

Progress Report: Student Concerns

February 11, 2015

Amid the long-term strategic planning happening across campus, several members of Chancellor Syverud's Executive Team continue to work with faculty and staff to take action on critical issues raised last semester by students. The Chancellor has directed his team to advance the important work and recommendations of the Express Yourself forums and workgroups and the Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education, and Advocacy, while more fully examining student concerns related to campus safety and facilities planning.

Progress is being made on multiple fronts every week. The priority is to close any identified gaps in services while at the same time improving vital supports and services important to students. This is the first of several planned progress reports to the campus community.

Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy

The Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education, and Advocacy met with Chancellor Syverud in late January to share their findings, recommendations, and emerging themes as outlined in their [final report](#). The workgroup provided 24 recommendations, dividing them into short-term and long-term recommendations.

Chancellor Syverud reviewed the recommendations—which he described as thoughtful and reasonable—before committing to moving forward on implementing all of them. The recommendations primarily revolve around prevention and education efforts, communication and promotion of available services, and creating space for support and advocacy for victims and survivors.

This semester, the Counseling Center is launching two new support groups as recommended by the workgroup. The Sexual Assault Recovery Group for female survivors meets on Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Office of Health Promotion, 111 Waverly Ave., Suite 006. The Healthy Relationships 101 Group meets Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the Schine Student Center; this group focuses on how to recognize relationship violence and how to conduct comprehensive safety planning; those wishing to participate may schedule a pre-group orientation through the Counseling Center (315-443-4715).

The Office of Health Promotion is also launching a new [robust consent campaign](#) called "Got Consent? Be S.U.R.E." The campaign promotes the notion that people should have shared understanding, respect and enthusiasm before engaging in any sexual activity. A full roster of events is scheduled for the spring semester. The University has also signed on as a partner in the national [It's On Us](#) public awareness campaign.

Staff within the Division of Student Affairs continue to evaluate and assess services, and reports that many of the workgroup's recommendations align with improvements the division has already begun implementing. Specific staff members have been charged with implementing the workgroup's recommendations.

For more information on sexual assault and relationship violence services, prevention and education efforts, and additional updates, visit the [Sexual Assault Services and Prevention page](#).

Express Yourself

More than 250 campus community members attended the “Express Yourself” [forum in Hendricks Chapel](#) last semester, where students, faculty and staff shared their stories and ideas for making Syracuse University a more diverse and inclusive place to live and learn. Some students discussed a need for more dialogue about diversity while others addressed the need for more campus spaces in which to engage and share concerns.

Following the forum, five workgroups were developed to look at specific areas of campus life—Diversity and Inclusion Planning; Participatory Educational Experience; Recruitment, Support, Retention and Success; Faculty Ambassador Program; and Athletics-Student Engagement. More than 100 people joined the workgroups, with meetings and analysis occurring throughout the fall semester. Some of the workgroups have developed preliminary recommendations and suggestions, such as creating a central online portal of information and resources, events and programs; assessing physical space on campus for community-building; and exploring a fellows program.

On Jan. 22, the Faculty Ambassador Program workgroup presented its final recommendations to Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost Elizabeth Liddy and Senior Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz. Citing a large body of research that suggests strengthening relationships between faculty and students raises retention rates—especially for students from underrepresented populations—the workgroup suggested several short- and long-term goals. Among them: establishing a means for faculty and students to engage with each other beyond the classroom. This could be accomplished through faculty-student events, increased opportunities to interact with advisors, and small stipends for faculty to cover the cost of refreshments for hosted reading groups or discussion sessions with students. Special Assistant to the Chancellor [Barry L. Wells](#) will advance this work as part of his portfolio.

Meanwhile, Dean of Admissions Maurice Harris is working with students, faculty and staff to revise and enhance the “Own the Dome” program for accepted students. The popular [one-night program](#) is hosted in the Carrier Dome every April and gives accepted but not yet committed students an opportunity to experience campus life at Syracuse. This year, the event will incorporate a broader set of multicultural programming shaped by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and student representatives from the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion Planning.

Campus Safety

The safety of students is always a primary concern. The University recently created a Division of Campus Safety and Emergency Services with the intent of strengthening and uniting each of the

functional areas of the University with responsibility for community safety, crisis and emergency response, compliance with safety and security regulations, comprehensive investigations into incidents and allegations, and law enforcement.

Just last week, a team of assessors for the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) concluded their campus visit with a strong recommendation to support the Department of Public Safety (DPS)'s [bid for accreditation](#).

DPS recently completed testing of officer body cameras and is in the process of purchasing units, with full implementation scheduled to occur in fall 2015. Procedures for use of the equipment will include activation at all interactions during incidents and community contacts.

The department's website now contains [links](#) individuals may use to submit comments or complaints, and an anonymous mechanism that does not route to DPS—but rather to the University's Audit and Management Advisory Services—is available through the third-party [EthicsPoint website](#).

In response to campus requests for cultural awareness among DPS officers, DPS hosted an LGBT Basics program for all staff and recently conducted a program on disability awareness with the Disability Cultural Center. In the coming semester, DPS staff are being scheduled for [Conversations About Race and Ethnicity](#) (C.A.R.E.) training with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and [Safer People, Safer Spaces](#) (S.P.S.S.) training with the LGBT Resource Center.

These recent efforts to improve campus safety and enhance training for officers and staff are an extension of work that has been ongoing over the last two years. Since 2012, DPS has increased night-time patrol and investigations supervision, increased walking escort capability, added a late-night safety escort shuttle, and created an overnight student safety shuttle service on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The University Area Crime-Control Team, a joint patrol program with the Syracuse Police Department, was launched to reduce crime and improve off-campus safety.