



The General Body

A united front of student organizations
at Syracuse University
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SIT IN FOR DIVERSITY AND TRANSPARENCY

SYRACUSE, NY, November, 5, 2014--Students at Syracuse University enter the third day of their sit-in and will hold a press conference at 3 p.m. today in the Crouse-Hinds Hall lobby. While Chancellor Kent Syverud made a brief appearance yesterday, he has yet to sit down with students. The General Body--a coalition of 50 student groups--will remain in Crouse-Hinds Hall until the Chancellor and his administration agree to meet their demands for transparent, democratic, and inclusive institutional change.

The students' first demand concerns the Syracuse University Board of Trustees' upcoming vote on new mission and vision statements for the university. These proposed statements, which omit key terms supporting diversity, democracy, community engagement, and social justice, indicate an alarming shift in the university's stated goals. The students demand that the Board of Trustees postpone the vote since the proposed mission and vision statements reflect the larger restructuring of the university that led to the sit-in.

In a show of support the faculty and staff have been leading teach-ins, delivering food, circulating petitions, and holding classes at the sit-in. Faculty are equally affected by the restructuring. For example, for the first time in nearly fifty years, the Budget Committee of the University Senate is restricted from meeting with university officials, and the University Senate's proposed tenure and promotion policy was rejected in May 2014.

The General Body's demands and grievances, outlined in a 43-page document available at TheGeneralBody.org, include the administration's attacks on diversity, inclusion, and transparency. To SU junior Tatiana Cadet, a Communication and Rhetorical Studies major, transparency is especially important. "Being a transfer student and coming from one school that lacked transparency to another, I strive to attend an institution where my voice matters and we can communicate productively." Thus far the Chancellor and administration have failed to communicate productively with students, and instead have made unilateral decisions affecting the entire campus community.

Angelina Vargas, SU sophomore, recently joined the General Body out of concern that SU is diminishing student diversity: “They cut funding for minority students, and most of the minority students are 1st-generation students.” She encourages students to visit the sit-in, stressing that the Chancellor’s changes affect everyone on campus.

Other students are concerned about the closed-door decisions that have shut out student input. Jamison Getman, a junior Information Management Technology major, notes that the administration has “hand picked only a few students to attend meetings.” Only 6 of the 93 seats in the strategic planning work groups are occupied by undergraduates.

“We are sitting-in until the Chancellor engages in direct negotiations with the General Body,” said Getman.

Visit TheGeneralBody.org for the full list of demands, and further information about the sit-in.