



Statewide Student Government Confirms new Cabinet, Sets Agenda for Year Ahead

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Lake George - The next chapter in SUNY Student Assembly history began this past weekend as newly confirmed Executive Committee leaders set platforms to transcend student advocacy for the upcoming academic year.

In Lake George, nearly 20 students from across the state were confirmed to the Executive Committee at the first Student Assembly meeting held under new Executive Board leadership.

“Our transitional meeting in Lake George was a superb chance for our Executive Committee to bond and set goals for the next year,” said Student Assembly Vice President Bridget Doyle. “After this weekend, I am confident in the abilities of our Executive Committee and cannot wait to see what we accomplish during this term.”

As a result of a competitive application process last month, various new positions in the Executive Committee were filled, allowing the Student Assembly to have greater influence in promoting initiatives for the upcoming academic year.

"After just one weekend with our new executive leadership team, it's clear that the students of SUNY will be well represented moving forward," said Student Assembly President Marc J. Cohen. "From military affairs and issues of diversity, to sustainability and campus safety, each of our committees have rigorous and comprehensive plans of action which will bring the State University of New York to new heights."

Among new leaders in the Executive Committee, 2014-15 Student Assembly President and Empire State College student Lori Mould returned to the organization this year to focus on veteran's issues. Mould was one of three consecutive prior presidents to attend the transitional meeting.

Serving as the new chair of the Military Affairs Committee, Mould hopes for the Student Assembly to promote stronger communication with military veterans and their families, raising awareness for issues such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

“Our veteran community needs effective student representation at the state level,” said Mould. “I have no doubt that under President Cohen’s leadership and the work of this committee, we will bring the work of military affairs to new heights.”

Under the leadership of Burgandi Rakoska from SUNY Fredonia and Jarius Jemmott from the University at Albany, the committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plans to push further advocacy and awareness towards all minority groups on SUNY’s 64 campuses. In addition to the continued push for social justice and equality across our campuses, the Student Assembly will focus in on disability awareness and accommodations, LGBTQ+ issues, and an effort to make SUNY even more welcoming and diverse.



Also continuing into the upcoming year, the DEI Committee will partner with the Ban the Box campaign, pressing SUNY to eliminate conviction history questions from employment applications.

Along with the Ban the Box campaign, the Student Assembly discussed continuing to spread sexual assault prevention through the It's On Us campaign under the Campus Safety Committee at the transitional meeting.

“In accordance with President Cohen’s passion for sexual violence and assault prevention, the Student Assembly will make a push like never before to get buy-in from student leaders across SUNY,” said Amanda Reed, Finger Lakes Community College student and recently confirmed chair of the Campus Safety Committee. “By the end of this summer, we hope to have the pledge signed on to by each and every student government president.”

In addition to standing by recent national campaigns, following international developments, this year the Sustainability Committee will focus on continuing to push SUNY to adopt the United Nations 2030 Agenda’s 17 sustainable development goals. The agenda was first adopted by the United Nations last year.

The committee, led this year by SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry student Alivia Sheffield, will also focus on deviating SUNY away from fossil fuels and purchasing local more food.

“The effort began last year, and I look forward to its continuation in the months to come,” said Sheffield. “Divesting from fossil fuels, and promoting sustainability throughout our daily lives, is crucial if we hope to reduce our carbon footprint.”

At the transitional meeting, newly confirmed Student Assembly leaders discussed pushing their agenda beyond the SUNY system to the local, state, and national stage. Moving closer to the presidential election, the Student Assembly will strive to bring issues in higher education, especially affecting SUNY students, to the national spotlight.

In an effort to expand the Student Assembly’s legislative influence, the Legislative Affairs Committee, being led by University at Albany student Rey Muniz, will increase advocacy in district offices, bring on more regional legislative interns and aides, and expand the “SUNY Speaks Up!” advocacy day.

While the Legislative Affairs Committee pushes to expand SUNY Student Assembly’s voice among lawmakers, the Academic Affairs committee aims to grow the voice of SUNY students among administrators. Newly

Led by Evan Rufrano, a student at Old Westbury College, the Academic Affairs Committee plans tackle issues such as textbook affordability, student representation in academic policy making, and increased student feedback in academic policy concerns.

“Issues of academic affairs are often undersold and underappreciated,” said Rufrano. “I appreciate President Cohen’s dedication to issues like textbook affordability and shared governance. This year will prove incredibly effective in the area of academic affairs and advocacy.”



“Leading an organization which works to enhance the overall student experience is a difficult feat, more so when it’s the recognized student government for the largest system of public higher education in the nation,” said Cohen. “I have no doubt that with the help of my Cabinet, we will be effective in making SUNY the best that it has ever been.”

About the Student Assembly of the State University of New York

The Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNY SA) is an organization comprised of student leaders elected by their peers from across SUNY’s 64 campuses. Empowering students throughout the state, the SUNY SA is committed to student life and ensuring the representation of its members on the state and national level as well as throughout the SUNY system.

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