

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on September 5, 2018

Location: Maxwell School Auditorium

Remarks: University Senate

*The Chancellor was introduced by the Senate Chair, Professor Ramesh Raina*

Can you hear me now? If I use my outside voice? Thank you.

I just have some brief updates.

First, I just wanted to report, highlight some accomplishments and the timetable for what we have accomplished. I want to ask for your help and a quick assessment.

The university did accelerate over the summer, including a lot of us who worked on the revamped first-year experience. Many faculty and others worked on this over the summer and if we have the opportunity to thank them, I would be grateful. We couldn't have made as much progress over the summer without the hard work of all these folks, including students and the leaders and staff of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. I'm grateful.

We did receive this summer a very strong report from the Middle States accreditation, which is very complimentary. I want to thank the faculty and staff who worked on it. It was a big effort and I am grateful for the positive outcome.

The university last month welcomed 89 new faculty members. I can tell you they're impressive and eager to be great teachers and mentors and scholars and creative colleagues. This is the vanguard of efforts to expand our faculty. This year I'm particularly eager that I work with the Provost and the chairs and the faculty and the deans to focus on faculty professional development and on strategic hiring and retention initiatives for the faculty. I know the Provost is going to speak to that during the course of the semester. Faculty are producing a strong portfolio across the board. Research is growing among all disciplines.

We are operating in FY'19 with a truly balanced budget once again. The university met fundraising goals of $150 million in new business this past fiscal year including $24 million for scholarships as part of the $40 million we needed to raise last year and this year for scholarships under Invest Syracuse.

We have a very academically qualified and very diverse undergraduate and transfer class and we have very strong undergraduate, strong graduate and professional cohort this fall. I believe we have record enrollment of students who are veterans and military-connected.

I put a lot of updates in the video I sent out last week. I included updates on progress and diversity inclusion, improving the student experience, physical infrastructure, and on review on Greek life. So if you haven't seen that gripping eight-minute video, I encourage to you watch it. I won't repeat it here.

I did note in the video that the disability external review process has not moved as fast as we hoped. The top consultants are not able to complete a project as fast as we were hoping to. We need to make progress this semester in the disability areas so I'm working with the leadership of the committee and the community to identify concrete steps that we can get done this semester, even before the delivery of the disability audit. For those interested in being involved in that, and working with this committee, I want to thank you

Third, I just want to thank the Senate for their hard work on the consensual and romantic relationships policy. The Senate and the committees played a positive and constructive role in that process. It took some time. I hope that we can take what we've learned and move forward, both from balancing a sense of urgency and the importance of shared governance to apply it to any gaps or transition rules as we implement this policy this year.

And there are two gaps that do need to be addressed that I know of already and they're going to be familiar for those of you in the Senate last year. I do think we need to improve the procedures in section 4 .11 of the faculty manual for responding to complaints against faculty. I think we should expedite the process for sexual assault and harassment. Currently, it takes multiple semesters and sometimes multiple years to resolve these complaints, and I ask that the Senate work with resolution services and the office of university counsel to determine whether there are better, more efficient processes and fair processes for changes we should make to improve the length of the process.

And second, I think we need to ensure that the new faculty we hire have consistently undergone an appropriate background check related to these issues. We also want our faculty, new and current, to be supported with appropriate professional development opportunities on these topics throughout their career as rules change.

As with the consensual relationship policy review, I'm asking the Provost’s office to work with relevant Senate Committees this year to move these issues forward.

Many of you played an active role and helped last summer and this past summer and in the spring in addressing the challenge of culture change at Syracuse University. I'm deeply grateful to everyone who engaged with making our university more inclusive and who are helping us improve the student experience.

We are not finished. We are looking to the faculty to help us be proactive and to the students and to help us be as nimble as possible in this challenge.

Next academic year will be the 150th anniversary of Syracuse University's founding.

The sesquicentennial will provide opportunity to celebrate history and accomplishments and a committee has been working on ways to mark that milestone with various events over the course of the year. This summer they have been working on ideas for how we can mark the 150th year in a way that's consistent with what makes Syracuse University unique in its values and our academic strength.

I've discovered lots of unknown and untold stories in our history that are pretty amazing. Some of them are stories to be proud of... some of them are mistakes.

So we have a great history department, a great library and archives and we want them to be part of the sesquicentennial to highlight both the noble stories and the mistakes. I would like to work with the Senate and the Sesquicentennial committee to figure out how to do that a little differently than the Sesquicentennial that's all celebration

I look forward to working with you over the coming year and I look forward to being part of the Senate. I send you best wishes for the school year and we'll take questions after the Provost’s report.