for the leadership workshop.

**February-** Send emails, social media posts to EOP alumni about leadership workshop. The goal was to only accept 15-20 alumni, to ensure proper engagement and attention to their professional development needs.

**March-** Inform accepted alumni, send assessment instruments for them to complete no later than mid-March.

**April-** Review all final logistics, print out assessment results, and set up space in Jacqueline Vito LoRusso Alumni and Visitor center on campus.

**April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019-** EOP Alumni Leadership Workshop begins from 9am-4:30pm.

The workshop was very enriching. All alumni in attendance received a significant impact in learning their preferences from DISC and FourSight in addition in having



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**  
**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

access to additional skill sets and tools they can implement in the workplace. The background of our alumni was very diverse. They were either in Graduate studies, Education, or recent graduates trying to learn where their path was next.

**4.) Grant Money Allocation:**

- Breakfast and Lunch for alumni and speakers
- Room rental
- Coach/facilitator fees
- Materials for workshops (pens, folders, printouts,)
- DISC and FourSight Assessments

5.) **Assessment:** We utilized Qualtrics to send out general interest of the workshop. We received 23 responses. From there, we sent the registration link for alumni to pay the \$20.00. We did this again, to offset the cost slightly on the workshop, and to gain commitment from alumni.

6.) **Findings:** There were unfortunate setbacks to the implementation. EOP alumni seemed unable to fill out the registration form accurately and many didn't show the day of. Although they paid a \$20.00 registration fee to offset costs ahead of time, they still chose not to arrive. Things we worked on to promote as we do for social events were social media postings, emails, and phone calls. The main drawback was because we knew many of our EOP alumni already relocated in



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**  
**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

New York City would have benefited from the event, but they lacked the access to travel to Buffalo, N.Y. It is common for our students to live in Buffalo while in school but move back home to help support their families. In addition, it seemed difficult getting alumni to take the time to fill out their application to admit themselves in the program. It would either be incomplete or blank. Regardless, I was pleased with the turnout, and benefit the alumni who did attend received. Many alumni who expressed interest in the workshop, were based outside of Buffalo N.Y. Those who were able to participate, felt very rewarded to have an intimate opportunity with the coaches. They were able to discuss personal and professional issues in their life and the coaches were able to articulate that need based on the theories they were working on.

7.) **Conclusion:** Overall, this study was successful. I'm unsure if this event will have the traction to continue to exist, due to the financial strain and limited interest locally. Possibly a digital version of this could yield better success, we would just have to assess the cost of either filming or providing the material publicly. If we went digital, I don't think the assessment instruments would have any value because they're too specific and personal. It lends itself difficult to personify examples that may not relate to the group experiencing the webinar. We engaged alumni which is always our goal and mission as we continue to exist as Alumni Engagement. Things to adjust for the future would pursue taking the workshop on the road or find less expenses coaches to facilitate. My professional opinion is to keep the existing coaches, based on



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Alumni Association

**N.E.A.T. Grant Final Report 2018-2019**

**Lauren E. Turner, M.S., Alumni Engagement**

their own credibility in terms of their contribution to the campus community and our urban community. This was a great risk/opportunity for our department. Most of our engagement is at a social level, so to challenge ourselves and have an education-based event for our alumni that wasn't a speaker series, was meaningful.

8.) **Impact:** The primary focus of this project was to find unique ways to engage alumni, that they could leave with on a long-term basis. The concept of the workshop was inspired from the Professional Development's office Emerging College Leaders program that's commonly in place for current employed faculty and staff. I hope going forward, providing maybe a half day workshop with only one instrument could encourage a future increase in participation.