

# Marnie LaVigne named CEO of Launch NY

By John DellaConrada [ /news/about-us/staff/della-conrada.html ]

Release Date: June 23, 2014



Marnie LaVigne

*“Given the crucial role of moving university research from the lab to the marketplace, in order to improve the quality of our lives, environment and economy, we look forward to building on UB’s partnership with Launch NY as we transform Buffalo into a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.”*

Alexander N. Cartwright, vice president, research and economic development  
University at Buffalo

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Marnie LaVigne, who has guided University at Buffalo economic development efforts since 2005, including helping UB and its partners establish Buffalo’s life sciences sector, has been named CEO of Launch NY.

Her appointment was jointly announced today by Launch NY and UB.

LaVigne, PhD, associate vice president for economic development at UB, will end her tenure at UB and assume leadership of Launch NY in July. One of the founders of Launch NY and a member of its board, LaVigne will focus her efforts in the CEO role on repositioning the young nonprofit organization to coordinate with evolving economic development efforts that target entrepreneurship as a key to the region’s economic future and job market.

Launch NY, which has received \$8 million in public and philanthropic funding, is a nonprofit venture development organization. It works to identify, support and invest in high-growth, high-impact companies and catalyze the entrepreneurial culture in upstate New York. LaVigne succeeds Al Culliton, who served as interim CEO for the organization after retiring as head of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency.

“With the incredible momentum we’ve built in this community through programs like the 43North business plan competition, which is part of Launch NY, Buffalo stands to become the hotbed for the most innovative new companies on a global scale,” said Jordan Levy, partner of Softbank Capital and board member of Launch NY. “Marnie is the right person at the right time to make sure we have all the key ingredients to help those companies hit the ground running.”

LaVigne’s expertise in business development, entrepreneurship and the commercialization of university research will strengthen the partnership between Launch NY and UB, building upon each organization’s efforts to support the growth of the region’s high-tech sectors.

“We have been pleased to play a pivotal role in the creation of Launch NY and hosting it at our New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences, where the interaction with our faculty, co-located businesses and firms has already supplied invaluable support in our entrepreneurial efforts,” said Alexander N. Cartwright, UB vice president for research and economic development “Given the crucial role of moving university research from the lab to the marketplace, in order to improve the quality of our lives, environment and economy, we look forward to building on UB’s partnership with Launch NY as we transform Buffalo into a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.”

LaVigne will lead Launch NY’s efforts to expand its influence in Western New York and beyond. Launch NY’s executive offices are in UB’s New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences, located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. It also has a field office in Ithaca, and entrepreneurs-in-residence working independently in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Binghamton.

“We evaluated best practices in bringing a business idea from concept to high-growth, and like never before, we now have a community ready to engage fully in a collaborative effort that accelerates new business ventures,” said David Colligan, partner at Colligan Law LLP and Launch NY board chairman. “Launch NY is eager for Marnie’s deep, multidisciplinary experience to lead Launch NY as we seize this moment.”

At UB, LaVigne played a major role in the university’s efforts to grow the region’s life sciences sector through the New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences. In 2012, LaVigne was named associate vice president for economic development. In this role, she led the Office of Economic Development, which leveraged university resources and

## MEET OUR EXPERTS



Lora Park [ /news/experts/lora-park-faculty-expert-psychology.html ]

Associate Professor of Psychology

Expertise: self, self-esteem, motivation, interpersonal processes

Phone: 716-645-0228

Email: lorapark@buffalo.edu

All Our Experts >

[ /news/faculty-experts.html ]



### Social Media / RSS

Read the latest in your favorite channels.

[ /news/our-services/social-media-and-rss.html ]



> DOWNLOAD UB MOBILE APP

[ http://mobile.buffalo.edu/ ]

collaborated with government, community and industry partners to spark innovative business, workforce development and community initiatives. In the last year alone, the efforts of LaVigne and her team yielded more than a 60-to-1 return in economic impact and hundreds of jobs through the work of UB's Center for Advanced Biomedical and Bioengineering Technology, one of Empire State Development's 15 NYSTAR programs across the state.

LaVigne participated in regional strategic planning in economic development and helped UB leaders secure \$50 million from the Buffalo Billion initiative to establish the Genomic Medicine Network. She also contributed to UB's successful participation in Start-Up NY, the state's new tax-free zone program, which recently announced that eight of the program's first 12 companies would be partnering with UB.

Before joining UB, LaVigne had 20 years of experience in the private and public sectors, creating new products and start-up businesses involving innovative applications of technology in the health care and life sciences sectors. She also served in executive management roles in two initial public offerings (IPOs).

LaVigne regularly mentors both youth and adults and launched a career pathways program, iSciWNY [<http://www.iSciWNY.com>], which has introduced thousands of people to the rewards and opportunities in high-tech industry. More recently, she introduced StartOneNY [<http://www.startoneny.com>] to highlight the region's entrepreneurial career pathway.

She volunteers as an editorial board member for the journal Disease Management and as a member of the board of directors for Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board, New York State Economic Development Council, Western New York Venture Association, and Insyte Consulting.

LaVigne has a bachelor of science degree in neuroscience and a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Rochester.

## Media Contact Information

**John DellaConrada** [</news/about-us/staff/della-conrada.html>]

Associate Vice President for Media Relations and Stakeholder Communications

Tel: 716-645-4601 (mobile: 716-361-3006)

[dellacon@buffalo.edu](mailto:dellacon@buffalo.edu) [<mailto:dellacon@buffalo.edu>]

Twitter: [@UBNewsSource](https://twitter.com/UBNewsSource) [<https://twitter.com/UBNewsSource>]