

ENHANCING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION WITH TRUE BLUE SPIRIT

Devon Jerla, devonslo@buffalo.edu

Michele Poitras, poitras@buffalo.edu

Peter Logiudice, pjl2@buffalo.edu

University Communications and Employee Engagement

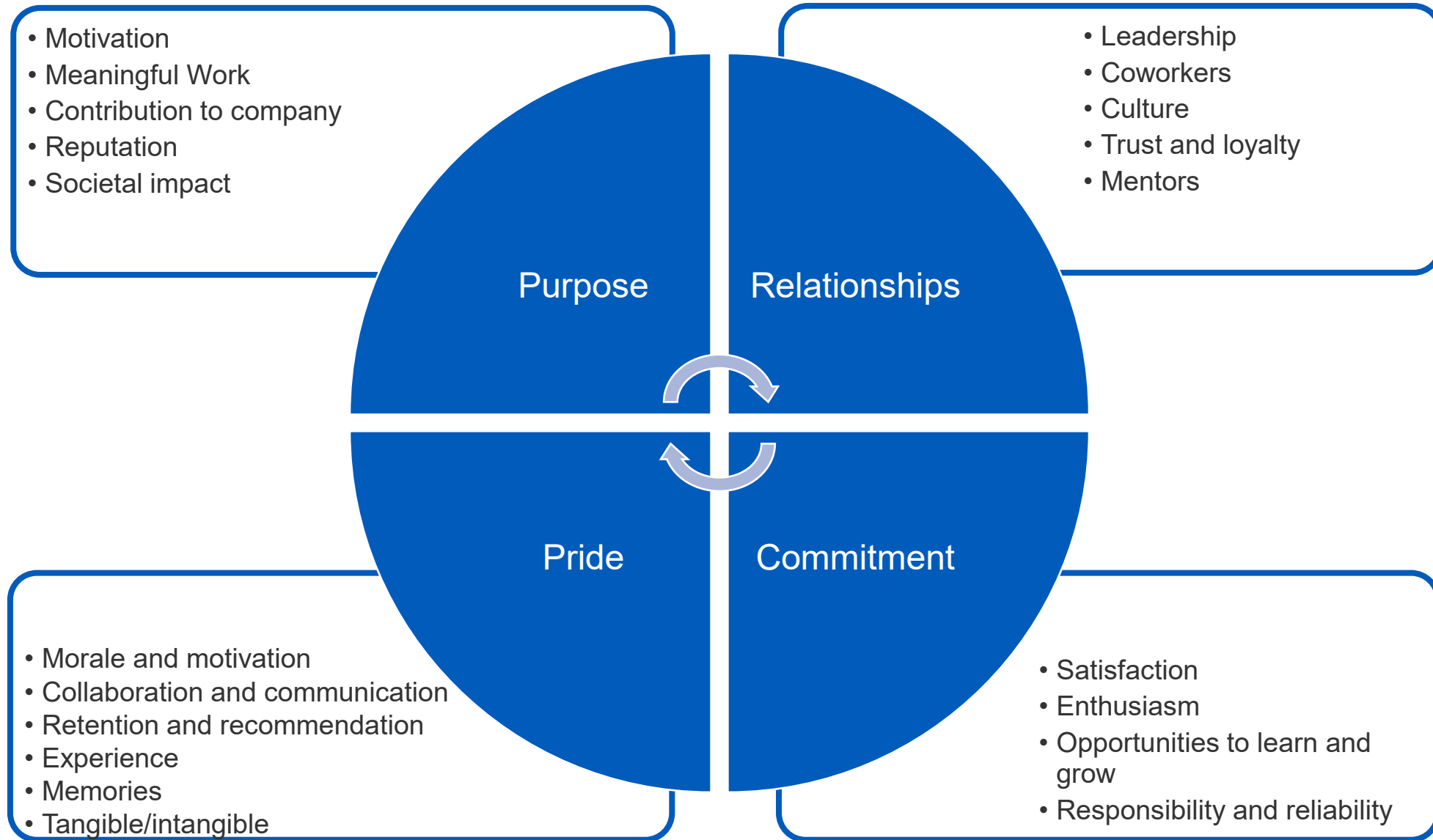
 **University at Buffalo** The State University of New York







Pride is multi-faceted.



Job Satisfaction/Well-Being

strongest predictor of

Retention

People want to receive **recognition** for
their contributions, feel **valued**,
& have a sense of **belonging**

Study within high-achieving organizations

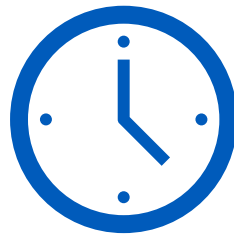
- **Felt welcomed when joining the organization**
 - *6x more likely to recommend to others*
- **Felt pride in the organization**
 - *1.3x more likely to go the extra mile*
- **Ability to take time off when necessary**
 - *1.9x more likely to stay*



Part of doing business



6 times more likely to endorse their workplace to others



2 times more likely to want to stay for a long time



1 times more likely to say it's a great place to work

New Employees and Students

- First impressions matter
- Stay/leave decision within the first 6-12 months
- Turnover impacts morale across entire institution
- Higher costs involved to replace employee or recruit a new student
 - **Retaining a student costs 3-5x less than recruiting**
 - **Requires 20% of an annual salary to replace a mid-level employee**

EMPLOYEE TRIFECTA



“Employee engagement is noticeably lower among employees experiencing low or very low physical, financial or emotional wellness”

What happens when it's not present?

withdrawn silos envy
bitterness irritation
resentment hostility
morale give quitting
dissatisfaction gossip
toxicity quit quiet discontent
disassociate low

Three layers of pride

Your institution

- Mission/reputation
- Where and why it matters

Your job

- The work itself
- What we do

You, your team

- Those around you
- Who we are



Your institution

- Mission/reputation
- Where we are, why it matters

Keenan G., alum/staff

*Community Engagement
Specialist, CTSI*



Your job

- The work itself
- What we do

Pete L., alum/staff

Assistant Director of Community Relations, *HR*



You, your team

- Those around you
- Who we are

Rosaura R.,
alum/student/staff
*Community Engagement
Manager, UBRI*

Little Victor

presentation

walks

Lunch spot

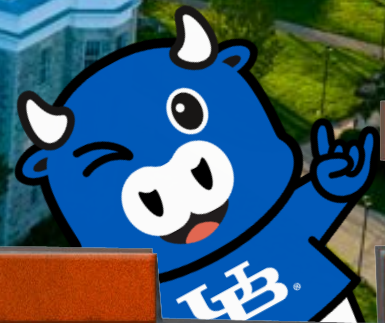
Open house

First day

mentor

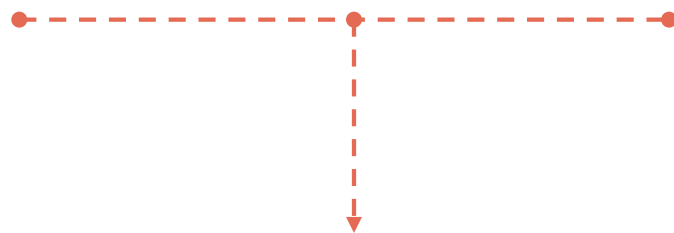
jacket

building



**TRUE
BLUESM**

2016
Brand Platform



2021
Pride only



Connect.
Engage.
Inspire.



Why True Blue?

Internal

- Inside reference that has special meaning just to our community. Builds camaraderie and provides an instant sense of connection.

Relatable

- It doesn't just place a subject on a pedestal for others to admire; it invites the community to feel a part of what's happening.

Inclusive

- Students, staff, faculty, alumni, and families (and those who fit in multiple of these groups).

Flexible

- Pride-building can support almost all university objectives: student experience, academics, research, athletics, fundraising, reputation, faculty recruitment, etc.

Connected

- Helps establish a through-line across pieces, places and units - these references then reinforce each other.

What can you do to build pride and engagement?

Understand UB – Mission, Goals

Understand how your role impacts the bigger picture

Collaborate with colleagues from across the campus

Seek out learning opportunities

What can you do to build pride and engagement?

Recognize and celebrate achievements

Be a positive influence

Engage in campus events

Be collaborative

What can **supervisors** do to build pride and engagement?

Consistent check ins

Invite employees from all generations for input

Demonstrate vulnerability

Be an advocate for employees

84%

of companies said **social
media or public
recognition** increased
employee **productivity**

What can **supervisors** do to build pride and engagement?

Highlight employee achievements in the way they want – ask their preference!

Greet employees and get to know them

Express thanks and show appreciation

Model and encourage a positive and cohesive work environment

Employee Recognition

Day-to-Day Recognition

Informal Recognition

Formal Recognition

Career Recognition



Celebrate each other

- Key customer touch points - to constituents you serve but also each other
- Opportunities to build relationships, leave an impression to create memorable moments
 - Onboarding packet of new staff
 - Card to celebrate through regalia distribution
 - Thank you notes
 - Zoom backgrounds
 - Giveaways



Ambassador Programs

- Increase pride and engagement with the university among students and employees and those who follow them
- Celebrate each other and build a greater sense of community and belonging
- Lift the UB spirit and motivate others to share theirs



Passionate Advocates



Social Connectors



Brand Champions



Engaging Storytellers



Staff/Faculty Ambassadors

- Representation from 20+ units
 - Range of positions and titles
 - VPs, program directors, administrators, student support, operations, communications

INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN AMBASSADOR?

Visit the UC table today or contact me at devonslo@buffalo.edu



[Ona Strang spreads joy — and fun — on campus](#)



[Crofts cleanup](#)



[True Blue celebration](#)





Faculty/Staff Ambassador TOOLKIT



Thank you for becoming a UB True Blue faculty/staff ambassador

What do I do?

True Blue isn't just for students, it's for you, and to the end of the year, we'll celebrate our ways that students, faculty, and staff live the UB every day—in the classroom, on the field and in the workplace.

What does it mean?

Being a True Blue ambassador for your department is a way to take pride with others. It's about motivating and encouraging your colleagues to live as UB community members.

When you become an official True Blue ambassador, you'll encourage unit participation and you'll be a role model for your colleagues.

Use this ambassador toolkit as a guide to help you live our True Blue values.



How can I order True Blue merchandise?

University Communications has select items that can serve as giveaways, prizes or other incentives. Please email [Dansen Jarls](mailto:Dansen.Jarls@ub.edu), assistant director of marketing and brand management, to confirm availability. To order additional merchandise in larger quantities from a vendor, connect with your [senior communications officer](#) to ensure you're following branding guidelines and with your [unit business officer](#) to confirm available funds.

Participating in True Blue Fridays?

True Blue Fridays are one of the easiest ways to engage with your colleagues—all you have to do is wear blue! Take it a step further and encourage participation by, for example:



WE'LL LOOK GOOD IN BLUE, RIGHT?

1

Arranging raffles with prizes for those who wear blue.

2

Coordinating contests inviting employees to submit True Blue pet photos.

3

Holding competitions for the most prideful workspace.



WHAT A CUTIE!

True Blue Fridays are also a great opportunity for office gatherings. Host coffee hours, luncheons or mid-day snack breaks to get everyone together in their blue gear. If your department is not fully present on a Friday, pick a day of the week when more people are working in the office to wear your blue.

Welcoming a new hire to your team?

This is a great opportunity to bring a new team member into the True Blue community. Share some True Blue office décor with them, encourage them to participate in [Explore UB Tours](#), or take them on your own campus tour and show them [UB's iconic places](#).



SEIZE THE MOMENT AT CAMPUS SOCIALS

Want to create prideful spaces?

Create a True Blue building display case or spirit wall with departmental photos, prideful items and other visual elements. Virtual spaces can be prideful, too! Encourage employees to set a [True Blue Zoom background](#).



Helping with a holiday party or other event?

Include small True Blue giveaways—such as pins, stickers, window clings or magnets—at the registration table. You can also order True Blue gifts or favors for attendees, such as pennants, T-shirts or reusable bags, or decorate the space with decorative [print-as-bull pride props](#). Whether you order your UB cookies from 3 Pillars Catering or [make them yourself](#), these tasty treats infuse True Blue spirit into any gathering.



YUM COOKIES!

TIP

Did you know that you can rent UB displays, tablecloths and banners from University Communications for your events? Visit our [website](#) to learn more or contact [Patricia McAllister](#) to make a reservation.



THERE ARE FOUR PRIDE COLORS TO CHOOSE FROM!



Preparing for an upcoming faculty/staff meeting?

Meetings are a great opportunity to remind your coworkers to participate in True Blue Fridays, document their departmental pride on social media using [#UBTrueBlue](#), or [submit spirited photos](#) (which will earn them a commemorative pin). You can also highlight any new employees with a True Blue welcome—introducing them to the team and asking them to share some prideful information about themselves.



Planning your school's annual award's ceremony?

Consider renaming an existing faculty, staff or alumni award as True Blue, or create a new award category to recognize spirit and pride. You can also add [True Blue graphics](#) or [legos](#) to your name tags. Award ceremonies are also a great opportunity to welcome alumni, donors and other UB partners with True Blue swag.



Activity examples

- **New Hires:** welcome new employees with True Blue swag/office décor, highlight newest True Blue employees at faculty/staff meetings, take new hires on a campus tour and show them UB's iconic places
- **Large/Small Events:** coffee breaks, luncheons, snacks, departmental tailgates, volunteer outing
- **Virtual events:** trivia or photo shares
- **True Blue Fridays:** raffle for wearing blue on Friday, pop up prizes
- **Contests:** pet photos, cube/office/door decorating, holiday baking/pot lucks, cook-offs
- **Recognition Program:** recommendations from other staff, highlight on digital displays, internal newsletters, departmental town halls, social media
- **Photo sharing:** Engage with UB on our channels, visit UB's iconic places and take photos at a True Blue Photo spot





True Blue celebration

The staff and students working in Student Engagement are all smiles as they share their True Blue pride during a departmental celebration. **Submit your own prideful photo** for a commemorative pin and learn more about **becoming a True Blue ambassador**. Wear your UB gear tomorrow on True Blue Friday. Photo submitted by student Daebreona Griffiths.

[See more UB Seen photos, slide shows and videos.](#)



jacobs_med_ub · Feb 17 · 1 photo

jacobs_med_ub It's F your #UBTrueBlue professor of pharmac

What makes him a pr community?

"My success in reser recruited by @jacobs.

"The students are cur intelligent. They have biomedical research, them."

Meet Bhattacharjee: t 2w

tanzascrubcaps 2w Reply

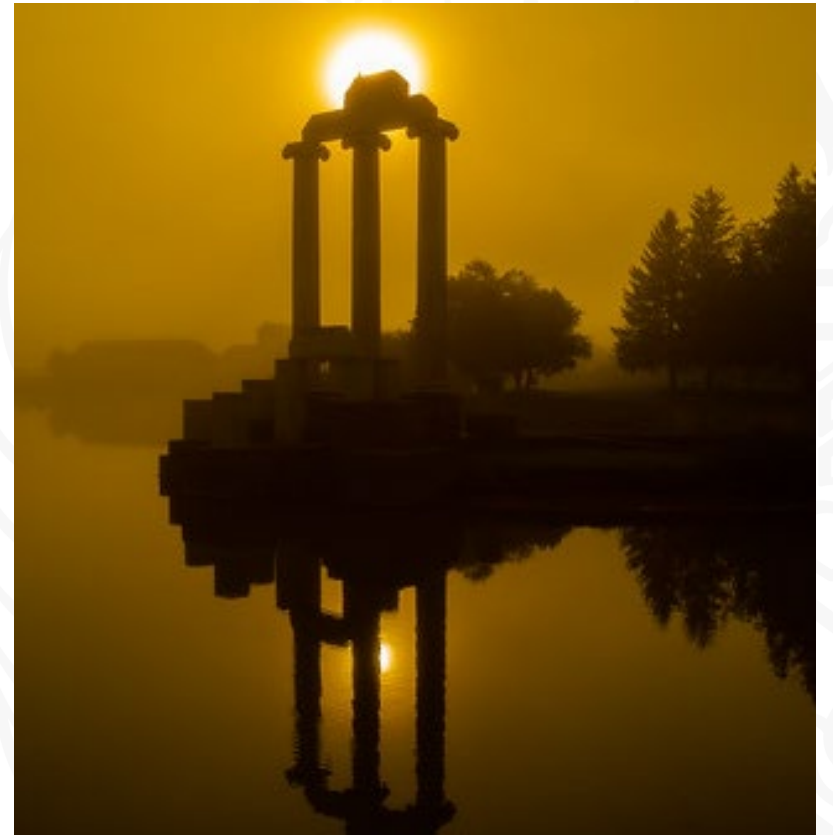
Liked by universityatbuf FEBRUARY 17

Add a comment...



Pillars of Pride

- Peer-to-peer recognition program
 - Categories: spirit, service, inclusion
 - Represent key facets of being an employee at UB and aspirational qualities that employees can strive toward
- Ongoing throughout the year
- Simple, easy to answer submission form
- No limit to awards, entries, etc.
- Any time in career for any purpose that aligns with recognition categories
- Informal and fun



True Blue Recognition Crew

- Opportunity to nominate a team/unit for institutional recognition
- Twice a year – once per semester
- Simple, easy to answer submission form
- Multiple nominations can be submitted
- Winners will be selected for each campus
- Winners will be surprised with treats and UB merch for the team/unit



I AM TRUE BLUE

- ▶ President of the First-Generation Law Students Association
- ▶ Board member on the new SUNY student run military board (Armed Services-Affiliated Advisory Board – ASAAB)
- ▶ Peer mentor for student veterans AND a peer-to-peer advocate for our law school



CHANEL

Hybrid environment

- Establish remote rituals
- Participate as a group in HR events, like trivia
- Departmental chat sessions – pose a question of the day or photo share on Teams/Slack or other communication platform
- Quick, conversational check ins – semi-structured discussions that leave room for casual discourse to break down walls with relatable questions

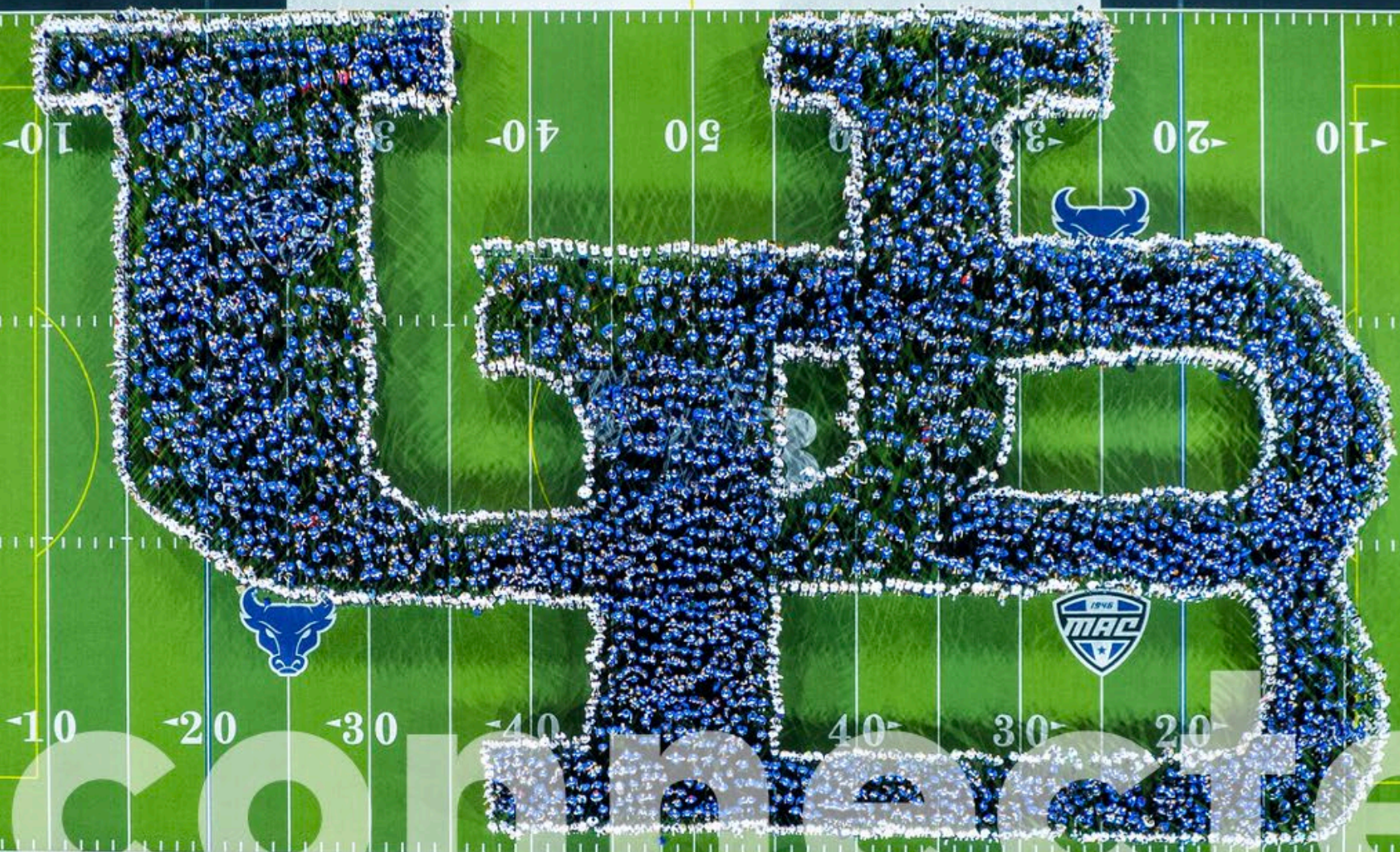




spiritited

BUFFALO

BUFFALO



connect



inspired



CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Unstoppable

WE ARE ALL

TRUE BLUE SM

THANK YOU!

Devon Jerla, devonslo@buffalo.edu

Michele Gliss Poitras, poitras@buffalo.edu

Peter Logiudice, pjl2@buffalo.edu



SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK.

Take the session survey using the QR
code on your schedule.

