# Table of Contents

**What is the High Road**

Perspectives: Experiences that Matter

- Alumni ................................................................. 2
- 2017 Class Profile .................................................. 3
- 2017 Fellows .......................................................... 4
- Faculty and Staff Profiles ........................................... 26

Curricular and Career Connections

- Pre-Course ............................................................ 28
- Engaged Cornell and Social Sector Studies Working Group .................................................. 29
- Partnership for the Public Good .................................. 29
- High Road Advisory Committee .................................... 30
- Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo ...................................... 30
- Career Development .................................................. 30

Happenings

- Friday Practicum Classes ........................................ 31
- High Road Highlights ............................................... 34
The term “High Road Economic Development” denotes a family of strategies for economic development that treat shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and efficient democracy as necessary principles, not options or afterthoughts. Originating in the research and policy initiatives of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) at the University of Wisconsin, it is a place-based strategy to realize these values while increasing equity.

Since 2009 High Road Fellowships have brought Cornell undergraduates to Buffalo for a summer immersion of community and economic development in the city’s dynamic social sector. Students are placed with partners of the Partnership for the Public Good, a think tank providing action-research, policy development and civic engagement tools to over 270 community-based organizations. This year’s placements are a diverse array of organizations including those focused on social enterprise, poverty alleviation, arts and education, food justice and worker cooperatives.

The High Road Fellowship is global learning on a domestic scale. Students are immersed in a dynamic model of collaborative outreach and extension that drives innovative, sustainable and equitable economic development in the new economy. High Road students are at the forefront of emerging policies and practices, from community benefit agreements to re-entry workforce development and employment programs, from livable wage campaigns to youth arts initiatives.
150 Cornell students have participated in the High Road Fellowships since 2009 and gone on to a variety of careers including fields such as law, social innovation, affordable housing and urban planning, organized labor, financial and asset management, graduate studies and even the NFL. Some have chosen to relocate to Buffalo to begin their professional careers.

They remain connected to the Fellowship in a multitude of ways broadening the two-way High Road from Ithaca to Buffalo and beyond. Matthew Scherer ILR ’11, 2009 High Roader, is a member of the High Road Advisory Committee and Susanne Donovan ILR ’13, 2011 High Roader, served as a host supervisor this summer with the WNY Council on Occupational Safety and Health Worker Center.

Whether our alumni find themselves in traditional nonprofit organizations or elsewhere, High Roaders know how to make their knowledge count – seeing opportunities for change in their communities as ways to apply their learning in a uniquely Cornell way.

“The High Road Fellowship was the best experience I had in my four years at Cornell. The High Road exposed me to diverse points of view and changed how I think. I became aware of issues effecting the community, learned what others were doing to help and how I could also make a difference,”

JC Tretter ILR ’13, 2010 High Roader, Cleveland Browns
This year’s cohort includes students from the ILR School, Arts & Sciences, Human Ecology and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

- 7 are local students from the Buffalo area and another 8 are from greater New York while the rest come from Kansas, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, South Korea and Vietnam.
- 14 rising sophomores, 7 rising juniors and 1 rising senior.
- 3 Public Service Scholars, 1 McNair Scholar, 2 Meinig Family Scholars.
- 9 different languages spoken.
- A myriad of talents including poets, athletes, artists, musicians, and journalists.
I couldn’t have asked for a better summer. This has been the most eye-opening experience that has caused me to do a lot of self-reflection. But most importantly, it has inspired me to always be doing more. I don’t have a defined career path yet. I find that every day I change what I want to do and I don’t know how to figure it out. But, this summer has taught me that I can’t be on the sidelines for anything and that I should trust my moral compass. So, for the long term, I don’t know what I am going to do or how I am going to do it. But, short term, I know I will be taking everything back to Ithaca with me. I want to be more involved in the non-profit community in Ithaca. I want to start organizing student organizations via the PPG model so that students can better advocate for what they deserve. I know I won’t forget this summer. It will be something that I always take with me and always will remember.

From Joe’s reflection journal

In Their Own Words...

Joe has a sharp analysis and a quick wit. He was instrumental in producing a campaign plan for our ongoing campaign to win a citywide mandatory inclusionary zoning policy for the city of Buffalo. He also assisted with the incorporation of and fundraising for Western New York’s first community land trust. It was a pleasure to get to know him and work with him over the course of the 2017 High Road Fellowship. As a native son of Buffalo, his hometown has a lot to be proud of. I look forward to the work he’ll do in the future, knowing that it will be grounded in justice and equity for all and a great love of humanity.

Harper Bishop, Open Buffalo

Work Highlights:

- Staffed the Community First Alliance, an Open Buffalo-led coalition that is working to make sure that the community benefits from economic development programs and projects through quality jobs, education and training, local and minority business opportunities, and green design and operations, with an initial focus on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and the surrounding Fruit Belt neighborhood
- Organized community meetings and legislative visits around key issues of inclusionary zoning and gentrification for Fruit Belt residents and coalition members
- Assisted on activities related to comprehensive anti-gentrification strategy including organizing and planning the inaugural Anti-Gentrification Summit
- Presented to the Community First Alliance and High Road partners about the current development landscape and policy recommendations of what the coalition should embark on next given capacity and effectiveness of the stakeholders

Open Buffalo
Open Buffalo is a civic initiative to make major, long-term improvements in justice and equity; it is an unprecedented collaboration among a diverse group of partners; and it is one of three projects in the nation chosen for the Open Places Initiative of the Open Society Foundations. Its mission is to create systemic changes leading to an “open” city for residents of Buffalo, through the measures of equality, justice, and freedom. Open Buffalo provides leadership development, media and policy strategy and coordination, direct support, and assistance to social and economic justice organizations and campaigns, facilitates action-oriented community research, and raises the profile of and mobilizes funding for this important work.

Impact...

Joseph Anderson
Amherst, NY • ILR • Class of 2020
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I was born and raised in Buffalo. I love this place, it’s my home, and I felt like I knew everything about Buffalo. How wrong I was. This summer, I have seen sides of Buffalo I didn’t know existed, and my previous understanding has been shaken. Through different speakers and tours of this city, we have discovered the problems, such as segregation and poverty, while also noting the positives, such as our important historical sites, like the Colored Musicians Club and the site of Teddy Roosevelt’s inauguration. This fellowship has changed the way I view Buffalo, and the way I now view businesses. I now know that there are alternatives to the hierarchical structure of the typical firm, where democratic practices are not usually in place. The cooperative business structure can be successful in creating employment, community activism, and a more equitable share of a company’s wealth.

From Annabel’s final evaluation

IMPACT...

Annabel was a great addition to the Breadhive family this summer. A bright and personable student, she produced a very thorough and well written research paper on the local cooperative movement. While promoting knowledge about cooperatives, this research will also be valuable in assisting cooperatives apply for different grants and other development strategies.

Emily Stewart,
Breadhive Worker Cooperative Bakery

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Completed an applied research study about cooperative business structures, the differences between cooperatives and typical capitalist business structures, and their benefits and drawbacks
- Interviewed stakeholders integral to the WNY cooperative movement in the past and present to chronicle the history of the cooperative economy and movement in WNY
- Presented research findings at a cooperative mixer about what aspects allow a cooperative to succeed and remain sustainable with suggestions on how to foster cooperative growth in the Buffalo area
- As a member of the Breadhive Cooperative, worked in the bakery in a variety of capacities on the front end with customers and other organizational support work
- Worked in the bakery in a variety of capacities on the front end with customers and other organizational support work

BREADHIVE WORKER COOPERATIVE BAKERY

BreadHive is a worker-owned cooperative bakery and cafe that seeks to create equity employment through the production and sale of high-quality, healthy food. The organization is committed to establishing a cooperative economy in Buffalo, NY, supporting its worker-owners by providing fulfilling work and equity ownership potential, supporting other cooperatives, and spreading awareness of worker-owned cooperatives as a viable and rewarding business model.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Most importantly throughout the High Road I found my own strength. I still over apologize, and I’m not the most confident person out there, but I’m getting closer to being the best version of myself that I can be. I surprised myself with how well my research project went, I surprised myself in how quickly I learned how to cook—at all, I surprised myself in how handled difficult situations. I am not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but I think I prefer myself after learning and growing than the me before.

From Maame’s reflection journal

IMPACT...

The issue of vacant and abandoned zombie foreclosures is one that has plagued Western New York for years. While the problem is widely known, the scope and scale of the problem has been hard to determine. Maame’s research will help strengthen our policy advocacy to win a Vacant Properties Registry. Her thoughtful and precise work was a great fit with the Law Center!

Kate Lockhart,
WNY Law Center
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

I learned that Buffalo has a lot to offer. It has a unique social sector that I have not been exposed to anywhere else. The summer has strengthened my desire to work in the nonprofit field but if that isn’t possible, I know I can still do good in other ways. I also learned that community engaged learning is not easy but you have to keep trying.

From Aja’s final evaluation

IMPACT…

Aja's passion and expertise enabled her to not only to complete her project but also allow her to relate with the community and build the valuable relationship. She innovated CAC’s training materials for Buffalo Beginnings into online version in a fun way. It is user friendly and accessible for everyone. AmeriCorps members and service-learners working with us enjoy the interface, and are able to acquire about the program and Western New York refugees demographic in a nutshell. That strengthens their working knowledge of the diverse population we worked with to deliver the impactful access to education. Aja was able to accommodate the need understanding our relationship to the local community and campus community.

Win Min Thant,
Buffalo State Community Academic Center

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Contributed to the Buffalo Beginnings program which supports newcomer refugee youth in building initial literacy skills during the first year of schooling
- Created a web-based training manual for volunteers and AmeriCorps members that work with the refugee youth which included gathering demographic data and researching the sources of conflict that refugees are fleeing in order to give better background
- Developed a training program for staff and volunteers which covers topics such as professionalism, cultural competency, restorative justice, and addressing race and class inequality through community work
- Conducted orientations for volunteers and new staff about CAC programs, organizational policies and tips for working with refugees and immigrants
- Staffed multilingual drop-in sessions which provide food, clothing donations, interpreters and other services to benefit CAC families
This summer indisputably reaffirmed my interest in the domain of health – innumerable lead ordinances and their nuances emboldened in my mind throughout the weeks. Assessing the progress made on implementing and overseeing the 2010 Task Force on the Prevention of Child Lead Poisoning’s recommendations and identifying the most promising steps moving forward for local coalitions and statewide efforts to fulfill the ultimate objective of Gov. Paterson’s Executive Order: the eradication of childhood lead poisoning in the State of New York, I have had the wonderful opportunity to eagerly use the skills that I have adoringly learned in the classroom as a Policy Analysis and Management Major and truly apply them in reality. I am thrilled for the future of Buffalo. I am grateful for all the people that I have met here, including those who I have lived with and those who I have engaged with on this unimaginable eight week voyage. I am inspired by their passion and their no nonsense approach to asinine apathy and I am excited for their futures that simply reek of the incredible.

From Jenny’s reflection journal

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS...**

Jenny was an amazing addition to the Community Foundation and allowed us to assist on projects and deepen partnerships that we would not have had the capacity to do otherwise. During her appointment, she updated two NYS reports from Gov. Patterson’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force and added a series of policy and agency recommendations for the State to consider. These recommendations are being reviewed by Lead Poisoning Coalitions across New York State.

Allie Urbanski,
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
**IN THEIR OWN WORDS...**

This summer was amazing. The High Roads lived up to its hype. I will never forget the experiences had, memories made, friendships built. This summer I learned a lot, grew a lot...Buffalo is a cool city. I would be interested in going into this type of work in the future. This summer gave me a lot of perspective on a plethora issues that helped me grow. Working for the community, in the community, helping build others up, and taking the high road was really fulfilling work for me.

*From Nathanael's journal and final evaluation*

**IMPACT...**

Nate was a tremendous asset to the Center this summer. His work has been a great help to our efforts to engage residents in critical conversations and will be highly valuable in helping us strengthen cradle to career initiatives for this community.

*John Siskar, Buffalo State College*

---

**BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN URBAN AND RURAL EDUCATION**

CEURE—the Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education—is committed to the enhancement of high-need urban and rural schools through recruitment, retention, and continuing education of highly qualified teachers, as well as the support of reform efforts and research about effective schools. To support educational reform and school improvement, CEURE partners with schools, community groups, foundations, and other institutions of higher education across Western New York.

**WORK HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Assisted in the logistics of a leadership development course for 25 emerging community leaders including creating publicity brochures, pairing mentors with mentees, and supervising the various workshops
- Surveyed 40+ program participants and utilized data to compile a report of recommendations that were adopted by the organization
- Interviewed 30+ community members and conducted an ethnographic study on the New American community in Buffalo
- Represented Buffalo State CEURE at community meetings and coalition focused on community development of Buffalo’s West Side
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I have become stronger, more courageous, and more open-minded on the High Road, and I know that these skills will be useful not only in my future internships but for the rest of my life. It is so important to check and understand our own privilege while also using our positions in life to help bring those around us up. Being in Buffalo, and being able to see the needs and issues of African-Americans and other minorities in the community, has opened my eyes even further. Equity is a goal that everyone should be working towards, and I have gotten the opportunity to do so in the time that I have been here.

From Kaya’s final evaluation

IMPACT...

Kaya exceeded our expectations. The work we did together was exactly what we planned to do and more. She is incredibly hard-working, courageous, curious and very ambitious. Her work is awesome and very much needed. I will be sharing photos and updates with her as to how her work has been used over time and how it has improved the quality of life for our students.

Phyllicia Brown, Learning Disabilities Association of WNY
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

Participating in this program has greatly encouraged me to get more politically involved. I don’t think I will ever run for office (though my thoughts may change) but I’m much more willing to contact my local representatives about issues important to me. Finally, I have learned that community engaged service learning is an incredibly powerful tool for actually developing solutions to problems your city faces. Getting to work with Grassroots Gardens and walk around the city let me see the vacant housing problem Buffalo faces first hand and all the different ways community and school gardens can help solve it while improving other aspects of community life. I would never have truly learned as much in a classroom. So even though grassroots level activism is an unpredictable and sometimes unreliable process, when it does get results, they can be quite beautiful.

IMPACT…

When the Harvest of the Month cooking guide is adopted by the school system it will have an impact on all students who receive their meals. It will also help connect New Americans culturally to the school systems by providing meals prepared in a familiar way.

Greg Wilder, Grassroots Gardens

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Researched and created a cookbook for the crop of the week program of the Buffalo Public Schools that is both nutritious by encouraging healthy eating habits and culturally inclusive recognizing Buffalo’s newest community members
- Developed a questionnaire for teachers to provide feedback and recommendations on the crop of the week program
- Represented Grassroots Gardens in a working group for Buffalo’s Farm to School program linking schools with local farms
- Researched best practices from other community garden organizations and Farm to School initiatives across the country
- Created a toolkit of curriculum based on the Farm to School policy for leaders of school gardens to use
Throughout my time at the Food Bank, I overcame my fear of phone calls (telephonophobia is real) via making over 50 calls, created a site visit evaluation sheet, visited 21 pantries in the counties of Erie and Niagara, pioneered a spreadsheet to compile such data and crafted a presentation to explain my findings. But beyond the tangible, I witnessed the importance of truly believing in the cause you work or volunteer for. Because without that, many lack the incentive to go above and beyond and in the non-profit sector it is those that go above and beyond that make the most difference. We all have the capacity to do so. I leave Buffalo a mini expert in the Food Bank business, a sous chef, a better runner, a more socially aware person, a slightly improved Avalon player, a Buffalo sports fan (Browns = Bills at this point) and most of all, a motivated person to always seek to take the High Road in business and in life.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS…**

Our organization benefitted greatly from this opportunity. The impact of this project is going to be implemented throughout our network. Emily always came prepared, stayed on point, was thoroughly engaged with Food Bank staff, member agencies and board members, is extremely motivated, and mature. Emily will be a success at whatever path she chooses.

*From Emily’s blog and reflection journal*

Emily King
Chagrin Falls, OH • ILR • Class of 2020

**WORK HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Analyzed current agency capacity of 21 member agencies through on-site visits and identified issues inhibiting food distribution
- Created a report based on a survey analyzing of current agency capacity. The report projected potential increase of distribution and identified issues that inhibited the organization’s efforts to increase distribution to those in need in their communities
- Presented findings to the Food Bank of WNY’s Agency Services Committee, Physical Systems Committee and Board Members
- Consulted on the successful implementation of her recommendations to the member agencies
- Secured central office approval to pursue grant funding for storage equipment and to decentralize certain field operating decisions

*Supervisor quote*

“The Food Bank of Western New York was founded in 1979, after a group of religious and community leaders came together to develop an effective and comprehensive way to fight hunger in the region. Today, the organization assists as many as 135,000 individuals in any given month through its 341 member agencies, including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth programs, group homes and senior centers.

**WORK HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Analyzed current agency capacity of 21 member agencies through on-site visits and identified issues inhibiting food distribution
- Created a report based on a survey analyzing of current agency capacity. The report projected potential increase of distribution and identified issues that inhibited the organization’s efforts to increase distribution to those in need in their communities
- Presented findings to the Food Bank of WNY’s Agency Services Committee, Physical Systems Committee and Board Members
- Consulted on the successful implementation of her recommendations to the member agencies
- Secured central office approval to pursue grant funding for storage equipment and to decentralize certain field operating decisions

**IMPACT…**

Our organization benefitted greatly from this opportunity. The impact of this project is going to be implemented throughout our network. Emily always came prepared, stayed on point, was thoroughly engaged with Food Bank staff, member agencies and board members, is extremely motivated, and mature. Emily will be a success at whatever path she chooses.

*Carol Palumbo*,
*Food Bank of WNY*
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I joined the High Road Program for many of the same professional reasons as anyone else here: to gain job experience, to explore the NGO sector of the workforce, to further discover my career interests, etc. But I also came to Buffalo looking for answers, to explore a side to society that I had never been previously exposed to for my own personal development. I wanted to be positively uncomfortable and to reflect on why I was uncomfortable in the first place. Thank you to everyone for making this summer so memorable. I’ve learned a lot while being here. I have a better sense of what social justice truly means and how to be a successful advocate for my community. No matter what sector I go into, I’m going to apply what I learned here.

From Aimee’s blog and reflection journal

IMPACT...

Amy’s creativity and research ability was a true asset to the organization. She was instrumental in helping us complete long planned projects.

Brian Brown-Cashdollar,
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health Worker Center

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Supported a campaign to reach, assist and empower workers in the nail salon industry
- Conducted outreach to targeted communities to educate workers on workplace safety and health issues and to promote Worker Center resources
- Created a Family Resource Guide for families who recently lost a loved one to a work related accident. The guide outlines New York State compensation death benefits, a sample FOIA, and introduces readers to the support WNYCOSH can provide.
- Planned and conducted Worker Center summer leadership training
- Organized incoming calls to the Worker Center’s 10 language hotline
**In Their Own Words…**

I can’t think of a better way to have spent my summer. I got to learn about my hometown through service work and field trips. I had great mentors at ASI and learned a lot from the other fellows as well. I would like to be involved in something like ASI in the future, either as an associate, board member or volunteer. I think the aspect of ASI that I found most interesting was the leadership. I really enjoyed seeing how the board made decisions for the nonprofit and discussed strategy for expanding its reach and influence while increasing its funding. This helped me realize that nonprofits do share many of the goals of businesses and have to consider many of the things that businesses focus on.

*From Lev’s reflection journal*

**Impact…**

Lev was an asset to our team this summer. He was flexible with tasks, he produced high quality work and provided insight and ideas that were utilized. He has a great attitude and was a team player.

*Parrish Gibbons-Herzog, Arts Services Initiative of Western New York*
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

I learned that Buffalo is a unique city in every sense – it is a vibrant community with polar opposites that are seeking to come together as one under a common agenda of social innovation. I learned that I would really like to become involved in the social sector via public service, and that it is possible to do so even as a financial institution. I truly enjoyed being with other Cornell students at Buffalo. I don’t think that I would have been able to fully enjoy the fellowship experience if I didn’t have my peers.

From Margaret’s final evaluation

IMPACT…

Margaret spoke to over 40 small business owners about WEDI’s services and worked independently on business plans with two WEDI clients. She created an MWBE certification guide that will be available to all future WEDI clients, as well as updated our Community Resources and Referrals Guide for our all clients, but specifically those who are over 50 years old.

Bryana DiFonzo,
Westminster Economic Development Initiative

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Participated in a variety of direct, grassroots economic development work through WEDI’s Economic Development program, including business incubation with its West Side Bazaar vendors and microloan clients
- Formulated business plans and guided small business entrepreneurs in restaurant, retail, transportation fields
- Conducted door-to-door community outreach to expand microloan clientele among refugee business owners by researching potential clients and marketing beneficial loan products
- Outlined issues in human resource policies through planning and organizing staff retreat and reporting outcomes
- Created guides for MWBE certification, loan management, community resources and referrals for WEDI clients
I have learned that Buffalo is still a growing city with a lot of untapped resources. Working in Buffalo this summer also convinced me that I’m in the right school, pursuing the right career. I also learned that community engaged service learning is one of the most direct means to apply theory. My interaction with other fellows also contributed to the great summer I had in Buffalo because it was my first time living and dining in a house with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Our interaction built new characters in me that I never planned or thought of. I’m also glad that the experience taught me more about myself.

From Martha’s final evaluation

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS…**

Martha was an incredible addition to our team this summer. She was a patient and through teacher who always went above and beyond to help her students succeed. Martha is true team player and we will miss her spirit and smile in the office.

Anna Matejova,
Jericho Road Community Health Center
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

I learned that for all its progress Buffalo has a lot more work to do. On the surface the city is starting to look better, but not everyone reaps those benefits. For my career path I still want to go to law school so I will take away a lot from this experience. I learned that community engagement can be done by for profit enterprises and that they make an enormous impact especially with regards to sustainability. Economic development and community development can be done concurrently.  

From David’s final evaluation

IMPACT…

We are so grateful for David’s input and hard work. He was a great team member who was eager to contribute in any way he could. His work will be highly valuable in securing Bak USA’s certification as a Benefit Corporation.

Carly Battin,  
Bak USA

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- To further the company’s social mission, developed documentation and systems to measure impact in areas such as supplier responsibility, sustainability, workers’ rights to align with Benefit Corporation (B Corp) standards
- Reviewed the list of credentials that the company needs to meet to receive B Corp certification and conducted the recommended assessment from the governing with policy recommendations for a successful application
- Met with company leadership about implementing the policy recommendations and the process to secure B Corp certification
- Developed a Supplier Code of Conduct for the company including fair labor practices, environmental policies, and good business ethics
- Created and distributed three surveys about employee satisfaction around volunteering, public transportation and child care

Bak USA

Bak USA is a social enterprise that seeks to further universal education, employment, and connectivity by producing affordable tablets and smartphones. Bak USA is nurturing vibrant communities in Buffalo, NY by employing willing, friendly people who are looking for a supportive environment to start a new career. Bak USA assembles high-tech tablet PCs by hand in Buffalo for educational use all over the world. Its products are made by people, for people. The company seeks to bridge educational gaps around the world by providing reliable, user-friendly instruments to learn at an affordable price. Bak USA sells tools, not gadgets.
This summer, I got to see many sides of Buffalo as a city that is growing. On one hand, I got to see the many issues that it still faces, but on the other hand I also got to see and work closely with local movements and efforts fighting for change. Friday discussions were amazing because they allowed me to meet community leaders actively fighting for change. This has helped me gain a lot of insight and experience in working in the social sector as a possible career path. I think community engaged service learning provided me with a very unique experience of working directly within the community and with the people who are directly affected by the issues you’re dealing with.

**From Cuong’s final evaluation**

Cuong did a great job at managing his time, keeping professional boundaries with the youth (some of which were in his peer group!), being inquisitive about our model, and learning as much as he could from the experience. Being a small organization, we tend to lean on each other for a lot, he fit right into the culture of helping and asking for help when needed. Cuong was amazingly empathetic and involved when it came to our youth.

Whitney Smith,  
*Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology*
**IN THEIR OWN WORDS…**

It’s almost as if I wasn’t ready to leave Buffalo (my suitcase wasn’t, they had to ship it out on the next flight), after a wonderful summer of growth and learning. I feel as though it’s strange that I spent so much time in a city and learned so much about its issues and burgeoning successes only to leave. I’m sure I’ll be following every new brief PPG puts out, every new strike the ALF goes on, and the after interview day I’ll definitely be following some of those elections. It’s strange, but I feel as though putting myself in a new and unfamiliar environment this summer helped me to discover new things about who I am and what I value. Buffalo has a special place in my heart even if I won’t see it again for a while. While I thought it almost silly at first, I really do understand the Buffalove. This summer has been instrumental in learning about my interests and how I can turn them into a career. I learned how interested I am in a socially-minded career, working for the greater good. I also learned about the importance of engaging with the community around development issues so that its progress doesn’t leave some people behind.

*From Vanessa’s reflection journal and final evaluation*

**IMPACT…**

Vanessa was a great fellow for us. She fit right into our work and as part of our team. Vanessa’s work will help us better understand our members and influence our advocacy priorities.

*Richard Lipsitz*,

*Western New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO*

---

**WORK HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Conducted an original survey of the labor federation’s 138 affiliated unions to compile a demographic profile of union members in WNY, including age and racial and gender make-up
- Created and distributed survey tool to capture demographic data of affiliates
- Produced a written report analyzing the survey results to all them to accessible to the union movement and to the general public
- Helped plan and execute the annual “Interview Day” where local candidates for elected office meet with labor representatives and pitch their platforms for potential endorsement
- Participated in the regular field work of the ALF attending a number of labor meetings and other coalitions

---

**WNY Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO**

The WNY Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, includes five Central Labor Councils (CLCs): the Buffalo Labor Council representing Erie County; the Niagara/Orleans Labor Council representing all of Niagara County and the western part of Orleans County; and the Dunkirk, Jamestown, and Cattaraugus/Allegany Labor Councils representing the counties in the Southern Tier. The WNYALF represents over 130,000 members from all walks of life and occupations. It seeks to strengthen connections with its affiliates and better understand the individuals comprising the organized workforce of the region. Its mission is to improve the lives and increase the power of working families, bring fairness and dignity to the workplace and secure social equality.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer I have seen the highs and the lows of my city; booming revitalization directly contrasts the neighborhoods left behind, struggling to combat poverty and segregation. Although I’ve grown up here observing this segregation, both socioeconomic and racial, my whole life, this summer feels different. Maybe it was my time away from Buffalo, living at Cornell, but I have returned with fresh eyes, and now often find myself overwhelmed by the problems of the city, feeling like there’s not enough time for me to possibly make a difference. Then I remember why we are here, as a group, working to experiment with ideas directly in the community. Taking the skills that we have learned at Cornell, and using them to make something better.

From Kate’s reflection journal

IMPACT...

Not only did the on-campus class and program preparation provide Kate with a strong foundation, she is a Say yes scholar, which provided her with additional insight to our work. Kate’s work helped to support our Say Yes scholars, of which there are over 4,000, plus their families, through her work on our website, fundraising campaign, and Alumni network concept.

Emily Wyckoff, Say Yes Buffalo
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer I learned so much more about Buffalo’s recent revitalization efforts. Especially since I live outside the city, there were some projects I was not familiar with that High Road introduced me to. Seeing the role of the arts in combating issues such as gentrification was really interesting. I also learned more about community engaged learning, something that I had never been familiar with. I really loved how this kind of learning involves a hands on approach that is often not as common in traditional educational institutions.”

From Audrey’s final evaluation

IMPACT...

Audrey was professional, organized and thorough. Her database project reflected these qualities. Buffalo Arts Studio will utilize her research as we continue to advocate for increased public art and inclusion of diverse communities in creating the installations.

Shirley Verrico,
Buffalo Arts Studio

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Created a database of public art installations in Western New York with an emphasis on murals
- Worked on a collaborative public mural project, The Art of Labor, and coordinated stakeholders including Area Labor Federation of WNY, the Coalition for Economic Justice, Buffalo Public Schools Art Education Department and Open Buffalo
- Supported Public Art: Training Youth to Create Art for Communities, a class aiming to engage BAS students’ interest in public art and assisting in the painting the Art of Labor Mural
- Shadowed leadership with the John R. Oishei foundation to learn about philanthropy and community development
- Supported daily operations of the gallery including managing exhibits, tours, administrative support and communications
IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I’ve learned taking the “high road” can be tough, but it’s extremely rewarding (I know, super cheesy but super true). And this applies to both non-profit work and interactions with people too. I’ve really learned the importance of kindness and being cognizant of the things I say and how they may impact someone of a different background who has had different experiences than I have. It also is not easy to devote your career to a project that you may never see through to the end, or that may not achieve the full progress desired. While Buffalo is not going to change dramatically overnight, so much progress has been made by the various organizations we all worked with and got to hear from on Fridays. This progress, even if it may seem insignificant to some, is necessary for creating a better Buffalo.

Impact...

Hannah was really on top of things. She helped plan the whole summer youth program! She also prepared other materials that were a significant contribution to our work supporting positive youth development programming in Buffalo and across Erie County.

From Hannah’s blog post

**Work Highlights:**

- Worked with the urban 4-H initiative on a summer youth development program, offering internships and opportunities for high school students to participate in community based projects
- Researched benefits and barriers to participation of summer youth employment programs and after school programs and wrote a policy brief, describing findings and providing recommendations
- Created a report of organizations across the county that have youth employment programs and descriptions of their goals, funding sources, and work tasks and/or curricula used

**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County**

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) is a key outreach system of Cornell University with a strong public mission and an extensive local presence that is responsive to the needs in New York communities. CCE is a participant in the nationwide network of Cooperative Extension programs, which began in 1914 as a means of applying land-grant university research in understandable and useful ways to farmers and rural families. The CCE educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

The High Roads experience will never just be ‘something I did one summer.’ It has sparked interests and skills I never knew I had, and it has kick-started a new drive in me. I have my sights set on working in communities as rich as this one, and though they may not always be in Buffalo nor in the public sector nor even in arts or education (though I am very closely attached to every one of those communities), I dearly hope they are all as enriching. I cannot express the depth of my appreciation for the experiences I had and the people I interacted with, and I will certainly carry this with me for the rest of my life. To my dear Buffalo, always my home and now my community, my gratitude is endless.

From Rachel’s final evaluation

IMPACT…

Rachel did phenomenal work with the M@Re and for ArtWorks programs. She was a wonderful mentor for our students, using her creativity and patience to really bring out the best in the youth. Rachel is an exceptional young person and it was a privilege to have her as part of the Young Audiences team this summer.

Rachel Whalen
Williamsville, NY • Arts & Sciences Class of 2019

YOUNG AUDIENCES OF WESTERN NEW YORK

Young Audiences (YAWNY) is a dynamic and growing provider of arts learning opportunities, providing services within eight counties of Western New York. Its mission is to make the visual, performing, and literary arts a part of young people’s lives in order to enhance their development as creative and productive human beings. Over the years, YAWNY has demonstrated expertise in helping young people develop the essential skills—from collaborative engagement and leadership to critical thinking and communication—necessary for the 21st century workplace.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Taught in the ArtWorks program, a paid youth apprenticeship program in the arts for high school students ages 14-18 who reside in the City of Buffalo. The youth work in teams to flex their creative muscles and learn essential career skills while producing works of art
- Researched and conducted interviews to create an informal strategic plan for sustaining and growing the ArtWorks program
- Created a visual art project in the form of a map to highlight the local region and places that students live, play and work
- Developed curriculum for the M@RE program which focuses on reducing recidivism by youth at the Erie County Youth Detention Center or somehow involved with the criminal justice system

Rachel did phenomenal work with the M@Re and for ArtWorks programs. She was a wonderful mentor for our students, using her creativity and patience to really bring out the best in the youth. Rachel is an exceptional young person and it was a privilege to have her as part of the Young Audiences team this summer.

From Rachel’s final evaluation

Rachel Whalen
Williamsville, NY • Arts & Sciences Class of 2019

YOUNG AUDIENCES OF WESTERN NEW YORK

Young Audiences (YAWNY) is a dynamic and growing provider of arts learning opportunities, providing services within eight counties of Western New York. Its mission is to make the visual, performing, and literary arts a part of young people’s lives in order to enhance their development as creative and productive human beings. Over the years, YAWNY has demonstrated expertise in helping young people develop the essential skills—from collaborative engagement and leadership to critical thinking and communication—necessary for the 21st century workplace.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Taught in the ArtWorks program, a paid youth apprenticeship program in the arts for high school students ages 14-18 who reside in the City of Buffalo. The youth work in teams to flex their creative muscles and learn essential career skills while producing works of art
- Researched and conducted interviews to create an informal strategic plan for sustaining and growing the ArtWorks program
- Created a visual art project in the form of a map to highlight the local region and places that students live, play and work
- Developed curriculum for the M@RE program which focuses on reducing recidivism by youth at the Erie County Youth Detention Center or somehow involved with the criminal justice system
The High Road Fellowship made this summer the most powerful I’ve had yet. I found such a smart and passionate group of friends who I am so lucky to have shared time, thoughts, struggles, and dreams with together. I met with people carrying immense burdens of despair, neglect, trauma, and experiences I could never fully come to understand, who made me become ever more aware of my privileges and the need to use it for those for whom those privileges are systemically unattainable. I had the opportunity to do something I really believed in — helping people make a transition from joblessness, homelessness, and shame to self-sufficient wage earning and living meaningful lives.

From John’s blog post

**IMPACT…**

John is an incredible young man. He showed tremendous maturity and provided valuable input that will contribute to our organizational success. His command of logic, analysis, and other vital skills were an asset in every assignment he tackled.

*Nicole Stewart, Community Action Organization of WNY*
IN THEIR OWN WORDS…

Buffalo is a promising city to live and work in, and there is certainly a strong culture of community activism I have not so readily encountered in other communities I’ve engaged with. The summer has made me more cognizant of grassroots campaigns and the different levels of engagement community involvement can take on. Service-learning with a rigorous educational curriculum as opposed to volunteerism is, by far, more effective and impactful in its ability to call the individual participant to reflect upon their experiences. I understand municipal politics and nonprofit organizations far more now, and would very much like to pursue a public sector career path in the future.

From Michelle’s final evaluation

IMPACT…

Michelle met and surpassed all our expectation as a High Road fellow this summer. Not only is she highly adept at research and writing, but her curiosity, personality and sense of humor brought a much-appreciated lightness to the office. Her report on the waterfront development will be an important model as we work to promote equitable development strategies across the city. My only regret is that Michelle didn’t stay longer!

Sarah Wooton,
Partnership for the Public Good

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Wrote a narrative on the history of the campaign to develop Buffalo’s waterfront. Interviewed a number of organizers, researchers, public officials, community activists and developers about the implementation of the High Road Principles Agreement for CanalSide which is now published on Buffalo Commons, a digital library of Buffalo-focused research
- Participated in the Buffalo Transit Riders United grassroots advocacy day in Albany to lobby State legislators for increased public transit funding, enhanced routes and rider representation on the transit authority board
- Updated Buffalo Brief publications that provide a snapshot of information about Buffalo demographics with regard to education, poverty, immigration, Housing, and Racial Disparities
**Faculty and Staff Profiles**

**Lou Jean Fleron**

**High Road Fellowship Director**

Now ILR emeritus, Lou Jean directs the High Road program. A Cornell ILR Extension faculty member since 1977, her research and teaching areas are public economic policy, industry and community development, and labor management relations. She served as director of ILR Western Region and is the author of studies on regional economic development, including *Champions @ Work: Employment, Workplace Practices and Labor-Management Relations in Western New York,* and *Buffalo Child Care Means Business.* Prior to working at ILR, she taught political science at SUNY Buffalo and the University of Kentucky. Lou Jean was chair of Buffalo Living Wage Commission from 2003 to 2010 and co-founded the Partnership for the Public Good which she now serves as chair of the board.

**Megan Connelly**

**Director of High Road Policy and Engaged Learning**

An attorney with years of policy advocacy experience, Megan joined Cornell in 2011 where she cultivates civicly engaged and socially responsible students while supporting community-engaged learning and research. Prior to her role as Director of High Road Policy and Engaged Learning she held concurrent positions as the Associate Director of the High Road Fellowships and Director of Policy Advancement at Partnership for the Public Good. Admitted to practice in New York, Megan is a graduate of the University at Buffalo Law School. She previously worked at Neighborhood Legal Services in Buffalo, at the Youth Justice Project in South Bend, Indiana, and for the University at Buffalo’s Office of Civic Engagement and the Regional Institute. She believes that her own service experiences as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame helped to shape her values, interests and ultimately, her career path and she likes to provide similar transformative opportunities for students to engage with and learn from the community.

**Ron Applegate**

**Lecturer, ILR School Cornell University**

An economic and labor historian, Ron is a lecturer at Cornell ILR in the Department of Labor Relations, Law and History. In addition to the foundational course in U.S labor history, Ron teaches courses on the history of U.S. economic development and contemporary innovations in community-based development. His research interest in the theory and practice of economic development, with a particular emphasis on collective action to establish inclusive governance and generate equitable outcomes, is rooted in prior work experience: coordinating community development programs for the Coalition for a Better Acre (Lowell, Massachusetts) and the Over-the-Rhine Housing Network (Cincinnati, Ohio). In his current capacity as the faculty advisor to ILR’s High Road Fellowship program, Ron has collaborated with ILR faculty in Buffalo to create courses designed to envelop students’ participation in engaged learning: both preparing students for their community immersion and deepening their critical reflections after their experience.

**Diane Burton**

**Associate Professor, ILR School Cornell University**

Diane Burton is a faculty member in the ILR School at Cornell University and currently serves as the Provost’s Fellow for Public Engagement. Her primary appointment is in human resources studies with courtesy appointments in organizational behavior and sociology. Prior to joining the Cornell faculty in 2009, she was a faculty member at the MIT Sloan School of Management. She started her academic career at the Harvard Business School teaching leadership and organizational behavior. She earned her PhD in Sociology at Stanford University and served as a lecturer and researcher in organizational behavior and human resources management at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Diane is an organizational sociologist interested in innovation and entrepreneurship, and has extensive experience in teaching by the case method. Her primary research is a major study of high-tech start-ups in Silicon Valley including the study of entrepreneurial teams and executive careers. More recently she has been studying R&D teams and leadership in the non-profit sector and employment practices in law firms.
Marya Besharov is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at the ILR School at Cornell University. An organizational theorist with a background in organizational sociology, Marya studies how organizations and their leaders navigate competing goals. Much of her research focuses on social-business hybrid organizations such as social enterprises and mission-driven businesses that combine social and commercial goals. Her work has been published in journals such as Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Business Ethics Quarterly, Academy of Management Learning and Education, Research in Organizational Behavior, Research in the Sociology of Organizations, and Industrial and Corporate Change. Marya currently serves on the editorial boards of the Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, and Administrative Science Quarterly. She received a BA in Social Studies, an MA in Sociology, and a PhD in Organizational Behavior from Harvard University. She also holds an MBA from Stanford. Prior to her academic career, Marya worked as a researcher and consultant in the health care field.

Shannon Gleeson earned her Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from the University of California, Berkeley in 2008. She joined the faculty of the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Fall 2014, after six years in the Latin American & Latino Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research focuses on the experiences of low-wage workers, the role of immigrant documentation status, and legal mobilization. She has also conducted research on immigrant civic engagement and the bureaucratic processes of labor standards enforcement. She is currently working on a book that examines the promises and failures of U.S. labor and employment law, the challenges low-wage workers face when they come forward to file a claim, and their experiences in fighting for justice. Her previous books include Precarious Claims: The Promise and Failure of Workplace Protections in the United States (University of California Press, 2016), The Nation and Its Peoples: Citizens, Denizens, Migrants (Routledge, 2014, edited with John Park), and Conflicting Commitments: The Politics of Enforcing Immigrant Worker Rights in San Jose and Houston (Cornell University Press, 2012).

Sam Magavern is adjunct faculty of Cornell ILR, and also teaches at the University at Buffalo Law School. He joined the clinical law faculty in 2007 after a year as compliance coordinator for the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission. His classes focus on the policy aspects of affordable housing and community economic development and offer students experience in action-oriented research and policy advocacy. A graduate of Harvard University and UCLA Law School, he practiced law with the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis before returning to Buffalo in 2004. Sam currently serves as pro bono attorney for the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission and as executive director of partnership for the Public Good which he co-founded. He has chaired the boards of several non-profits, including an inner city family service provider, a ballet school, and a land conservancy. He hosts a weekly radio show, the Public Good, on WUFO AM 1080. Sam has published many works, ranging from scholarly articles to poetry, including a nonfiction book, Primo Levi's Universe (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and a movie, The Last Word (Firelight Films, 2004). He has been the lead author on many policy reports for Partnership for the Public Good, including Missing the Target: How Economic Development Programs Fail Buffalo’s Most Challenged Neighborhoods; The Niagara River Greenway: Fulfilling the Promise; Greening Buffalo: What Local Governments Can Do; and Generating Waste: Problems with NYPa and the IDAs and How to Solve Them.
During the spring semester fellows participated in a pre-course to provide them with an academic framework to support their summer immersion experience.

ILR 3052 Community Controlled Economic Development: The Case of Buffalo NY, introduced students to a brief economic history of Buffalo and explored the challenges, opportunities and assets of a classic rust-belt city experiencing a dynamic revitalization. Students learned about the types of nonprofit, social enterprise, labor, and community organizations they would be working with during their time in Buffalo, and introduced to the problem-solving, planning and community-building efforts of the social sector and government actors committed to moving Buffalo toward a new economy based on equity, sustainability and democracy.

Taught by Professor Ron Applegate, Lou Jean Fleron and Megan Connelly along with guest speakers, topics covered included:

**Local is powerful: economic development models that seek to address community needs**
- What is meant by “economic development”?
- How has New York State policy supported efforts to democratize economic development practices?

**Buffalo’s changing economy across the 20th Century**
- Examining which local, national and international forces shaped Buffalo’s history: from the Old Economy, growing and industrial, to a New Economy, shrinking and uncertain.
- Understanding the importance of collective storytelling in shaping decision-making at individual and civic level.

**Building the social economy: Buffalo and beyond**
- How community based organizations are working with government and private sector actors to develop equitable economic development policies and programs locally.

**The power of civic capacities: leading change at the local level**
- What is civic engagement? How does a community build capacity in its residents and organizations to enable them to participate in governing economic development policies and practices? How does one become an engaged citizen?

**Engaged Research and Transmedia Workshop**
- Covering tools and ethical principles of engaged research and creative ways to present and communicate work products.

Course requirements included a critical reflection essay on how a community redefines itself by retelling its own story and a poster on community-based organizations as problem solving agents.
The High Road Fellowships program is the flagship engagement opportunity for students within the Social Sector Studies (3S) Working Group at the ILR School. The 3S program provides a multi-disciplinary academic framework for students to study the dynamic social sector and its organizations. Curriculum explores the legal and institutional environment, the specific problems and issues that the sector seeks to address, the distinctive organizational and leadership challenges associated with generating revenues, managing volunteers and stakeholders, and the values and perspectives that distinguish the social sector as an alternative to the for-profit sector.

The 3S program works in collaboration with co-curricular resources to serve the career aspirations of ILR students as well as to strengthen connections to ILR alumni and friends who work in social sector organizations.

Since 2016, the Social Sector Studies Working Group has received funding from Engaged Cornell to develop curriculum and support engaged undergraduate and graduate research.

Additional curriculum will offer participants the unique opportunity to connect the personal impact of an immersive service experience with the intellectual resources that a university environment affords.

The Partnership for the Public Good (PPG) builds a more just, sustainable, and culturally vibrant community through action-oriented research, policy development, and citizen engagement.

PPG is the ideal community partner for the High Road as along with its partners, PPG is driving a number of innovative initiatives moving Buffalo towards a just and equitable new economy.

PPG unites over 270 organizations that endorse its mission, vision, and principles. Partners are entitled to vote on each year’s Community Agenda and to apply for High Road Fellows.

PPG provides a strong collaborative environment that ensures collective impact by leveraging existing relationships with community partners such as social enterprises, workforce development agencies, organized labor, service providers for refugees and immigrants, arts and culturals, and youth organizations.
A dedicated group of Cornell alumni and Buffalo stakeholders serve on an advisory committee to help guide and support the program while deepening community and University connections through their unique expertise and networks.

- **Ramone Alexander** (Director of Inclusivity & Community Building, Nichols School)
- **Matt Connors** (Cornell HOTEL ’09, Vice President of Development, Sinatra & Co.)
- **Cathy Creighton** (Cornell ILR ’87, Attorney, Creighton, Johnsen and Giroux)
- **Steve Deisig** (Cornell ILR ’96, Director of VISTA and Opportunity Corps, The Service Collaborative of WNY)
- **Warren Emblidge Sr.** (Cornell ILR ’65, President, S.J. McCullagh, Inc.)
- **Marc Hennig** (Deputy Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Assoc. of WNY)
- **Dennis Maher** (Cornell Arch. ’99, Professor, University at Buffalo School of Architecture)
- **Hon. Amy Martoche** (Cornell ILR ’92, Buffalo City Court Judge)
- **Jack McGowan** (Cornell Ag ’80, Project Manager Insysy Consulting, President,)
- **Matthew Nagowski** (Cornell ILR ’05, Vice President, M&T Bank)
- **Laurie Riester Collins Chair** (Cornell ILR ’06, HR Leader and Talent Advisor, Columbus McKinnon)
- **Matthew Scherer** (Cornell ILR ’11, Associate, Hodgson Russ)
- **Paul Tesluk** (Cornell ILR’91, Dean, UB School of Management and Professor, Department of Organization and Human Resources)

**Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo**

Since 1880, Buffalo Cornellians have been actively supporting the University. Today, the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo is dedicated to engaging area alumni, students, parents, and friends of Cornell with each other, the University, and Buffalo civic life. There are over 2000 Cornell alumni in the area, and Cornell currently enrolls over 175 students from the Buffalo-Niagara region, or around 45 students in every entering class year. A not-for-profit association, the Club remains an independent entity from the University although it retains close ties with the alumni office in Ithaca.

**Career Development**

The High Road exposes students to the dynamism of the metro economy and introduces them to diverse careers and professional occupations, particularly in the social sector. Networking and mentorship is also available to students through the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo and the High Road Advisory Committee. Previously Assembly Member Sean Ryan provided State funding for a program on careers in public service.

For the first time High Road Fellowships received support from a corporate sponsor, M & T Bank. The funding was awarded through M & T’s Human Resources Department because it is seen as a valuable investment in attracting promising young people to Buffalo.

With this gift, Cornell added two undergraduates to the 2017 High Road Fellowship program, bringing the placement total to 22. This partnership also expands involvement with M&T’s Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN) by exposing students to this collaborative effort providing a life-changing continuum of cradle-to-career services on the East Side of Buffalo.
HISTORICAL ASSETS AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: NEIGHBORHOODS, HERITAGE AND POVERTY

There have been pockets of immense growth in the city of Buffalo over the past decade, which has created a number of opportunities. But there still are intense pockets of poverty throughout the city as well. This is an enduring challenge and tension. History matters. Communities do not reach extreme levels of poverty quickly. Poverty and disadvantage in these communities tend to concentrate there over many years. High-poverty communities do not appear overnight. High levels of poverty in these communities are the product of long-term, complicated economic and social dynamics, as well as deliberate public and private-sector actions. Students discussed planning strategies and visited historic sites to learn about conserving and incorporating heritage into development.

Panel Discussion on preservation, renewal and development
- Bradley Bethel, Jr., Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Christiana Limniatis, Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Karen Stanley Fleming, Restore our Community Coalition

Professor Shannon Gleeson on Civic Engagement
Tour and Lunch at the African American Heritage Corridor
- Nash House, with George Arthur
- Colored Musicians Club, with Danny Williams
- Michigan Street Baptist Church

GREEN AS THE NEW GROWTH: WATER, ENERGY, AND THE BINATIONAL REGIONAL ECONOMY

With an economic development boom underway in Buffalo, community groups are working hard to make sure ‘green’ is a key component. Tools such as community benefit agreements that incorporate green principles are being effectively utilized more often. Struggles for racial, economic, and climate justice; for true democratic governance, transparency and accountability; for equity being seen as a legitimate growth mode with prosperity rooted in interdependence with the earth’s natural systems—are all deeply interconnected. This day raised the question of how Buffalo be a model in creating a new green economy promoting the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

Panel Discussion on assets and strategies for a green-blue Buffalo-Niagara
- Lynda Schneekloth, Professor, University at Buffalo School of Architecture
- Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Deputy Director, PUSH Buffalo

Lunch at Empire State Development with Sam Hoyt, ESD Regional President
Tour Buffalo Waterfront, Silo City and Outer Harbor

NEW AMERICANS: REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Buffalo has a rich history as a city of immigrants. From 2000 to 2010, the Buffalo-Niagara Metro Area saw a 33% rise in foreign-born population. The main reason for this increase is the number of refugees being resettled in Buffalo. This day examined how and why localities are (or are not) being proactive in creating policies and structures that increase access and accommodation for immigrants and refugees.

Panel Discussion on access, protection and accommodation policies
- Jessica Lazarin, City of Buffalo Office of New Americans
- Gamileh Jamil, ACCESS of WNY
- Fidèle Menavanza, Erie County New American Committee

Lunch at the West Side Bazaar
Tour of Bak USA
**JUNE 30TH**

**EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY:**
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD**

School inequality in Buffalo and the surrounding metropolitan area are built on extreme residential segregation.

On this day students explored barriers and solution to inequity in public education. What role can the State and advocates play in legislating policy to effect positive change in school districts? What innovative practices is the District implementing to create change? How can community-based organizations collaborate with these other actors to strengthen our local economy by investing in the education of our city’s future workforce?

**Panel Discussion** on *education policy and community-based initiatives for success*

- Will Keresztes, Buffalo Public Schools
- Hon. Crystal Peoples-Stokes, NYS Assembly
- Emily Wyckoff, Say Yes to Education
- Todd Hathaway, NYSUT

**Lunch and M & T Bank Human Capital Presentation**

**Presentation** Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, with Glenn Jackson, M & T Bank

---

**JULY 7TH**

**CULTURAL CAPITAL:**
**THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN ECONOMIC VITALITY**

The creative arts not only enhance the human experience, reflect the beauty of nature, and promote cultural uniqueness, but also, in many various ways, highlight and seek solutions to some of our community’s most pervasive problems. The importance of narrative was a key theme of the summer. In order to build a more equitable local economy, one critical component is to change the stories that Buffalo tells about equality, justice, and democracy. This will draw upon the arts sector’s strength as the most racially inclusive and united part of the community.

**Panel Discussion** on *creativity, innovation and community*

- Dana Saylor, Emerging Leaders in the Arts Buffalo
- Ekrem Serdar, Squeaky Wheel and WAGE
- Karima Amin, Storyteller
- Aitina Fareed Cooke

**Lunch at the AK Café**

**Tour** of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery

**Tour** of the Frank Lloyd Wright Darwin Martin Campus

---

**JULY 14TH**

**INNOVATION-BASED DEVELOPMENT:**
**HIGHER ED, ENTREPRENEURS, AND ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS**

The day examined the different local actors that are driving innovation to spur productive, inclusive and sustainable economic development. Nationally and locally there has been an inability of traditional politics and policies to address economic failings. This has fueled an extraordinary amount of experimentation by activists, economists, academics, policymakers and socially minded business leaders. Cities are home to valuable assets—clusters of urban institutions and organizations that both foster and benefit from the growing collaborative nature of innovation. “Anchor institutions”—research hospitals and universities—have become one of the primary catalysts of this community-based change. How are these assets leveraged to grow the culture of innovation? What policies are necessary to support and sustain this movement? How can this community increase accessibility to entrepreneurial opportunities for more people?

**Panel Discussion** on *higher education in society and the economy*

- Paul Tesluk, UB School of Management
- Susan McCartney, Buffalo State College Small Business Development Center
- Patrick Whalen, Niagara Global Tourism Institute
- Paul Hogan, John R. Oishei Foundation

**Lunch** at Larkinville with Jack McGowan, Insyte Consulting and WNY Venture Association

**Tour** Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

---
Any good economic development system will have to do more than spur growth; it will need to increase equity. Students met with local leaders in the public and social sectors to discuss policies and initiatives to promote inclusive development.

Social Impact Careers and Recruiting with Regina M. Duffey Moravek, Director, ILR Career Services

Breakfast with Franchelle Hart, Open Buffalo
Meeting with Assembly Member Sean Ryan
Lunch with Emily Stewart and Andrew Delmonte
Tour and Meeting at City Hall with Mayor Brown

The 2017 High Road kicked off with an orientation for fellows which included an overview of administrative basics, a discussion of High Road values, and individual and group goal setting for the program. Supervisors from the fellowship hosts joined the cohort for a lunch and brainstorming session of not to be missed Buffalo assets for the summer. Fellows then went on a guided bus tour of the city with PPG’s Sam Magavern and Tim Tielman of the Campaign for Greater Buffalo.

Final Presentations by High Road Fellows
Remarks:
Lou Jean Fleron, High Road Fellowships
Harry Katz, Former ILR School Dean
Presentation of Certificates
Lunch and End of Summer Soiree
High Road Builders Awards:
Matthew Nagowski, ILR ’05
Jack McGowan, Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo

“I am deeply optimistic because I am certain, if we: build bridges by building relationships, work locally, demand intellectual honesty, work with tantrum-throwing urgency, and put our true talents on the table, the solutions will come, along with a way to implement them... and then, we will, in fact, rise to meet the demands of this historical moment.”

Address by Maria Whyte, Deputy County Executive
The High Road was honored to welcome Professor Louis Hyman as the annual Cornell ILR faculty speaker. In collaboration with the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site and the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo, Professor Hyman’s talk, “The Gig Economy and the American Dream” explored the gig economy from a historical perspective and examined current challenges and necessary policies to make this economy work better for people. Leading the lively discussion that followed was Nicole Hallett, assistant clinical professor at the University at Buffalo School of Law. Professor Hallett is director of the Community Justice Clinic, which represents low-income local residents on issues that include immigration, employment and civil rights, and also is the inaugural Open Buffalo Public Research Fellow.

On June 17th the Lipsey Buffalo Architecture Center came alive with the buzz of creative problem solving. High Road Fellows, Oishei Leaders from local nonprofit organizations and members of the Architecture Center worked together to create four Tape Art murals assisted by the extraordinary Tape Art team: Michael Townsend, Kristen Carbone, Leah Smith and Sam White.

The theme of the day was “Navigating Narratives,” the challenge to change the story and picture from a problem to a solution. Too often the narratives of Buffalo and similar cities are dominated by a focus on problems and struggles. These problems become ingrained in the identity of the community in a ways that make them that much more difficult to overcome.

For this project the participants were tasked with retelling these stories, recasting these images, with radical solutions. They tackled four tape drawings representing the most pressing issues facing Buffalo: Income Inequality, Segregation, Disenfranchisement, and Sprawl. In teams, fellows worked with local community leaders to transform these “monsters” into counter narratives. The day ended with a discussion of the power of collaboration in solving problems and the power of using narratives in community development work.

Immense thank to the John R. Oishei Foundation and Karen Spaulding for making Tape Art possible this summer!
To Reject the Requiem
By Rachel Whalen
For the High Roads Class of 2017

At the edge of ourselves we began looking for a quiet rescue.
You see, this was long after we began to feel we had woken up on the wrong side of the sunrise that the daytime air was too thick with rhetoric copied and pasted from a past we wanted no part of.
We had many of us long since pushed past those feelings numberless of hopelessness, under this edge of ourselves we were spilling into nowhere.

But we did not fall into the requiem. We knew the music we wanted to make. We had heard it somewhere from that music box wound by the best hands of history.

And then our quiet rescue in a place perhaps unexpected. A place where there dwell shark girls where there dwell segresauruses where there dwell sprawling octopi that can swallow cities whole.

We knew the music we wanted to make, and Buffalo, you with all your artists and your anchors you tasted like an answer.

Buffalo, you with your electric lights strung across centuries you taught us what it is to be a many-faceted thing a kaleidoscope ever-shifting in our hands.

We stroked your streets, combed your silos – from innovation to engagement trust, art, impact, community – we spelled these words out loud in your air.

We rejected the requiem. We knew the music we wanted to make and we had to learn that sometimes when you approach the piano there are broken keys. And while we did not accept it sometimes we could only sound a certain policy brief or phone call and hope for the best and sometimes it was all out of tune.

But we knew the music we wanted to make and with guiding hands strung across the city we opened the piano.

We saw its underbelly, its hammers and its nuts and bolts its partnerships and its murals, its newest citizens and its brilliant children and its high road to somewhere.

We opened the piano and saw in every vibrating string a map of you, Buffalo, and there we found our melody.

So now, each of us our own quiet rescue (perhaps not so quiet) sung across the Queen city, strung across the universe – So now, each of us

our own piano string plucked across the night.

And as we say farewell for now to you, dear Buffalo, we promise we will not forget your light.