



Burton Blatt Institute
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

2007
2011
FIVE YEAR
Strategic Plan

Working Toward a World Where Every Person is Valued

OUR VISION

Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) has great expectations to transform the Syracuse University community and communities worldwide, where every person is valued regardless of the nature or scope of disability.



Through research and scholarship in action, BBI will advance the civic, economic, and social participation of persons with disabilities everywhere.

Seventeen years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there is an evolution in thinking and behavior that environments—the classroom, the workplace, public places, and places where we live—must accommodate and embrace individual differences.

From the growing interest for lifelong learning to the contributions of a diverse workforce, there is a need to expand effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities.

By creating a collaborative environment to foster public-private dialogue on and off campus, BBI

research and development activities will explore 21st-century solutions to the challenges of access and inclusion in employment and the economic mainstream denied to so many because of disability.

With the involvement of faculty and students in the multiple disciplines of law, education, communications, public policy, business, social sciences, architecture, and technology, we can test and evaluate new policies, programs, products, and systems that:

- ensure family support is timely and responsive to raising a child with a disability;
- offer reasonable public incentives to encourage individuals with disabilities to work and advance self-sufficiency without fear of losing health care;
- enhance learning opportunities at all levels of education;
- embrace universal design concepts to promote affordable and accessible housing and livable communities for everyone;
- change corporate culture to proactively recruit and retain an inclusive workforce;
- provide every individual who wants to start a business with the access to entrepreneurial training and financial resources to be successful; and
- build relationships between individuals with disabilities worldwide to recognize the critical link between civil rights and economic empowerment.

OUR VALUES

The values of the research and development team of BBI flow naturally from the legacy of Burton Blatt who was a pioneer more than 25 years ago in humanizing services for people with significant disabilities. Blatt was the dean of the School of Education and Centennial Professor at Syracuse University, served as director of SU's Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation, and founded the Center on Human Policy to promote a more open and accepting society for people with disabilities.

BBI has identified five enduring values that guide all aspects of research and development activities and will help set strategic direction for the future.

1. We value all individuals regardless of race, gender, cultural background, age, or disabilities and respect their productivity and contributions to make communities more livable and inclusive.
2. All BBI research and development activities must encourage and value the participation of persons with disabilities and their families at all stages, including the formulation of relevant questions, the appropriateness of design, and the analysis and evaluation of results.
3. We value the spirit and benefit of collaboration across disciplines, between the public and private sectors, and among all important stakeholders that recognize the power and possibilities of partnership to overcome attitudinal, physical, and communication barriers to inclusion and community participation.

4. We value the principles of scholarship in action to move beyond traditional venues of teaching and learning to cross boundaries and forge new alliances that pioneer creative problem solving to make a better world.
5. We value self-determination and informed decision making that empower individuals with disabilities to have choices and direction that respects their individual preferences.

STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE

No individual, organization, business, or institution of higher education has a monopoly on ideas or innovation that can change the world we live in.

BBI recognizes the power of collaboration to create new knowledge, structure, and systems to foster high expectations about the possibilities of civic, economic, and social participation of individuals across the spectrum of disability.

By engaging faculty and students in schools across Syracuse University in research and development activities, BBI has a commitment to the following:

- building the next generation of leaders in multiple disciplines and
- identifying, testing, and refining promising ideas that can provide key elements to lasting change in the classroom, the workplace, and communities.

Whether working on a new financial service or product, technological innovation, or a change in public or corporate policies, BBI has the unique

capacity to bring together leading researchers; policymakers at a state, national, and international level; business executives; faith and community-based organization directors; and persons with disabilities to listen and learn from one another.

Our strategies to improve and refine the value of livable communities worldwide are straightforward.

Through multidisciplinary research, we can identify, analyze, and document promising practices that help make the case for full participation of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, the classroom, and livable communities.

Through training, technical assistance, and information dissemination activities, we can build the capacity of organizations, government, and communities to support principles of full access, inclusion, and effective and meaningful participation.

Our structure is flexible to encourage partnership and collaboration. Based on mutual interests, a time sensitive project may be established with multiple public and/or private sector collaborators. Based on the level of financial commitment, a Center on Innovation may be established to focus resources on research and development activities in such targeted areas as entrepreneurship, affordable and accessible housing, or international human rights.

During the next five years, BBI will continue to partner with other major university research centers, government at multiple levels, the business community, and community organizations that represent the leading voices for persons with disabilities and their families.

OUR PROCESS

BBI's senior management met in January 2007 to create a clear and compelling statement of the organization's vision and values to set a framework for future growth and development. Eighteen months after BBI was established, the one-day meeting of senior members of the BBI Research and Development Team provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon accomplishments to date and identify the strategic direction for the next five years.

The day provided the group an opportunity to evaluate the focus of BBI activities and its current strengths. In small groups, there was an opportunity to review the four primary BBI objectives and begin to identify short- and long-term strategies to achieve valued outcomes.

This strategic plan for the next five years (2007-2011) will set important direction for BBI staff and collaborators. It will guide BBI to a new level of operation and performance. It provides both an ambitious and optimistic view of a world where everyone is valued, encouraged to participate, and appreciated for their contribution. It highlights the unique opportunity for BBI to leverage the strengths and assets of Syracuse University to advance an agenda of inclusion.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Over the next five years, BBI will increase its impact on the SU campus with students and faculty. The impact will be in the classroom through expanding interest and study that bring into focus disability as a natural part of the human experience. The impact will also be in scholarship in action influencing public policy development in Washington, D.C., promoting entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities in Central New York, evaluating and impacting corporate culture through case studies of Fortune 500 companies, and leading global collaborations to translate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to practical action.

BBI will strengthen its roles as a collaborator and problem solver through research, training, and capacity-building activities. Most important to its varied funders and partners, BBI will strengthen its role of fostering innovation that changes thinking and behavior, product design and people, and policy and practices. The bottom line must be BBI's ability to create measurable improvements in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

The goals and more specific objectives and activities are ambitious and yet achievable. We invite you to join us and contribute to a world where every person is valued.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL ONE

Provide global leadership through research, knowledge creation, and knowledge sharing that overcomes barriers to opportunity and full participation of individuals with disabilities in the classroom, the workplace, and livable communities.

Objective: Become the premier law and disability policy research institute with a focus on civil rights, employment, and economic empowerment.

- Set the standard for the analysis and authorship of case studies of Fortune 500 corporate culture and business practices to advance the employment, accommodation, retention, and upward mobility of workers with disabilities.
- Forecast and promote understanding of employer demand in growth industries and their support of an inclusive workforce that recognizes the value of participation of individuals with disabilities in diverse roles.
- Produce and share new knowledge that amends public policy to promote consumer-friendly work incentives, income preservation, and asset building.
- Create new understanding for communities to design and implement policies and practices that improve physical and program access and social and civic participation.
- Convene policymakers and disability leaders from multiple regions worldwide to translate lessons learned from ADA and other civil rights protections to be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities in other countries.
- Become the recognized national leader in interpreting ADA judicial decisions and a recognized voice to promote the rights of people with disabilities globally.
- Become a trusted partner for New York Governor Eliot Spitzer and New York State government for policy analysis and research, convening business and government forums, and strategic thinking on an "inclusion agenda."
- Create and sustain a strategic alliance with other New York-based disability researchers and centers as well as with leading research centers nationwide.
- Serve as advisors to the executive and legislative branches of the federal government and states across the country to translate research findings to policy development and service delivery changes.
- Develop the reputation and expertise of the Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center to advance voluntary compliance with the

ADA and promote employment of people with disabilities.

- Develop and provide training on BBI core areas of expertise, including the following:
 - a) civil rights, disability law, and policy implementation and monitoring;
 - b) employment and business practices in an inclusive workforce;
 - c) self-employment and entrepreneurship;
 - d) mainstreaming disability in emergency preparedness and response;
 - e) asset building, tax policy, and economic growth; and
 - f) systems coordination at federal, state, and local levels to advance inclusion and full participation.
- Maintain strong visibility and serve as a trusted and leading knowledge disseminator with diverse stakeholders—policymakers, researchers, service providers, and persons with disabilities—through an accessible, user-friendly web site, publications, and presentations at conferences worldwide.



GOAL TWO

2 Set the world-class standard for an institution of higher education that infuses a disability perspective across all major areas of study and actively supports the enrollment of students with disabilities through accessible and inclusive classes and programs.

Objective One: Infuse the disability perspective to educate the next generation of leaders across disciplines to be knowledgeable and active in promoting an accessible and inclusive society.

- Actively engage students and faculty across all 12 schools at SU through internship programs, independent study, scholarship in action, and the core curriculum to apply multiple disciplines to advance effective and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in communities.
- Develop and offer an online course for all SU students that advances their understanding of disability from a civil rights perspective to influence their future professional experience across multiple disciplines, including architecture, business, education, law, communications, industrial design, public administration, and information studies.
- Create and facilitate an annual BBI speaker series that brings to the SU campus leading experts across multiple disciplines to share the latest thinking about inclusion across environments (home, classroom, workplace, communities).

- Support the Summer Policy Leadership Development program in Washington, D.C., for SU law students, and expand participation to students from the Maxwell School.

Objective Two: Become the premier university for educating students with disabilities with state-of-the-art programs and support services, accessible technology, and full physical communication access.

- Collaborate with the Chancellor to develop and implement—as part of a University-wide “Inclusion Strategic Plan”—the removal of physical barriers to enrollment and full participation of students with disabilities in SU schools across all disciplines.
- Increase by 20 percent the enrollment of students with disabilities in SU programs who benefit from a barrier-free campus, accessible distance learning, and targeted scholarship funds.
- Create a strategic partnership with the Office of Student Disability Services to enhance effective and meaningful experiences of students with disabilities through peer mentor support, improved access to technology assistance, and barrier-free environments.
- Establish and host an annual diversity forum and expo to highlight the accomplishments of students with disabilities and faculty as well as actions taken by SU to enhance its leadership role as a model inclusive campus and learning environment.

3 GOAL THREE

Become recognized as a resource for customized problem solving for government and the private sector and as an innovator in the development of policy, products, and services that enhance civic, economic, and social participation of persons with disabilities in a global society.

Objective: Identify and create opportunities with public- and private-sector investment of human and financial capital to design, develop, test, and evaluate 21st-century solutions that improve or offer new products, services, systems, and/or public policy to advance the full potential of individuals with disabilities.

- Expand options for entrepreneurship and business creation for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with the Whitman School of Management.
- Develop an online network to connect disability advocates worldwide to promote peer support and share knowledge to advance full community inclusion in collaboration with the School of Information Studies.
- Test new approaches to reduce the stigma of disability as portrayed in the media, and design a new communications strategy in collaboration with the Newhouse School of Public Communications.

- Design and establish a national resource center for disabled veterans and their families in collaboration with multiple SU schools (Law, Arts and Sciences, Maxwell, Newhouse, Whitman, Education, Information Studies, Engineering, Architecture), Upstate Medical University, and the veterans affairs hospital system nationwide.
- Design and test new financial services and asset development strategies that expand affordable housing choices and a better economic future for persons with disabilities and their families.
- Fund annual BBI mini-grants to foster innovation in research, program development, and product design that offers unique opportunities to engage SU students and faculty to advance the BBI vision of an inclusive society where every person is valued.
- Raise net assets of \$10 million for BBI as a permanent endowment fund to provide a long-term base of support for operations.
- Diversify and strengthen BBI's funding base to create a ratio of 50 percent publicly funded grants and contracts and 50 percent private-sector support (individuals, foundations, corporations).
- Meet, within three years, a targeted annual revenue goal of \$5 million to support BBI program goals and objectives.
- Build and maintain an infrastructure in Syracuse, Washington, D.C., New York City, and other satellite offices that results in efficient and timely operations within budget by investing in a diverse, world-class expert team.
- Invest and support a diverse, expert BBI staff that understands and embraces core values of BBI to promote state-of-the-science research and world-class capacity building, innovative thinking, and strategic problem solving.
- Benefit from an internal group of advisors that represent all schools on the SU campus.
- Benefit from an external group of advisors that represent business, government, and major private-sector interests.

4 GOAL FOUR

Manage and develop efficiently and effectively the human and financial resources of BBI as part of Syracuse University.

Objectives:

- Develop a financial and organizational structure that is flexible and responsive to the BBI core mission and supports the SU goals of leadership development, multidisciplinary research, and scholarship in action.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS 2007-2011

I. Global Leadership Through Research, Knowledge Creation, and Knowledge Sharing to Advance Full Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities

- Become the premier law and disability policy research institute to document and advance best practices in an inclusive workforce across market sectors.
- Create new understanding for communities to design and implement policies that improve physical and program access and social and civic participation.
- Produce and share new knowledge that amends public policy to promote work incentives, income preservation, asset building, and a better economic future for persons with disabilities.
- Work in partnership with national and regional organizations in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America to advance disability law and policy protection against discrimination and promote economic empowerment for persons with disabilities.

II. Inclusive Campus and Development of the Next Generation of Leaders Across Disciplines to Promote Accessible and Livable Communities

- Infuse relevant disability-related content into existing curricula for various degree programs.
- Increase by 20 percent the number of enrolled students with disabilities in SU programs who benefit from a barrier-free campus, access to technology and needed support services, and accessible distance-learning platforms.
- Offer students from multiple disciplines the opportunity to participate in various BBI research projects and summer leadership programs in Washington, D.C., to improve understanding of disability-related policy development.

III. Innovator and Creative Problem Solver in the Development of Policy, Products, and Services with Government and the Private Sector

- Create and test a pipeline of innovative ideas that enhance civic, economic, and social participation of persons with disabilities in a global society.
- Expand options for entrepreneurship and business creation for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with the Whitman School of Management.
- Develop an online network to connect disability advocates worldwide to promote peer support and gain experience and expertise to promote the rights and full inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Test new approaches to reduce the stigma of disability in the media.

IV. Sustainable Organization with Efficient and Effective Management of Human and Financial Capital

- Develop a financial and organizational structure that is flexible and responsive to sustain revenues at \$5 million annually with net assets of \$10 million.
- Support effective collaboration with multiple SU schools through an internal group of advisors representing all schools on campus.
- Benefit from an external group of advisors that represent business, government, and major private sector interests.
- Support a diverse expert team within the organization that understands and embraces core values of BBI to promote state-of-the-science research and world-class capacity-building efforts.

***“We can change the world.
The first step is to change ourselves!”***

Burton Blatt

THE BURTON BLATT INSTITUTE was established to open the world to the enormous potential of people with disabilities. It starts with building an understanding of the challenges they face each and every day.

Our mission is to build upon that understanding—creating inclusive environments in schools, the workplace, and the community—through research, education, training, policy, technical assistance, outreach, and fund raising. Our ultimate goal: To create a world where every person is valued.

Burton Blatt Institute

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