

THE GENERAL BODY

A united front of student organizations at
Syracuse University



THE General Body

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

THE GENERAL BODY TO HOLD 3 P.M. PRESS CONFERENCE AS SU ADMINISTRATION ISSUES “FINAL WORD” ON STUDENT NEEDS & GRIEVANCES

November 13, 2014. At 3 p.m. on Thursday, THE General Body will hold a press conference in the lobby of Crouse-Hinds Hall, where students will discuss Syracuse University Chancellor Kent Syverud’s “final offer” on student needs and grievances. Breaking with precedent, Syverud e-mailed this document to the entire university community, instead of using preexisting channels of communication between his administration and THE General Body.

Syverud’s e-mail is consistent with his administration’s unilateral approach to governance and communication. It was received after two days without promised communications to set up more meetings from the administration. On Wednesday night, more than 20 members of THE General Body sat down as a group and systematically moved through Syverud’s comments, noting places where the administration had addressed students’ concerns, and searching for concrete commitments to action.

The administration has made real promises on several of THE General Body’s proposed solutions. Most heartening are the administration’s commitment to the search for an ADA coordinator, a commitment to a 7% raise for Grad Student TA pay for one more year and more student representation on the Fast Forward Working Groups and Steering Committee, and the ability of the Student Association president to e-mail the entire student body.

However, there are still several important issues that are not being addressed or remain unclear. THE General Body is particularly concerned that many of students’ life and death needs have not been properly addressed. Many of the administration’s responses are vague and direct students to

preexisting processes that are not transparent and disinclude student voices. Areas of concern include:

- An inadequate commitment to details and action plan for improving mental health and rape prevention services and policies, and discrepancies in public statements from administration on the search for a university psychiatrist.
- No agreement to do anything beyond “consider” the recommendations made by the Chancellor’s Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy, created in the wake of the sudden closure of The Advocacy Center
- A refusal to honor the original contract with the POSSE scholarship program
- No commitment to maintaining and enlarging the numbers of faculty, staff, and students of color and students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, nor a commitment to add hate crime language to the student code of conduct
- No commitment to recognize Indigenous People’s Day
- No disclosure of specific requested financial and enrollment information, nor a true re-commitment to shared governance structures, structures which we have seen continuously disregarded and overturned
- A refusal to open comments on the new Mission and Vision statement for longer than one month, rather than our proposed full semester process of a community-wide collaboration to rewrite what will become the guiding principles for the future of SU

THE General Body maintains that the sit-in will not end without written commitment from the administration to taking concrete steps towards resolving the student body’s needs and grievances, and moving towards concrete steps for safety, justice, equity, and access on campus. The sit-in was a last resort for students, many of whom have tried to work through traditional channels for change for months, even years. Claims by the administration that they have been responsive to THE General Body and have engaged reasonably with students must be understood within the context of the administration’s unilateral decisions without student input. Further, the heavy policing of students at the sit-in, including a functional lock-in over the weekend, belies the administration’s insistence that student safety is their primary concern.

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