



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION  
**WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

**Friday, May 31, 2024**  
**University at Buffalo Alumni Arena**

*In Partnership With:*



*Presenting Sponsor:*



# EMERGING LEADER PATHWAY SESSIONS

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## SESSION ITINERARY

**Session One**    ***Authentic Connections: Building Real Relationships That Hit the Mark***

**Session Two**    ***Dynamic Evolution: Understanding and Nurturing a Growth Mindset***

**Session Three**    ***Understanding Followership: Unveiling the Factors Behind Why People Follow***

### Session Host



**Jessica Baker, Esq.**

Jessica is general counsel and corporate secretary for Evergreen Health and its affiliates Pride Center of Western New York and Community Access Services. She is a member of the senior leadership and executive teams, and provides legal and strategic advice and direction to senior management and the Board of Directors. Prior to joining Evergreen, Jessica spent 10 years as associate counsel for the SUNY Office of General Counsel at the University at Buffalo where she handled wide ranging legal issues for the Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, its affiliated UBMD Physicians Group, and UB's health sciences schools. Before that Jessica was a senior commercial litigation associate at Hiscock & Barclay, LLP.

Jessica is a Board member of the Western New York Women's Foundation and prior Board Trustee of the Pride Center of Western New York. Throughout her career Jessica has been active with the UB Law School and the LGBTQ community by serving on the UB Law Alumni Association GOLD Group, providing training and mentorship to law students through externship and other student programs, co-founding the UB LGBTQ Faculty & Staff Association, serving on speaking panels for LGBTQ law students, presenting at the SUNY Spectrum Conference on Trans Privacy and the JSMBBS Reproductive Justice Conference on LGBTQIA access to care, and co-chairing the Women's Bar Association LGBTQ Committee.

# SESSION ONE

## *Authentic Connections: Building Real Relationships That Hit the Mark*

In today's fast-paced world, the ability to forge genuine relationships is more critical than ever. Join us for Authentic Connections: Building Real Relationships That Hit the Mark, an enlightening session that explores the dynamic interplay between fostering genuine connections and thriving in competitive environments. Through engaging discussions, real-life examples, and actionable insights, you will learn how to maintain authentic relationships while achieving your goals. Discover strategies to collaborate effectively, handle competitive pressures, and build a network that supports both personal fulfillment and professional success.

Moderator



Kathleen Heckman

Kathleen is Interim Vice President for University Advancement at the University at Buffalo, New York's premier public center for graduate and professional education and the state's largest and most comprehensive public university. A veteran higher education professional, Kathleen has nearly thirty years of higher education experience in special events, alumni engagement, advancement services, and administration. As the chief advancement officer for the university, Kathleen serves as an advisor on all matters pertaining to the management and operations of advancement, alumni engagement, advancement services, and the university's one-billion-dollar Boldy Buffalo Campaign. She serves as a member of the president's cabinet and develops and implements collaborative advancement strategies to achieve the university's Top 25 ambitions.

As Program Director of the Environmental Justice Corps, Deirdre Wright has continued her focus on the strength of a community that has been denied countless opportunities and resources. Her work of innovative program and partner development with Buffalo Center for Health Equity has provided another space to connect people, projects and experiences together to create change! In 2021, she created and implemented the region's first workforce development program in Green Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance (GSIM) practices partnering with the Buffalo Sewer Authority (BSA). The curriculum was designed with an equity centered approach. It fills socio economic gaps, removes barriers that block employment and entrepreneurial pathways, and teaches Corps Members how to identify and leverage opportunities. In 2023, the program maintained an 88% job placement rate, with 44% of those employed at the BSA.

Speaker



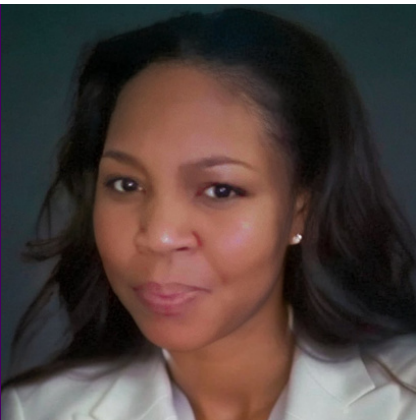
Deirdre Wright

# SESSION TWO

## *Dynamic Evolution: Understanding and Nurturing a Growth Mindset*

Dynamic Evolution: Understanding and Nurturing a Growth Mindset is an engaging and transformative session designed to empower individuals to thrive amidst change. In this dynamic session, participants will explore the principles and practices of fostering a growth mindset that embraces change as an opportunity for learning, innovation, and personal development. Through interactive discussions, real-life examples, and practical exercises, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the core components of a growth mindset enabling them to lead with confidence and agility.

Moderator



Gellenia Smallwood

Gellenia Smallwood has been a member of the Say Yes Buffalo team for 10 years in various roles, where she worked to realize the organization's mission on the frontline directly with students and families, increasing the number of Buffalo students graduating high school and receiving a post-secondary education. Currently as the Senior Director of Early Childhood Services, Gellenia leads Say Yes Buffalo's efforts in supporting our community's youngest learners.

Jamie Falzarano is the Managing Director of LeaderCore at the University at Buffalo, School of Management. She is responsible for creating the overall coaching process and managing the coaches as well as creating and facilitating the leadership development of individuals from diverse backgrounds. She is also an Executive Coach with Falzarano & Associates.

Speaker



Jamie Falzarano

# SESSION THREE

## *Understanding Followership: Unveiling the Factors Behind Why People Follow*

Ever wonder why people follow some but not others? *Understanding Followership: Unveiling the Factors Behind Why People Follow*, is a thought-provoking exploration into the dynamics of leadership and followership. In this illuminating panel discussion, esteemed experts and thought leaders will delve into the intricacies of what drives individuals to follow and support leaders. Through insightful dialogue and real-world examples, our panelists will uncover the multifaceted factors that shape followership behavior. From Executive Presence, Personal Brand, Self-Advocacy and Emotional Intelligence to Strength vs Warmth, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between leaders and their followers.

Moderator



Rhonda Fredrick

Director of Community Support & Giving  
West Herr Automotive Group

Panelist



Heather Gresham, Esq.

Counsel and Vice President  
People and Culture  
RepresentUs

Panelist



Gwen Applebaum

Chief of Staff, University at Buffalo  
School of Management

Panelist



Althea Luehresen

Chief Executive Officer  
August Moon Consulting

Panelist



Marta Rogers

Employee Experience Director  
Evans Bank