



**TO:** The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** William P. Murphy *William P. Murphy*

**SUBJECT:** State University of New York Buffalo State University:  
Master Plan Amendment to Offer its First Doctoral Level  
Program and Regents Authorization to Award the Doctor  
of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) Degree

**DATE:** August 28, 2025

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Betty M...*

### SUMMARY

#### **Issue for Decision (Consent)**

Should the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize The State University of New York Buffalo State University to offer its first program at the doctoral level and authorize the University to award the Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) degree?

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State statute and State regulation.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the Full Board for action at its September 2025 meeting.

#### **Procedural History**

On March 11, 2025, the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees authorized SUNY Buffalo State University (University) to offer a program in Creativity and Change Leadership leading to the Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) degree, subject to Regents approval. A master plan amendment is required because the proposed program will be the first doctoral program at the institution. Regents authorization is also required to allow the institution to award the Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) degree.

## **Background Information**

SUNY Buffalo State University is proposing to offer its first doctoral level program, Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) in Creativity and Change Leadership, at the institution. This program would provide professionals with the knowledge, principles, and tools to serve as change makers in their organizations and communities. In a world increasingly characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, creative thinking and creative problem solving are now widely recognized as essential to leadership effectiveness. The University's Center for Applied Imagination, as a pioneering program in the field of creativity studies, currently offers both cutting edge theory and practical skills drawn from a curriculum that has evolved over half a century. To be successful, strategic level leaders across all industries, education, business, health care, government, etc., are required to solve complex problems, spot new opportunities, and facilitate the creative potential in others. These are precisely the kinds of change leadership skills that are embedded in the proposed D.P.S. program.

The proposed program would be offered fully online using synchronous distance education courses delivered in compressed 7-week terms. Students would be required to complete 72 graduate-level credits organized into the areas of Applied Creativity (21 credits), Foundations in Creativity Studies (9 credits), Creativity and Change Leadership (9 credits), Creativity Research and Scholarship (24 credits, comprising 12 credits in research methods and 12 credits in dissertation), and electives (9 credits).

The Department has completed an academic review of the proposed program. The Department determined that the proposed degree program meets the standards for registration set forth in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. In July 2025, following the standard protocol, the Department conducted a canvass of degree-granting institutions in the Western Region. Of those canvassed, one positive letter of support was received, and there were no objections or statements of negative impact.

## **Related Regents Items**

Not applicable.

## **Recommendation**

The Department recommends that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize State University of New York Buffalo State University to offer its first doctoral program and authorize the institution to award the Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) degree.

## **Timetable for Implementation**

Amendments to the State University of New York Master Plan require approval by the Governor. If the Board of Regents approves the master plan amendment, the Department will forward the amendment to the Governor for approval. Upon gubernatorial approval, the Department will register the proposed D.P.S. program in Creativity and Change Leadership at SUNY Buffalo State University.