

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

TENURED LAW PROFESSOR CHALLENGES CHANCELLOR SYVERUD'S THREATENING ACTIONS AND REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE GENERAL BODY TO SEEK COUNSEL

Members of THE General Body are once again “locked in” to Crouse-Hinds Hall, unable to re-enter if they leave the building. On Friday night, Chancellor Kent Styverud and his administration ordered physical plant workers to tear down a memorial that students had erected on a wall surrounding Crouse-Hinds in remembrance of those who lost their lives or had their lives disregarded due to lack of adequate services and support on campus. Later that night, students were issued copies of the student code of conduct and disruption policies. In the morning, students were not allowed to meet with their legal counsel. Below, a letter from a tenured law professor at Syracuse University indicts Chancellor Styverud’s escalation of the situation and denial of students to their basic rights.

Dear Faculty members:

THE General Body students were denied lawyers today after the University's lawyer delivered hand addressed envelopes to 15 of the students (with their individual name on it) with copies of the student code of conduct and disruption policies highlighted. Dan French, the University's lawyer hand delivered these about 10 minutes after a representative from the ACLU and a law professor had left the building at 8 pm last night. We were not advised of this before we left the building.

There was no explanation, no warning, no orders, nothing. The students asked to see a lawyer who could advise them on the student conduct system policies and procedures. As a tenured law professor here for 22 years I was refused admittance to Crouse Hinds on Saturday morning. I explained that my mission was to explain the code of conduct and its procedures to the students and that was all; I was denied admittance after being made to wait out in the cold for their response. When I called DPS I was told that students would be allowed out two at a time to talk to me and then would be permitted back in the building; before I could deal with the problem of advising the students out in the cold I received a call from DPS Sardino who informed me that no lawyer, university or otherwise (NY Lawyers even those actually retained by the students) would be allowed in the building this weekend and the policy of allowing them out to talk to me was withdrawn. Other NY lawyers are trying to get in to see the students but I am told they will be denied. This is outrageous and an abuse of all that should be respected about our students and their rights to the most basic access to lawyers to advise them about their situation.

I think we faculty members need to meet and discuss how we want our university to conduct itself. We need to have a voice on the most basic rights of these students who are now isolated from further counsel during this weekend when events may change at any second.

Let's talk about how we can support these students: they are not being rowdy, disruptive or aggressive. They aren't part of the party image of Syracuse: they are arguing for mental health counselors, for the advocacy center, for posse scholarships to continue, against the exclusion of a commitment to racial, ethnic and other diversities in the mission statement as well as other important items. They have been peaceful, thoughtful, and committed to making this a better place.

They are exhausted and yet still do their studies and hold teach ins and other educational events in the midst of a growing hostility and isolation by the administration. They have been waiting now for four days for the promised meeting with the administration; their demands have sometimes been met with apologies but no changes for things like the advocacy center and the posse program. Their signs were torn down last night, signs that were honoring and commemorating those who may have died because they lacked proper access to mental health care here. They deserve our visible support. They have their own voice and their own issues. People who don't understand their issues should go talk to them directly when the building is open again; do not depend on others and their attempts to diminish the importance of key issues by citing the least important ones.

At a minimum, please write and tell the Chancellor that denying them immediate direct access to legal advisors is a very bad move and only escalates the situation. This could have been a non-issue by permitting two lawyers to meet with them for an hour this morning (and at similar points in the future if further questions arise.) There is nothing to gain by the University stubbornly refusing them direct legal advice on university policies or NY law. There is much to lose by ignoring these basic rights.

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