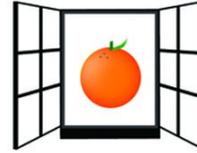


# THE GENERAL BODY

A united front of student organizations at  
Syracuse University



**THE General Body**  
A united front of student organizations  
at Syracuse University  
900 Crouse Avenue  
Syracuse, NY, 13244

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Vani Kannan  
THE General Body  
Phone: 703-819-3586  
avkannan@gmail.com

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **STUDENTS END 7TH DAY OF SIT-IN, CONTINUE TALKS WITH ADMINISTRATION**

**November 9, 2014.** In tonight's meeting with senior Vice President and Dean Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, Associate Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric Spina, and Dean Bea González, students continued to express concern that the available decision-making channels are not transparent and do not consider student input. Students expressed particular concern about the fact that both the campus sexual assault advocacy center and the POSSE scholarship program were terminated without any student input. Inside Crouse-Hinds Hall, students spoke about several key goals which have been at the center of THE General Body's concerns:

- 1.) the need for the student body president to email the entire undergraduate student body;
- 2.) university divestment from fossil fuels
- 3.) student representation on the university's Fast Forward committees
- 4.) honoring the contract for the POSSE program; and
- 5.) increasing accessibility on campus.

While THE General Body and administration made productive steps on points 1, 2, and 5, students are still waiting for commitment on the part of the administration for increased student representation on Fast Forward committees, and for the university to honor its existing contract with the POSSE scholarship program. Several major points of discussion remain pending, such as reinstatement of an advocacy center that provides similar services to the one that was closed in May; the need for adequate mental health services on campus; and support for students with marginalized identities.

“These are life and death issues, issues that affect the health of the entire campus community,” said sophomore Angelina Vargas. “We will remain here until we get solutions.”

Throughout the sit-in, the demands have been consistent and they center on the following issues: transparency in decision-making processes and support for policies and programs that foster student safety, diversity, and inclusion. Prior to Wednesday’s preliminary meeting it was understood by the upper level administration that they would be receiving a preliminary document that would be updated by their meeting on Thursday. Since Thursday there have been minor revisions to the portion dealing with needs around disability and access. Otherwise, the document has remained consistent and is structured to keep dialog open.

The campus community has taken up this invitation, and THE General Body continues to receive incoming demands/needs, demonstrating the many unaddressed concerns and issues faced by students, faculty and staff on this campus. They also serve as evidence for the faith the campus community is placing on THE General Body’s negotiations with administration and the need for an open channel of communication and flexible negotiation process that can accommodate incoming demands and needs. The community’s choice to input demands via our website and through direct communication with members of THE General Body also reflects the broader community’s concern with the fact that the administration has overridden established governance processes in favor of unproductive work groups and ad hoc task forces. These groups do not have the power to produce the structural changes that the campus community needs.

“The upper level administration has been constructing a narrative that THE General Body’s list of demands has been shifting significantly, and that this is the reason we have not moved forward with negotiations,” said PhD student Yanira Rodríguez. “Negotiations have been hampered by the fact that Dean González reminded us repeatedly that she cannot make any decisions in relation to the demands,” said Rodríguez.

Following Sunday’s meeting, the administration published a recap of the weekend’s events that identified several points—such as prioritizing increases in the minimum graduate assistant stipend to follow this year’s 7% increase—as commitments that arose out of THE General Body’s demands. THE General Body is still waiting for a commitment to a specific percentage increase that will allow graduate assistants, who are often teachers at this university, to have a living wage. Currently, the 7% does not meet a living wage, and means that some graduate assistants on campus only earn \$13,000/year. THE General Body is asking for clarification on stipend increases to ensure that they meet a living wage.

Negotiations with upper-level administration will resume Monday afternoon at 4PM.