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### University College 100th Anniversary Gala

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*Syracuse University*

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# Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud  
Delivered on Saturday, October 6, 2018  
Location: Goldstein Auditorium  
Remarks: University College 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala

*The Chancellor was introduced by Retired News Anchor,  
Jackie Robinson*

Thank you, Jackie.

I begin my remarks by thanking Dean Mike Frasciello, who will follow me at the podium. Mike, you are a wonderful dean of University College and a wonderful colleague to me and to your fellow deans. I also want to recognize Bea González. Bea, your steady and compassionate leadership of University College over many years has contributed so much to Syracuse University, our students, and our community. I am grateful every day to you for stepping up to work with me as Syracuse University's Vice President of Community Engagement.

We are joined this evening by three trustees of Syracuse University: Neil Gold, who is here with his wife Helen; Pat Mautino, who is here with her husband Lou, and Judy Mower. I thank each of you for your tireless service to the university and to our community as a whole – tonight I want to thank Neil, Pat and Judy in particular for your leadership in teaching me that part of leadership involves showing up – involves being there for events and activities in the University and the community, and genuinely learning from the people and events that you attend. Each of you leads and follows, shows up and listens, and it means a lot to me and this University.

I also thank all those whose hard work has made this evening possible, including the 100th anniversary committee at University College, co-chaired by Chuckie Holstein, George Kilpatrick, and Stewart Koenig. I am grateful for your commitment.

Finally, I thank the students and graduates of University College. In a very real sense, you are the cause of our century celebration tonight, because you are what University College has always been about.

I believe in University College. I believe in University College because it has always been about our students, and about embracing fully as our students everyone who can benefit from a Syracuse University education.

During my four decades in higher education, people have always talked about “non-traditional students.” At the many universities where I have taught other than Syracuse, people have talked about non-traditional students. They usually did so by saying that in addition to focusing on the “core” business of the university – teaching traditional students in traditional formats and doing traditional research and service – in addition to that “core” business, they also do this really nice peripheral thing on the side, which is to serve non-traditional students. I learned early in my career at very old universities that to be called “non-traditional” is not necessarily a compliment. In this context, non-traditional meant part-time students, older students, non-degree students, transfer students, and pretty much anyone who did not go directly to college from high school and then graduate in four years.

Then I came to Syracuse. Here, I learned that this place is different. This place has long, long been different. The non-traditional tradition of University College is a big reason why. The “tradition” of University College has always been to try new things, and to embrace the students others called “non-traditional” as the core of what Syracuse University and its mission stands for.

I know I am preaching to the choir on this tonight, but I assure you I give the same sermon wherever I go. I give the same sermon when I am with those who, ignorant of our history, are a little too focused on their definition of what is a “normal” student.

What do I say to such a colleague? Well, I start with the history of this University, and in this case I have a century of it to work with. For example, just take seriously for one moment the facts in your program for tonight’s dinner. In the last century, University College has been responsible, not just for embracing part-time students and the community when many universities turned their backs on both. University College also played a key role in starting or growing a lot of things that we now take for granted as traditions. Including: Summer school at Syracuse; outreach to active duty military and veterans; SU Abroad; Syracuse Stage; the Higher Education Opportunity Program – which is a big reason full-time first generation students at Syracuse outperform many of our peers – the English Language Institute; the extension programs that eventually have become SUNY Binghamton and Utica College; our extensive partnerships with the Syracuse City Schools; and now an expanding array of online and certificate programs that help adults advance their careers and their lives.

Those are nine big innovations that University College successfully made part of the DNA of Syracuse University. University College’s tradition is to innovate and create new traditions by embracing all students, and by fully accepting our educational mission in this community and the world.

University College’s tradition has never been more needed, or more salient, than it is today. Our students are changing. I don’t know about you, but I have not run into many people on our campus today who describe themselves as “traditional” students. Even if they are going full-time, even if they are straight from high school, they want more than a traditional education, and they think of themselves as having unique

talents and needs. They want the full breadth of a great university to be available to them in flexible and accessible formats at the time and place and manner of their choosing, not necessarily in a manner fixed in concrete back in 1918. They are all, in this sense, post-traditional students, and they are going to be the vast majority of students this University needs to serve in the next 100 years.

So how is Syracuse University going to meet this challenge? I am not certain. It will require us to innovate. It will require us to change. It will require us to embrace our post-traditional students as they are, not as some of our peers would like them to be. I am certain, though, that innovate we will, change we will, embrace post-traditional students we will. And part of why I am sure of this is because we have University College. Because University College's DNA is perfect for this challenge, as is its leadership and its wonderful staff and faculty.

It is a staff and faculty that, just in the past 18 months, has been strengthening and launching better part-time programs. Five fully online undergraduate programs. Seven part-time master's programs. Eleven hybrid and online graduate degrees.

This is a staff and faculty that has opened doors to veterans, to career-changers, to active duty military, to those who are balancing work and education, and to students who have in the past been physically located far away from all the Orange opportunities we provide.

This is a staff and faculty who have been willing to nimbly embrace opportunities in the growing and emerging fields that will help people in our community get to jobs and a better life. Just this year, that means new programs in Cybersecurity Administration, in Creative Leadership, and in Knowledge Management.

This is a staff and faculty who truly understand that every student Syracuse University serves matters equally. Every student matters

equally whether the student is part-time, full-time, online, employed, unemployed, 19 years old, or 84 years old. I am proud that University College now equally serves 900 such students. I hope and expect that University College and Syracuse University will embrace service to many, many more post-traditional students in the years and century ahead.

And so let me conclude by saying this to one of our distinguished guests tonight, Mr. Albert Turner.

Albert Turner graduated from University College in 2013 after delaying his education for a 36-year career at Verizon. He delivered the convocation address as student speaker for University College in 2013. His mother and 104-year-old-grandmother were in the audience. Today, he passes along the opportunity he was given to complete his degree as a volunteer for On Point for College and other community organizations – and has been recognized by the NAACP with a community involvement award. Mr. Turner, Syracuse University is proud of you, and proud that you are a traditional student of the most innovative and serving school I know. Mr. Turner, I conclude tonight by promising you that, after 100 years, Syracuse University College is just getting started, and that I believe and pray that it will serve and produce thousands of glorious students like you in the years ahead.

Thank you.

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