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## **SUNY Student Assembly Reconvenes at Brockport, Welcomes Newcomers, Lauds Past Advocates**

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Last weekend, the SUNY Student Assembly welcomed several members into its organizational rankings during the first executive committee meeting of 2017 at The College at Brockport. “The Student Assembly continues to tackle the tough issues facing students across our campuses like affordability, access, equity and inclusion, and sustainability,” said Marc Cohen, President of the Student Assembly and SUNY Trustee. “I am confident that this coming semester will be our best yet with the leadership team we have in place.”

Emily Altschuler, a junior at SUNY Cortland and strong advocate for students through the It’s On Us campaign, was appointed Chair of the Campus Safety Committee. Jake Webster, sophomore at SUNY Poly and President pro tempore of the SUNY Poly Student Senate, was also confirmed as the Co-Chair of the Military Affairs Committee. Rosemary Guerra of Sullivan County Community College and Imran Suhail of Fulton-Montgomery Community College joined as representatives in the Community Colleges sector, while Vice President Emerita Melissa Kathan, a first-year law student at the University at Buffalo, rejoined the Assembly as a doctoral-granting graduate representative.

Margaret Ketchen, the Student Assembly’s Acting Director of Communications Margaret Ketchen was elected as Interim Secretary of the Assembly in a special election. In addition to her new role as Secretary, Ketchen serves as Student Government President at Schenectady County Community College, where she is in her second year as a paralegal studies major.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve in this capacity and work with so many wonderful people with great minds and positive spirits who are willing and dedicated to advocating for the 600,000 students in SUNY,” said Ketchen. “I look forward to seeing all that this incredible team of leaders will accomplish in the coming months.”

The Student Assembly also acknowledged some of its longtime advocates. In a resolution, SUNY’s outgoing Director of Marketing & Creative Services, David Belsky, was recognized for his advocacy in public higher education. For the past eight years, Belsky, in numerous roles at SUNY System Administration, has been a strong partner with the Student Assembly. Belsky served the Student Assembly as a student at the University at Albany as its Director of Communications and Director of Government Relations before joining the ranks of System Administration in the Chief of Staff’s office.

Along with Belsky, long-time student rights supporter Michael Doyle -- now a six-year member of the Brockport Foundation Board -- was recognized as a lifetime member of the Student Assembly, a move that was met with roaring applause from the Executive Committee. In the 1970s, working with the Student Association of the State University (SASU), Michael advocated for what is now the Open Meetings Law and voting student representation on campus boards and councils, along with the SUNY Board of Trustees.

“It was truly heartwarming to have my father honored by the SUNY Student Assembly for his work in public higher education,” Student Assembly Vice President Bridget Doyle. “As a past president of the Brockport Student Government, he has always been a supporter of student rights. I am so proud to call him my dad, and a fellow member of the Student Assembly.”

The meeting was hosted by the Brockport SG President Devin Bonner and Vice President Danielle Fenley. In addition to serving the Brockport student body, both leaders have maintained frequent communication with the Student Assembly. Nearly a year after graduation, Conner Wolfe, a former Brockport SGA senator and a University Colleges representative in the Student Assembly, was excited to revisit his roots in student leadership. He was later reunited with members of the Brockport SGA in a joint SGA-Student Assembly dinner reception.

“It was an incredible honor to be back at Brockport and to be hosted by Brockport Student Government,” said Wolfe. “BSG truly is one of the premier student government associations in the SUNY system and it was inspiring to work with their leadership once again.”

### **About the SUNY Student Assembly**

The Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNY SA) is the recognized student government organization representing the nearly 600,000 students of the State University of New York. Comprised of student leaders elected by their peers from across SUNY’s 64 campuses, SUNY SA is committed to empowering students throughout the state, and ensuring the representation of its members on the state and national level, as well as throughout the SUNY system.

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