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From the Buffalo Business First:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2021/05/19/program-brings-women-of-color-allies-together.html>

New program brings female entrepreneurs of color and allies together

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Action – that’s the motivation behind and the goal of a new local diversity, equity and inclusion program.

The Women’s Business Center at Canisius College and Local Initiatives Support Corporation WNY are partnering to create the Building Allyships program. The purpose is to work with community influencers and decision makers as well as women-of-color entrepreneurs to give action steps toward DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion), said [Sara Vescio](#), executive director of the Women’s Business Center.



PHOTOGRAPHER: JIM COURTNEY

Sara Vescio, executive director,
Women’s Business Center at
Canisius College

The grant-funded program, which is free for participants, will start June 9 with six weekly classes for 25 women of color and 25 allies who will act as mentors. The program will run a second session for 25 more women and 25 more allies starting July 21.

Entrepreneurs will get technical support such as assistance with business pitches and financials, Vescio said. The allies will go through DEI training where facilitators focus on people's personal challenges with DEI and how to make connections and be an actionable advocate.

The second half of the session will bring both groups together for classes and build an action plan of allyship.

"Entrepreneurs can do and learn so much, but it has to be two-sided," she said. "We have to make sure opportunities exist for them and that funders and employers are ready to give those opportunities to them."

Applications are on the Business Center's [website](#) and are due May 21 for the first session and June 30 for the second session.

In other education news:

- **D'Youville College** named Ralph Mueller executive vice president for strategic initiatives and Natalia Blank vice president for academic affairs. Mueller has worked in higher education for 34 years and is currently an education and psychology professor and inaugural provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at Purdue University Northwest. Blank is currently associate vice president for academic affairs at Norwich University.

- The **University at Buffalo** recently appointed Brian Hamluk vice president for student life. He is currently associate dean of students and director of administration at the University of Pittsburgh.

Lian Bunny
Reporter



Buffalo Business First

