



University Response to Student Concerns

November 19, 2019

A series of deeply troubling incidents involving hate speech directed at African American, Asian, and Jewish students have occurred in our community over the last ten days. Two groups of students—those who have held space in the Barnes Center since November 13 and international students—have expressed concrete concerns related to the environment for diversity and inclusion on our campus.

Each group has met extensively. Each group has assembled lists of concerns which have been submitted to me. I have met several times with the student groups (as have many University leaders) and have promised a specific response to these concerns. The University's response to each concern is captured in the attached chart.

The chart lists each concern, in the students' words, then summarizes the university's response. Where appropriate, the chart also indicates (by name where appropriate) the responsible University official or group that will work to implement the response.

University Commits Significant Resources to Prompt Security and Diversity Steps in Five Prioritized Areas

The University believes that all of these responses are important, and that some are more urgent than others to address and complete quickly. We are by this response immediately committing extensive resources, including more than \$1 million for curriculum development, to implement these responses over the next year. We view the most urgent responses to be completed quickly are (1) extensive additional resources to assure greater safety for our students; (2) clarity in the Student Code of Conduct so that all have clear understanding of the expectations and consequences for incidents like those in the past ten days; (3) decisions about SEM 100 so that they are implementable in time for the 2020 fall semester; (4) facility decisions that support a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students including international students and students of color; and (5) hiring additional staff in significant areas of concern.

As Chancellor, I take very seriously these immediate priorities, and commit to promptly achieving them, as well as to supporting the other important measures in the responses.

University Commits to Clear Communication

The discussions these past ten days have resulted in productive work. In most cases, the work has continued extraordinary efforts already in process by students, faculty, staff, and alumni volunteers and

board members over the past two years. One clear conclusion from discussions over the past days is the need for better communications and transparency about programs, resources, and other efforts that are already in place or underway. The University has created and filled the position of Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and is strengthening the staffing and support for programs of that office; in addition there are existing and new bodies, including the Council on Diversity and Inclusion and the Inclusive Leadership Assembly, that have been hard at work over the past year. We commit today not just to continuing to spending resources and accelerating the implementation of plans for those efforts but also to timely and regular communication of work that has been completed and is ongoing.

Shared Responsibility

Each of us at Syracuse University must share accountability for assuring this community is a welcoming and supportive environment for people of all backgrounds. As noted in the responses, University administrators are expected to lead in many areas and to produce concrete results. For a significant group of concerns, meaningful change requires the participation and support of the schools, the faculty, the University Senate, and student groups and representatives as we go about the work necessary to implement solutions. This is particularly the case for changes to the curriculum which are so important to many of the students who have participated in these discussions. It will be essential for all to work with faculty and the University senate on these issues.

The Board of Trustees is and has been committed to the core values of diversity and inclusion at Syracuse University. The Board, led by Chair Kathy Walters, does engage in periodic updates on the University's diversity and inclusion efforts. As the University implements these responses, the Board will focus on progress in this area.

We also need our students to engage as partners in this work in a constructive manner. This includes identifying particular individuals to continue the work commenced in the last few days as representatives, through student governance bodies, as decisions are made and implemented in accordance with these responses. The University requests that the Barnes participants and international students also identify representatives so that the work can continue. Many other student leaders will also be key to successfully addressing these climate issues.

There will be a Community Forum—Safety and Student Concerns on Wednesday, November 20th from 6-7:30 pm. The forum will be held in Goldstein Auditorium at the Schine Student Center.

As we undertake this important work, we face real challenges here and we operate in a fraught national climate. I ask all who are Orange to reaffirm our values at this University—our values of inclusion, openness to learning from others, and responsibility as citizens to care for each other and our whole community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kent Syverud". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kent Syverud
Chancellor