

University History

Here is how the years add up to something big.

Through a steady succession of big ideas, big ventures and big achievements, UB has advanced dramatically over the past century and a half. Starting in 1846 as a small, private medical school, we've grown to become the largest institution in the State University of New York system, and we're charging toward world renown as a top-rated public research university. Our history is proud and prodigious—just like UB itself.

Through continual growth

1 First was medicine, then pharmacy, followed by law and dentistry: UB in its earliest days was a series of professional schools. The creation of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) in 1913 made the university all the richer with its focus on the arts and humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. Students today can choose from 13 schools and colleges, of which CAS is the largest, with 30 departments.

By breaking new ground

2 As UB has evolved through the decades, so has our physical presence. The original downtown medical school moved north in 1953 to join the largely E.B. Green-designed Main Street Campus (now the South Campus). Land for the North Campus in suburban Amherst was purchased in 1964. Our newest campus, in downtown Buffalo, has brought the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences school full circle, this time to anchor the city's first academic medical center.

[QUICK FACTS]

1846: The UB Medical School is founded in downtown Buffalo

1886: The School of Pharmacy is established, with the schools of law and dentistry to follow

1930: UB more fully coalesces on what is now known as the South Campus

1953: UB opens three dormitories to become a residential university

1962: The University of Buffalo merges with the State University of New York

1968: Ground is broken in Amherst on what will become UB's largest campus

2013: Ground is broken in downtown Buffalo for the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

2023: UB receives flagship designation by NYS in recognition of academic leadership in higher education

2024: UB is announced as the new building site to launch the Empire AI Consortium and its state-of-the-art computing center

Through pioneering progress

3 Major discoveries are nothing new to UB. From the invention of the implantable cardiac pacemaker to the sequencing of the genome of a common coffee plant, our history is one of continual breakthroughs and innovations by big thinkers in relentless pursuit of answers. Over the years, UB faculty have won the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology.

With an ever-expanding vista

4 UB has always been international in outlook and reach. In 1980, we were the first U.S. university to partner with a Chinese university following the normalization of relations between the two countries, and have since founded ongoing partnerships in Canada, India, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Poland, and Singapore. UB is consistently among the top 25 universities in the country for international student enrollment.

With an eye on the future

5 Throughout the years, leadership has maintained an ever-evolving and ambitious vision for UB. The "Boldly Buffalo" campaign was launched publicly in 2018. Since then, nearly 80,000 donors have committed funding to fulfill UB's three key campaign priorities — supporting student success, empowering faculty research and scholarly activity, and making an impact on the world. In 2024, UB surpassed its billion-dollar goal.

The University at Buffalo has been a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities since 1989.



UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

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