

OCTOBER 29TH 2025

Exceptional Education Dept.

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NEWSLETTER



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Falling Into the Semester

The semester is in full swing, and by now, routines are starting to take shape.

These first few weeks can feel like a whirlwind of assignments, adjusting to new classes, and reconnecting with campus life. But this is also the time when the foundation for the rest of the year is built.

Fall is a season of change, and just like the leaves, we're reminded that growth comes in many colors and forms.

Quick Highlights

- ***From the Horace Mann Endowed Chair***
- ***Professor Spotlight: Continuing Her Passion for Education***
- ***Teacher Tailgate, PDP Conference, and more***
- ***Resources to Support Your Semester***

Did you know, Buffalo State's Exceptional Education Department is one of the largest of its kind in New York State, with graduates teaching and leading in schools and programs across the country?

Read more on our website

<https://exceptionaleducation.buffalostate.edu>



From the Horace Mann Endowed Chair



Dr. Shannon Budin

Greetings Exceptional Education students!

I am thrilled to share a brief update to you in my role as the Horace Mann Endowed Chair. You may be wondering: Who is Horace Mann? And what exactly is an endowed chair? Great questions!

Learning about Horace Mann (affectionately known as “Hank”) is a mini history lesson about our Exceptional Education Department, of which YOU are an essential part. Dr. Mann joined Buffalo State in 1953 and helped grow our program into one of the largest and most prominent in the United States. He was a passionate advocate for students with disabilities, championing their inclusion in our schools and society. Buffalo State was his home, and we were his family.

Upon his passing, he left a legacy to us in the form of many student scholarships (be sure to check out the CAPS Portal to apply!) and an endowment for the “chair” position. As the current Endowed Chair, I am honored to carry on his mission and will continue to look for ways to support students and faculty to make a lasting impact on the field of special education.

One exciting initiative I am eager to support is the sharing of our teacher candidates’ expertise. I want ALL educators to see the amazing work that YOU are doing-- whether it is planning an explicit lesson, developing a behavior intervention plan, or identifying evidence-based strategies to help a student learn to read, solve math problems, or complete a morning routine. Your work deserves to be seen, celebrated, and shared!

If you are curious about the interventions and strategies your peers have found successful, please join us at the Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium on December 6. This event is a celebration of the work that inspired Dr. Mann, and we hope it will inspire you as well, as you continue making a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,
Dr. Shannon Budin

Professor Spotlight

Mrs. Blask, Continuing Her Passion for Education



This fall, we're shining the spotlight on Mrs. Blask from the Exceptional Education Department. Though she currently holds her master's degree, Mrs. Blask is in the final stages of completing her Ph.D. in Psychology/Behavior Analysis, a remarkable accomplishment that reflects her dedication to lifelong learning and her passion for supporting students and future educators.

Coming from a family of nurses and teachers, Mrs. Blask was inspired early on to make a difference in education, especially by reaching teachers before they enter the classroom. She believes in teaching future educators strategies to help students stay engaged, manage behaviors effectively, and understand the impact of trauma, skills she says older generations of teachers often didn't have access to in their training.

Mrs. Blask's curiosity and love of learning extend far beyond teaching. She admits that if she weren't a professor, she might have become a midwife or even an archaeologist, two careers that reflect her deep interest in people and discovery. That same curiosity is what fuels her passion for research, one of the main reasons she chose to pursue her Ph.D. "I've always loved research," she shared, explaining that earning her doctorate allows her to explore questions she's passionate about and contribute new insights to the field of exceptional education. Her doctoral research focuses on *the effects of visual stimuli on active engagement in students with ADHD during math instruction*.

Professor Spotlight

Mrs. Blask, Continuing Her Passion for Education

At Buffalo State, she teaches courses such as Applied Behavioral Analysis and the project/thesis course, which she describes as her favorite.

"I love watching students start with no idea what they want to do, then seeing their confidence grow as they complete their projects and present at the symposium,"

Her teaching philosophy is grounded in equality and mutual respect:

"Just because I'm your professor doesn't mean I'm better than you, we're all learning together."



When asked what she wants students to take away from her classes, she said, "That they can do it."

Having faced challenges with ADHD herself, Mrs. Blask emphasizes perseverance, relationship-building, and self-belief, values she instills in her students.

Outside the classroom, she enjoys live music, camping, traveling, and spending time with her Boy Scout troop, where she serves as a committee chair. Her guiding motto says it all:

"You have one life to live, make it count, and be remembered for the good things."



Editor's Note:

A special thank you to Mrs. Blask for being the first faculty member to take part in this spotlight series. I give her major kudos for pursuing her Ph.D. while also teaching, her dedication to both her students and her own growth is truly inspiring.

Teacher Tailgate

The 2025 PDP Teacher Tailgate was held on Tuesday, October 21st, at 12:00 p.m.- 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union second floor Social Hall.

This was an open house gathering of 67 teacher education students, 38 faculty/staff, and 10 supporters to learn about educator opportunities and resources.

Exceptional Education had a chance to speak with many students, and we thank you all for attending. If you didn't go this year, plan for next year!



Exceptional Ed



Get Involved!

Looking to get involved on campus? Bengal Connect is your one-stop hub for all things student life at Buffalo State!

From club meetings and events to campus-wide activities, you can find everything that's happening right here.

<https://www.bengalconnect.com>



Upcoming Events

October 28th

- Bengals Passionate about Education is hosting 'Teacher Tricks and Treats' in the Butler Library Curriculum Lab (Second floor above Starbucks) from 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mr. Prince Johnson, the 2026 NYS Teacher of the Year will be in attendance to speak with students. Cookies and cider will be provided!

November 1st

- IPDP is hosting a study abroad in Kenya at the end of the Spring 2026 semester. The deadline to apply is coming up, if you want to know more: [IPDP Kenya Information](#).

PDP Conference

The PDP Consortium holds its conference at the beginning of each fall semester, offering an important platform for professional development stakeholders, including school teachers, administrators, campus faculty, and teacher candidates, to engage in lively discussions on emerging topics in education. Each year, teacher candidates also present their ongoing research through both poster sessions and speaking presentations, sharing their innovative work with the broader educational community.

This year, Buffalo State faculty/students showcased a wide range of projects reflecting global engagement, cultural understanding, and inclusive teaching practices.

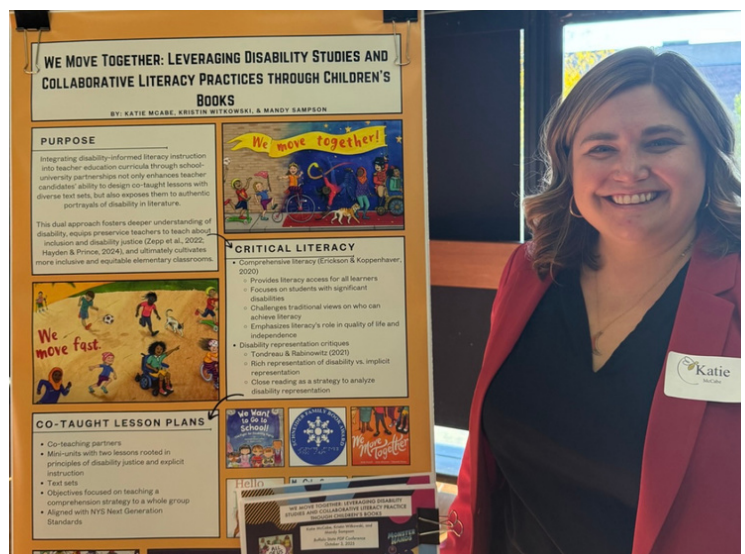
Below are a few highlighted presentations from Ex. Ed. faculty and candidates.

The first research group, led by Dr. Hashey and Dr. Budin, with Darnell Hilliard, Jasmine Pen, Jourdan Summers, and Tamiel White, presented “Zambia Teaching & Cultural Immersion – Summer 2025.” Their work highlights a study abroad experience that emphasizes cross-cultural teaching practices and global education awareness.



The second research group, led by Dr. Patti with Alana Jacowitz, explored “Social Work Observations in Santiago, Chile Summer 2025.” This project offers a valuable lens into international social work experiences and the ways cultural context shapes community engagement and student learning.

The third research team, featuring Dr. McCabe, Kristin Witkowski, and Mandy Sampson, shared “We Move Together: Leveraging Disability Studies and Collaborative Literacy Practices through Children’s Books.” Their project underscored the importance of inclusive education by integrating disability studies and literacy development to foster understanding and empathy in the classroom.



The 2025 PDP Conference served as a testament to the dedication and creativity of Buffalo State's faculty and teacher candidates. Through global engagement, innovative literacy practices, and a shared commitment to inclusive education, participants are shaping the future of teaching and learning both locally and beyond.



ASL Microcredential

Sign Language in the Classroom

Students in Mrs. Amy Crockford's Exceptional Education classes were introduced to a new resource to support their learning, an American Sign Language (ASL) tutor now available to assist with coursework.

Cadence Aguilar is available on Tuesdays from 4:30 - 5:45 p.m. and on Thursdays from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Tutoring is located in the Academic Commons (Suite 145) in the Butler Library. Check in at the Ask Us desk & online tutoring may also be available upon request. If you are interested in learning ASL, click here: [ASL Micro Credential](#).

Study Abroad with IPDP

This past summer, Exceptional Education Professor, Dr. Patti, was a co-faculty leader for the International Professional Development Schools (IPDP) program in Chile. The short-term, faculty-led study abroad program's objectives include:

- enhancing intercultural competency and humility,
- developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to language teaching and learning, and
- deepening understanding of education from a global perspective.

The IPDP Chile program recently developed a new university partner in Chile, Universidad San Sebastian (USS). To read about the collaboration between USS and Buffalo State, please click here: [USS & Buffalo State Collaboration](#)

To learn more about international opportunities for education majors, please click here: [IPDP Opportunities](#)



IPDP Chile



Campus Resources!

Buffalo State has a wide range of resources to support your success both inside and outside the classroom.

From academic tutoring and career services to counseling and the food pantry, help is always available when you need it.



Keep in Touch

Want to keep up with everything happening in the Exceptional Education Department?

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for the latest updates, event reminders, and student spotlights.

Resources and Supports

Student Conduct and Community Standards Office

- <https://studentconduct.buffalostate.edu>

Weigel Health Center

- <https://weigel.buffalostate.edu>

The Counseling Center

- <https://counseling.buffalostate.edu>

Student Resources Page

- <https://deanofstudents.buffalostate.edu/academic-resources>

Stay Connected

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- Username: [buffalostate_exed](#)

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- Username: [Buffalo State Exceptional Education Department](#)

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- Username: [bsc_exed](#)

Exceptional Education Website

- <https://exceptionaleducation.buffalostate.edu>