



PAGE

**3**

Yoga program for children with disabilities teaches more than stretching



PAGE

**5**

Another UB dental care bus hits the road

PAGE

**7**

New program protects older adults from online fraud

“Older adults did not grow up using the internet. For many, it can be difficult to spot online deceptions, and the results can be tragic.”

Siwei Lyu, Empire Innovation Professor

Where campus and community connect

# Neighbor



Urban planning students (from left) Silvi Patel, Andrea Harder and Shameeq Willis helped the owner of Charlie's Food Mart on the East Side of Buffalo secure a \$40,000 storefront revitalization grant.

## A United Front

Urban planning students help a store owner in the Broadway-Fillmore corridor turn ambition into action

**Did you know?** Broadway-Fillmore, part of the area known as “Old Polonia,” was named a local historic district in 2018.

In 2021, Fillmore Forward, a nonprofit organization working to revitalize the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood, approached Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, associate professor and interim chair of UB's Department of Urban and Regional Planning. They were seeking guidance on envisioning and securing resources for storefront revitalization in the economically distressed Broadway-Fillmore corridor.

Frimpong Boamah, who led a studio project on the East Side and is co-directing a major community research project in the area, engaged the Graduate Planning Student Association (GPSA) and the African American Students of Architecture and Planning (AASAP) to mobilize a volunteer effort. A number of students stepped up to the challenge, with three students—Andrea Harder, Silvi Patel and Shameeq Willis—working through this past summer to develop a formal proposal.

Now, a \$40,000 Storefront Revitalization Grant—the maximum award offered by the Erie County community development fund—will be helping Yasri Alabbadi, owner

of Charlie's Food Mart on Broadway, transform a deteriorating storefront into a brick façade with new signage, an awning reflective of the historic character of the neighborhood, and street-side amenities, such as vegetation, a bike rack and a bench.

The student volunteers, who met with Alabbadi several times over the spring 2022 semester to understand his vision, said the greatest reward comes in supporting the aspirations of the community and its residents.

“One of the takeaways of this project is how important it is to collaborate and embrace the ideas everyone gives. It makes the process more rewarding,” said Willis, who holds a bachelor's degree in environmental design from UB.

That community-minded sensibility defines UB's urban and regional planning program, Frimpong Boamah says.

“Buffalo is our home,” he said, “and we take pride as a school and department when our students translate our theories about justice, placemaking and equity into real-world solutions that benefit members of our Buffalo home.”



# Shoutouts & Standouts

Recognizing what's happening around the community



## Looks terrific.

LEROI: Living in Color, an exhibition running through March 26 at the **Burchfield Penney Art Center**, showcases the work of **LeRoi Johnson**, a Buffalo artist of international renown. Over 70 of Johnson's pieces are featured, alongside the works of 80 Buffalo student artists who produced multimedia responses to his art.



BURCHFIELD PENNEY ART CENTER

Decades of work by artist LeRoi Johnson engage the imaginations of local students from the Buffalo Public Schools and other organizations in a new exhibition at the Burchfield Penney Art Center.

## See you this summer.

The annual **Samuel P. Capen Garden Walk**, now 22 years strong, is scheduled to take place the weekend of July 15-16, with special "Capen by Night" viewings of some gardens that Saturday evening. Go to [ourheights.org/gardenwalk](http://ourheights.org/gardenwalk) for more info.

## Hey, that's us!

University Heights came in at **no. 12 in Niche's 2022 "Best Places to Live"** list for greater Buffalo, topping more than 50 other area neighborhoods. University Heights received an overall grade of A and high marks for its diversity, nightlife, outdoor activities and family friendliness.

## Thanks for lending a hand.

The **University Heights Collaborative** organized a community paint day and cleanup last fall, sprucing up the North Buffalo Rail Trail and Minnesota Linear Park and helping artist **Andrea Pawarski** give a refresh to the "Unity Through Community" mural.



## UB Through the Years

### Celebrating Capen's accomplishments

The Capen name is well-known throughout the community, gracing a key street connecting University Heights and Amherst, a popular garden walk event and more. But how much do you know about the person behind the name?

Samuel P. Capen was UB's first full-time chancellor. Prior to his inauguration in 1922, the university was just four professional schools—medicine, pharmacy, law and dentistry, each housed in separate buildings around Buffalo. During Capen's administration, seven more schools were established and 12 buildings added, and the university was unified into the modern structure it has today. Student enrollment rose from 1,800 to over 13,000 by Capen's retirement in 1950.

Last fall, UB archivists staged an exhibit honoring the 100th anniversary of Capen's inauguration in—fittingly—Capen Hall.

← **Test of Time:** In what decade was Capen Boulevard named in honor of Samuel P. Capen (front left)? Find the answer at the bottom of the back cover.



UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



# Teaching by Reaching

Partnership leads to unique new program for children with disabilities

**F**or 30 minutes a day, a dozen young children meditated, read, sang and bounced around a room in the Beyond Learning Center in Depew. This was not your typical physical education course. This was a yoga class.

The students were participating in the K-2 Let's Move project, a study led by researchers in the Graduate School of Education to examine the effects of yoga on self-regulation and motor skills among K-2 children with developmental disabilities.

Yoga and mindfulness-based programs for children are known to build body awareness, decrease anxiety and assist stress management, said co-principal investigator Catherine Cook-Cottone, professor of counseling, school and educational psychology.

However, these effects are understudied in children with developmental disabilities, many of whom have difficulties with self-regulation—the ability to manage reactions to feelings and sensory experiences. Self-regulation can impact a student's ability to stay in their seat during class, follow their teacher's directions, communicate, engage in fewer impulsive actions and not overreact to new situations.

**“Yoga provides a period to move through routine and novelty and offers many opportunities to self-regulate.”**

**Vito Gigante**

the Cantalician Center for Learning), and Claire Cameron, associate professor of learning and instruction. The project was also supported by Maria Priore, an alumna of the Graduate School of Education who worked on the study as a graduate assistant and was funded by The Children's Guild.

The yoga and mindfulness-based curriculum consisted of movement and breathing exercises, relaxation, meditation games, reading and music.

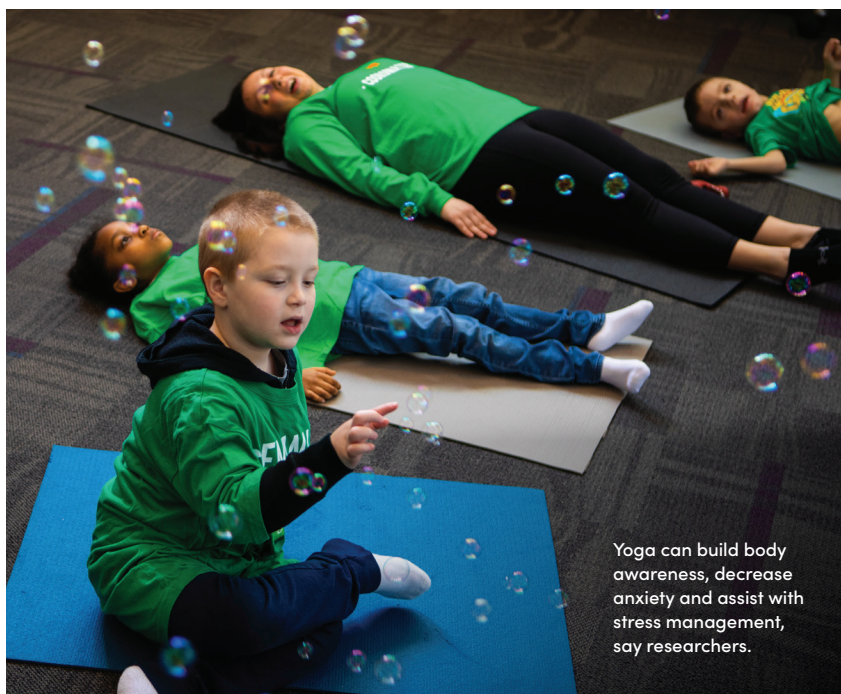
“We tell kids to pay attention, but nobody teaches them how. We tell them to calm down, but don't tell them what that means,” said Gigante. “Yoga provides a period to move through routine and novelty and offers many opportunities to self-regulate.”

The study will soon yield several academic papers that detail the effectiveness of the curriculum and the assessment tool for children with developmental disabilities that was created as part of the project.

Although the data is still being analyzed, K-2 Let's Move is already a sterling example of what can be accomplished when researchers, educators and families work together toward the mission of helping children thrive. The culmination of efforts produced a unique study that many researchers would not have attempted, said Cook-Cottone.

“We are so grateful for the opportunity to bring the scientific, problem-solving method to the schools,” she said. “This wonderful community shared their challenges and ideas with us, and together we were able to study yoga in a way in which it has never been studied before.

“Perhaps even more importantly,” she added, “I think Vito and the kids had a lot of fun. I know we did.” ●



Yoga can build body awareness, decrease anxiety and assist with stress management, say researchers.

COMMUNITY

## Matters

A note from UB's Office of Government and Community Relations

UB recently welcomed **Jordan Nicholson** as its new director of community relations and deputy director of state relations. This position is dedicated to strengthening the university's engagement with civic and community-based organizations, businesses and residents within the neighborhoods surrounding UB's campuses.

Previously, Nicholson worked for U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer, first as deputy regional director and later as regional director, overseeing the leader's Western New York office (spanning four counties) and advocating in Washington for his constituency. His takeaways from that experience center around the unifying power of public service.

“The most important thing to keep in mind is that, for the most part, we all share the same goal—we all want vibrant and safe communities,” Nicholson said. “Once you understand that, common ground is easier to find.”

Nicholson looks forward to building relationships with the residents of Buffalo and Amherst. Having grown up in the town of Chautauqua, Nicholson now resides in the city of Buffalo and is enjoying getting to know the community, particularly the historic University Heights neighborhood. “I'm eager to learn more about what UB's neighbors have to offer. This is an extraordinarily diverse community, and that presents a unique opportunity for learning from one another.”

Learning and discovery, after all, are at the heart of UB's contribution to the region.

“The University at Buffalo is a truly world-class



institution right in our own backyard,” said Nicholson. “Our professors aren't just sitting in their offices grading papers; they're doing real, tangible work across a wide swath of disciplines that enriches the community around them. Western New York would be a very different place without UB.”

As we prepared this spring issue of UB Neighbor, we were still in the wake of the historic blizzard that took a tragic toll on our city. The tenacity of this community gets tested continually, but the “City of Good Neighbors” nickname is not just a cliché.

As Nicholson said, “Over the last year especially, this community has proved to the world that there is nothing we cannot overcome if we do so together. That togetherness is what makes Buffalo what it is.” ●

➔ Let us know what's on your mind. Call us at 716-829-3099, email [communityrelations@buffalo.edu](mailto:communityrelations@buffalo.edu) or visit [buffalo.edu/community](http://buffalo.edu/community).

UB Neighbor  
Spring 2023







## Research Roundup

What UB's inquiring minds want to know

### 1 What's in the air on Buffalo's East Side?

UB scientists will use a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to gather air quality data at sites in East Side neighborhoods and then integrate those measurements with existing data from satellites and ground-monitoring networks. The goal is to provide useful info to help reduce adverse health outcomes for vulnerable residents.

### 2 Can newborn health screenings be improved?

Low accuracy rates for some screenings lead to false positives, which then lead to unnecessary interventions for babies and unnecessary anxiety for parents. With a grant from the National Institutes of Health, a UB researcher is leading an effort to improve screening accuracy for three rare, often fatal, diseases. In preliminary studies on Krabbe disease, the approach was more than 90% accurate, a huge leap over the current accuracy rate of only 10-20%.

### 3 Would a robotic dog enjoy a tummy rub?

Probably not, but UB researchers are finding that a dog-like robot named Yubie can serve as a unique learning and research platform, enabling faculty and students to explore new frontiers in robotics, computer science and artificial intelligence.

Learn more about UB research that affects your life at [buffalo.edu/community/outreach/research](http://buffalo.edu/community/outreach/research).



Matthew Pelkey directs the School of Law's Entrepreneurship Law Center Clinic.

## Supporting the Entrepreneurial Spirit

*UB's e-Law Center Clinic nurtures startup businesses with legal advice, encouragement*

**B**uffalo-based entrepreneur Adam Utley knew back in 2016 that he had a great idea: a biotech company that would collect and store a person's immune cells—what he calls the “soldiers of the body”—so that they're available to power immunotherapy treatments for cancer if and when they're needed in the future.

What he didn't have was the know-how to turn his idea into reality.

“We knew that there was a market opportunity,” said Utley, now the CEO of Immunaeon, “but our team had little understanding of what it meant to start a company.”

So he reached out to Matthew Pelkey and the School of Law's Entrepreneurship Law Center Clinic, or e-Law Center Clinic, a blossoming student-driven agency that provides legal services to entrepreneurs and startups not yet ready or able to engage outside legal counsel.

“Matt and his team helped us to understand the fundamentals of starting a company,” Utley said. “They gave us insight into corporate structure, best practices, regulatory pathways, and helped us set up the company from the ground up.”

Over the past five years, around 30 student-, staff- and faculty-led companies have filed applications each semester to work with the e-Law Center Clinic, which guides them through the essential legal challenges and questions faced by new and fledgling businesses.

“When you are starting a business, especially for first-time founders, there are a lot of business and legal issues to navigate—all while you're focusing attention on getting an idea off the ground,” said Pelkey, the clinic's program director. “You don't even know what you don't know. Having mentors there, having resources there, is crucial to avoiding common mistakes.”

“As practitioners, we fill a gap in the marketplace because oftentimes, those businesses don't have the funds to hire proper counsel. So they will go online. They'll do it themselves. They'll have their uncle's nephew's next-door neighbor twice removed do it. In the process, they ultimately create more problems than they solve,” he said.

The clinic represents startups during the academic year, with its services available to faculty, staff, alumni and students. Pelkey said the clinic also will help anyone affiliated with UB partner associations, a large group including Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute, Kaleida Health, Jacobs Institute and the Western New York Incubator Network.

“The only caveat is, it can't be a business that has raised any capital with investors,” Pelkey said.

Not every business the e-Law Center Clinic works with is a high-growth business. “We work with a lot of small businesses,” said Pelkey. “It might be a café, T-shirt company, or as simple as painting faces.”

The e-Law Center Clinic also supports minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBs) and conducts research around breaking the barriers of traditional venture investing.

For Utley, who later went on to become the first entrepreneur to graduate from the UB Cultivator startup program, early involvement with the clinic was instrumental in making his business dream come true.

“Without their guidance and help, Immunaeon would not be where we are today,” he said. ●

**“You don't even know what you don't know. Having mentors there, having resources there are crucial to avoiding common mistakes.”**

**Matthew Pelkey**



UB Neighbor  
Spring 2023

4



# Black Men in White Coats

*A local chapter of a national organization aims to expand access to the medical profession*

**S**hawn Gibson, a fourth-year medical student at UB's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, was back home in New York City studying for the medical licensing exam last summer when he learned of the death of Dr. Jonathan D. Daniels, the school's former associate director of admissions, in a fire at his North Buffalo home.

The devastating news gave a poignant new urgency to an initiative the two had discussed but, with busy schedules and the COVID-19 pandemic, had never found the time to pursue.

So Gibson, along with second-year med students Michael Augustin, Kwaku Bonsu and Nathaniel Graves, decided to make it happen, and by September, the Jonathan Daniels Chapter of Black Men in White Coats at Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo was officially chartered.

Black Men in White Coats is a national organization that seeks to increase the number of Black men in the field of medicine—a figure which stands proportionately at about 2.7% in the U.S. The purpose of the charter club, Gibson said, is to impart to young people in Buffalo that “you could be what you see.”

The chapter will work with local schools to mentor Black students; its first outreach is with fourth- to sixth-graders at Buffalo PS 39 Martin Luther King Multicultural Institute on High Street.

“We are creating that pipeline for young Black men in the community,” Bonsu said. “If they are interested in medicine, that’s great. If not, we still are mentoring them and helping them with the things they are interested in, helping them prepare to be future professionals.”

The medical students became involved with the city school through an introduction facilitated by the Rev. Kinzer M. Pointer, pastor of Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, and an instructor at the Jacobs School. Pointer and Fred D. Archer III, clinical assistant professor of pediatrics, are the faculty advisers for the new chapter.

“What we know is that in order to arrive at medical school, it requires a tremendous amount of preparation,” Pointer said. “If that preparation doesn’t start until high school, you are behind the eight ball.”

Pointer noted that MLK School 39 is just a short walk from the medical school, “and yet those students in that school, by and large, have never seen a Black physician.”

“We want to, at least, give them that experience, and we want to make sure these kids can begin to dream as early as possible.” ◉



Rev. Kinzer M. Pointer



Medical students Michael Augustin, Shawn Gibson and Kwaku Bonsu are co-founders and co-presidents of the Jacobs School's Black Men in White Coats chapter along with Nathaniel Graves (not pictured).



## Have You Heard ...

Good news worth sharing

### → Tomorrow's teachers got a helping hand.

The UB Teacher Residency Program, lauded as a nationwide model for addressing the country's K-12 teacher shortage, has been awarded \$3.5 million by the U.S. Department of Education to expand its reach in Western New York. The program, launched in partnership with the Buffalo Public Schools in 2019, is slated to expand into Sweet Home Central School District, Amherst Central School District and Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District.

### → Another dental care bus has hit the road.

The School of Dental Medicine recently added a second mobile unit, driving dental care to underserved populations including older adults, people with disabilities and people who are homeless. Equipped with two exam chairs, X-ray and digital radiography capabilities, a sterilization center, and a wheelchair lift, the unit reflects the school's commitment to improving the health and well-being of Western New York's most vulnerable citizens.



### → UB employees give big.

Since 1976, the UB Employees Campaign for the Community has been inspiring employees and retirees of the university to contribute to charitable organizations of their choosing. In usual fashion, they came through again this year, donating close to \$555,000 to hundreds of agencies and programs serving the Western New York region and beyond.

UB Neighbor  
Spring 2023





# ACTION ITEMS

## Opportunities to connect with UB

### Think summer.

UB's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences engages in a wide variety of K-12 summer camps and activities aimed at stimulating interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Topics include cybersecurity, sustainability and more. Go to [engineering.buffalo.edu/home/outreach/camps](https://engineering.buffalo.edu/home/outreach/camps) to check out the options.

### Reach out about long COVID.

UB and UBMD Physicians' Group have launched a free, online long COVID registry open to anyone 18 years of age or older in Western New York who has (or thinks they may have) the condition. The goal, say organizers, is to connect people with helpful information and resources, and, ultimately, opportunities for treatment. Visit [buffalo.edu/cts](https://buffalo.edu/cts) and search "long covid registry" to find out more.

### File for free.

IRS-certified accounting students from the UB School of Management will again provide free tax preparation services to individuals and families with annual incomes of \$60,000 or less. The service is provided by the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program with volunteers from the UB chapter of Beta Alpha Psi and the UB Accounting Association. Visit [management.buffalo.edu/taxprep](https://management.buffalo.edu/taxprep) for dates, times and location.



Srikrithi Krishnan connects onstage with VP Kamala Harris during her visit to UB in September.

## Questions for Srikrithi Krishnan, UB grad student

Vice President Kamala Harris' whirlwind visit to UB last fall was a big deal for the university. For Srikrithi Krishnan, it was life-changing. A first-year graduate student pursuing degrees in public health and business administration, Krishnan got the opportunity to formally introduce the vice president before her speech on the Inflation Reduction Act and its potential for fighting climate change.

With only a day to prepare her remarks, Krishnan drew from her interest in environmental justice as well as her background as a first-generation American whose parents emigrated from India. And when Harris said from the stage in the atrium of the Center for the Arts that Krishnan did an excellent job, she clearly meant it, as weeks later Krishnan received an invitation to Harris' residence on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., to celebrate Diwali, a major Indian holiday.

Again, Krishnan was asked to make the formal introduction, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that she was able to have twice.

### How did you get the chance to introduce VP Harris at her visit to UB?

**1** "They were looking for a student with an interest in climate issues. People don't necessarily relate public health to the climate, but there is no public health without a healthy planet. So I got a call from the [UB] Office of the President, and after we talked a bit, they said, 'The vice president of the United States is coming; how would you like to introduce her?' I was like, Oh! I had no idea that was what the conversation was leading to! I also got to meet with her before the talk, and I got a few minutes with her backstage."

### And then the party at her home—what was that like?

**2** "I was struck by how many Indian and Indian-American individuals are doing things at such high levels. There was the vice president herself, as well as the surgeon general [Vivek H. Murthy], and so many others. I met a woman who works for the rights of working mothers, and another who runs a makeup brand for people with South Asian or Indian skin tones. I was amazed by all of the issues that I never even thought about until I met the people who are changing them."

### You described growing up in Williamsville in an Indian family as being in a "cauldron of cultures." How so?

**3** "I always wanted to fit in with the people I went to school with. But my parents were good about helping me to learn Indian culture, so it was always a mix for me. I celebrated Diwali and Navaratri but also got gifts at Christmas and candy at Easter. I didn't see the full benefit of that until I got older. When I came to UB, with its huge international population, it helped me realize just how much diversity there is in the world."

### What are your plans for the future?

**4** "I'd really like to start an organization that serves individuals who don't have access to quality health care, whether that's because of physical barriers, financial barriers, whatever. I want to help bridge that gap and achieve better health equity. And I definitely want to stay in Buffalo. I'm a member of the Western New York Prosperity Fellowship, which supports students who have a desire to stay in the area and contribute to the region's economic growth and vitality. It's funny because when I was younger, I always thought that I would move away, but now I can't imagine ever leaving."







# WHEN TEXTS SPELL TROUBLE

**UB-LED TEAM RECEIVES \$5 MILLION TO PROTECT OLDER ADULTS FROM ONLINE FRAUD**

Last year, more than 92,000 U.S. adults aged 60 and over reported being victims of online scams—falling prey to emails, text messages, donation sites or social media profiles that were not what they seemed. Their losses? Roughly \$1.7 billion.

To fight this problem, a UB-led research team has been granted a two-year, \$5 million National Science Foundation (NSF) award to create tools to help older adults better recognize and protect themselves from online deceptions and other forms of disinformation.

“Older adults did not grow up using the internet. For many of them, it can be difficult to spot online deceptions, and the results can be tragic,” said principal investigator Siwei Lyu, Empire Innovation Professor of computer science and engineering.

The project, named Deception Awareness and Resilience Training, or DART, is led by the UB Center for Information Integrity (CII). It builds upon a \$750,000 NSF grant the team received

last year when it began meeting with older adults in Western New York and in South Carolina to better understand how they fall victim to online deceptions. The platform uses fun, easy-to-use digital games, including engaging and realistic social media situations, so older adults can learn on their own, in communal settings such as adult homes or libraries, or with the aid of a caregiver.

While other digital literacy tools are available, most are not tailored to older adults, which limits their effectiveness. DART addresses this by including a wide range of online schemes that older adults specifically may encounter. The team will update the learning materials as schemes evolve.

Additional partner organizations include the Amherst Center for Senior Services; Clemson Downs, a retirement community in Clemson, South Carolina; and the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library system. ●

## THERE'S A LOT ON THE LINE

According to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center, among U.S. adults 60 and over in 2021 ...

**92,371**

were reported victims of online scams

with  
**\$1.7B**  
in total losses

a greater than  
**5x**  
increase from 2015 figures

with an  
**\$18,246**  
average loss per person

and  
**3,133**  
victims losing more than \$100,000

accounting for  
**24%**

of all loss reported to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)

UB Neighbor  
Spring 2023







## A web resource for the community!

Find news, opportunities and other resources at [buffalo.edu/community](https://buffalo.edu/community).



## The Big Picture

**In With the New** The building itself was unremarkable—but its demolition is a milestone worth noting. The razing of Diefendorf Annex last fall fulfilled a decades-old commitment to remove a building always meant to be temporary. → One of several annexes on the South Campus built during the 1960s to accommodate UB's rapid growth, it has housed everything from classrooms to office space. Now, the cleared site will be redesigned as the new Bailey Avenue entranceway, part of UB's master plan for renovating the campus and enhancing the experience for students, faculty, staff and university neighbors. → "We will create a quadrangle in front of Abbott Library between Diefendorf Hall and Harriman Hall," said Kelly Hayes McAlonie, director of campus planning. "The new entry will also have public art and a site for the UB Blue food truck." → Five other annexes remain for now, mostly serving as surge space during the renovation of Crosby and Parker halls. Three Hayes annexes are slated for demolition after Parker Hall is completed. → "It's great to see this project finally come to fruition," said Hayes McAlonie. "While it's only one piece of our larger strategy for revitalizing the South Campus, removing Diefendorf Annex is symbolic of our commitment to those plans." ●

### STOP BY AND SAY HELLO!

Reach UB's Office of Government and Community Relations at 716-829-3099 or [communityrelations@buffalo.edu](mailto:communityrelations@buffalo.edu), or visit us at 120 Parker Hall on the South Campus.

The University at Buffalo is the largest and most comprehensive institution in the State University of New York system. If you have questions about UB's programs or wish to be added to the mailing list for this publication, please call 716-829-3099, or send an email to [communityrelations@buffalo.edu](mailto:communityrelations@buffalo.edu). Produced by the Division of University Communications, University at Buffalo. Editor: Sally Jarzab. Designer: Richard Klingensmith. Contributors: Charles Anzalone, Dirk Hoffman, Jared Lane, Cory Nealon, Jay Rey and Marcene Robinson.

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