



## **SUNY CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

**Linda A. Rainforth, M.S.**

### **SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service**

**Linda A. Rainforth, M.S.**

Linda Rainforth, associate director of financial aid, has risen through the ranks of the Financial Aid Office over her nearly 40-year career at Buffalo State. She began as an entry-level CSEA stenographer and currently serves as associate director, demonstrating her passion for lifelong learning, personal and professional development, and most importantly, student success.

In her associate director position, Rainforth has exuded care and compassion for students and works tirelessly to educate, clarify, or problem solve to provide accurate and clear direction for students. Her meticulous attention to detail and ability to swiftly address issues are legendary. In addition, as the Financial Aid lead on the Title III grant proposal, her noteworthy contributions played a critical role in attaining approval for a \$2.2 million grant that served as a transformative opportunity for the college to enhance its overall retention and persistence to graduation rates by providing a variety of academic supportive services to its student body.

Rainforth has made significant and lasting modifications to the systems and processes that have made the Financial Aid operation more efficient and user friendly for campus partners. For example, she was part of the initial implementation of the Financial Aid module of Banner and on multiple occasions has identified forms and processes within the system that could improve functionality for both the Financial Aid Office as well as the Student Accounts Office to create a more efficient system. She has even gone out of her way to provide necessary training for colleagues from the Student Accounts Office. She is a consummate professional who models correct procedures for her team and peers.

Beyond her role in Financial Aid, Rainforth works collaboratively with departments and colleagues in support of common goals around student success. She is quick to volunteer her service and expertise on numerous committees and working groups, such as the workshop "Being Mindful of Financial Aid Implications When Advising Students," a partnership between academic advising and the Professional Development Center to instruct faculty and staff on critical information that directly affects persistence and success.

*Nominator: Connie F. Cooke, M.S., Director, Financial Aid Office*