



The State University of New York  
Student Assembly

Office of Communications

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## **Student Leaders Pass Critical Legislation on Climate, Affordability at SUNY Oneonta**

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Last weekend, the SUNY Student Assembly met at SUNY Oneonta for the second executive committee meeting of 2017. Oneonta Student Association President Nicole Pereira and Executive Vice President Darren Pikul graciously offered to host the Student Assembly for its February gathering. Pereira and Pikul, both members of the Student Assembly's Executive Cabinet, shared that, "Oneonta's SA works hard to ensure that we are advocating for our students as much as possible, a goal we share with the SUNY Student Assembly. Having roles on both the campus and state levels really strengthens the bond between both organizations." Pereira continued, "We are proud to have had this opportunity and hope that everyone enjoyed their time at the home of the Red Dragons."

Saben Durio, President of the Graduate Student Association at the University at Albany, was appointed as an Acting Graduate Division Representative for Doctoral Granting Institutions. When asked about the appointment, Durio said he was "honored to join a team of such passionate student leaders," continuing that, "all the work that the SUNY Student Assembly has done in light of recent events in the nation has truly shown the level of dedication they have for advocating for students and their needs."

Arthur Ramsay, in his second year with the Student Assembly, was confirmed as the Director of Communications for the remainder of the year. Ramsay previously served the Assembly as Deputy Director of Communications and Deputy Director of Academic Affairs. Additionally, Sarah Petrak was appointed the Deputy Director of Communications. Petrak is a senior at the University at Albany and works as a Legislative Aide in the New York State Assembly.

Ramsay and Petrak have worked closely with the Office of Communications at SUNY System Administration and look forward to spreading the Student Assembly's message. Chief of Staff Nicholas Simons praised these appointments, noting "a strong communications staff is integral to this organization. With the professionals we added this past meeting, we're poised to elevate the student voice like never before."

Alivia Sheffield, Chair of the Sustainability Committee, claimed a major victory when the Executive Committee passed her resolution urging the federal government to continue the environmental stewardship of the previous administration. "Now more than ever, it is of the utmost importance that SUNY and the State of New York maintain and continue their progress towards a more sustainable world," said Sheffield. She added that through the resolution's passage, "students of SUNY are making their voices heard on their expectations for SUNY to keep their promises in terms of sustainability throughout any changes made by the current presidential administration."

The State-Operated Campuses Committee also brought forward a resolution calling on the SUNY Board of Trustees to guarantee a voting seat for students on all boards that regulate broad-based fees. Alex George, a SUNY Oswego senior and University Colleges Representative who crafted the resolution, noted its passage “strengthens our commitment to affordable higher education by including broad based fees in the conversation. Though we recognize the significance of these fees and the resources they provide, we also realize the importance of transparency and shared governance have in the levying of these fees.”

Reiterating these accomplishments was Student Assembly President and SUNY Trustee Marc Cohen. "We have shown once again that the student voice in New York is powerful and progressive," said Cohen. "Efforts to encourage sustainability and affordability will not fall by the wayside under the watch of this incredible group of leaders."

The Student Assembly’s Executive Committee looks forward to meeting at Schenectady County Community College on March 4 for its final meeting of the year before the Assembly’s Spring Conference, April 7-9 in Rochester.

#### **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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