

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on October 12, 2021

Location: Flaum Grand Hall, Whitman School of Management

Remarks: Provost Gretchen Ritter Welcome Event

*The Chancellor was introduced by doctoral student in Chemical Engineering and President of the Graduate Student Association, Yousr Dhaouadi.*

Thank you, Yousr.

It’s a great day for Syracuse University. It is my pleasure to join in welcoming Gretchen Ritter as Vice Chancellor, Provost and Chief Academic Officer. I first thank everyone who helped in the process of bringing Gretchen Ritter to Syracuse.

You heard from Professor Winders about the inclusive and thoughtful search process. This search was an opportunity for Syracuse University to find an academic leader to continue an upward trajectory. The work of this search committee was key to attracting the right candidates and selecting the right person. They did an outstanding job, with an outstanding Chair.

I want to introduce and recognize the other members of the search committee:

* Trustee Christine Larsen G’84
* Trustee Louise Phanstiel
* Trustee Howard Woolley ’80
* Amaar Asif, undergraduate student representative
* Sharif Bey, faculty, College of Visual and Performing Arts
* Duncan Brown, faculty, College of Arts and Sciences
* Dan Cutler, director of learning communities
* Carol Fadda, faculty, College of Arts and Sciences
* Tula Goenka, faculty, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
* Marcelle Haddix, faculty, School of Education
* Can Isik, faculty, College of Engineering and Computer Science
* Daniel Kimmel, graduate student representative
* Laurel Morton, instructor, College of Visual and Performing Arts
* Jeff Pauline, faculty, Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics
* Kira Reed, faculty, Whitman School of Management
* Steve Sawyer, faculty, School of Information Studies
* Michael Schwartz, my colleague on the faculty of the College of Law
* Yutaka Sho, faculty, School of Architecture
* Michael Speaks, dean, School of Architecture

I also want to acknowledge Megan Travis and Mallory Mitchell for their work in ensuring that the search process ran smoothly.

Thanks are also due to John Liu, who for the last 22 months has served as the University’s interim vice chancellor and provost. His leadership has been critical to Syracuse University’s success through challenging times. The University is fortunate that John will return as Vice President for International Strategy after his very well-deserved research leave. Thank you, John.

And I also want to thank Ramesh Raina, who has served so well as interim Vice President for Research during this same period. He has done this while simultaneously serving as an integral part of the public health team. I am grateful that he has agreed to stay on in the role.

This University and its people have been through a lot in the last two years, and we have made a lot of progress despite the extraordinary challenges in the world. We have been in a time of so many transitions that tested all of us. And now we have a long-term Provost in office who is a fine scholar, an experienced academic leader who has seen and led at top universities, and a person who is deeply thoughtful and caring about both our faculty and students. We ar all going to have to step up to support and enable the leadership that we all crave and celebrate today.

Thanks to the hard work of so many people, Provost Ritter joins Syracuse University with a solid foundation to build on. She brings a strong understanding of our mission and a broad awareness of the forces shaping higher education today and into the future.

This year, I have asked leadership and faculty from across the University to focus on academic excellence at a university that is welcoming to all.

Provost Ritter’s accomplishments speak to both of these imperatives. She is a respected political scientist with a track record of scholarship focusing on key aspects of American democracy. She is a frequent reviewer for scholarly publishers, top-tier journals and major granting organizations. She is the recipient of highly competitive fellowships and a member of prestigious organizations in her field.

Her work as a faculty member is reflected in how she has led as an administrator. She has supported and expanded faculty research and encouraged collaboration across disciplines. She has a track record of hiring outstanding academic leaders and faculty members. She has led and supported faculty through the often politically-volatile process of curriculum changes. She has championed the creation of new research centers and programs. She has also worked with faculty and leadership to secure philanthropy that enables academic excellence.

Her work demonstrates an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access. At Ohio State, she led the development of a university-wide initiative for strategic hiring and retention in Race, Inclusion and Social Equity. She has demonstrably increased diversity in leadership and on the faculty both at Ohio State and Cornell.

And Provost Ritter has a deep commitment to students. She is laser focused on enhancing learning in and outside of the classroom. She has created programs to enhance student diversity, support first-generation students, and improve advising.

Provost Ritter is a keen listener and a strong communicator. These qualities will serve her well as she leads us as an academic community in carrying our student-focused, international research university into the future.

Please join me in welcoming Provost Gretchen Ritter to Syracuse University and to the global Orange community.

Thank you.

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