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### 14th Annual Nya wneha Ska:nonh Welcome Luncheon

Kent Syverud  
*Syracuse University*

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# Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on August 23, 2021

Location: Skybarn

Remarks: 14th Annual Nya wenha Ska:nonh Welcome Luncheon

*The Chancellor was introduced by Vice President for the Student Experience and Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience, Rob Hradsky*

Thank you, Rob. Welcome to all of our Indigenous students and loved ones. Welcome to the members of the Onondaga nation, Haudenosaunee Clan Mothers and Title Holders. We are joined today by my wife, Dr. Ruth Chen, and other faculty and university leaders including newcomer Vice Presidents Allen Groves and Cerri Banks. I want to thank Regina Jones and the team at the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Division of the Student Experience and Campus Catering.

On behalf of Syracuse University, I am also honored to welcome and thank Tadodaho Sidney Hill for joining us today to give the Thanksgiving address. He will also join us for our new student convocation and for our Class of 2020 Commencement in September. As you know, we begin all University-wide events with the land acknowledgement. Todadaho Hill's Thanksgiving is another commitment by this university to remember our history, honor our traditions and remind us of our shared values. The Thanksgiving will continue as part of future ceremonies. I am also honored to welcome one of our most distinguished alumni, Faithkeeper Oren Lyons. I was grateful to be able to visit with both of you and other Chiefs and Clan Mothers earlier this month. The University values our relationship with the Onondaga Nation and all the Haudenosaunee.

I grew up in Irondequoit New York and attended "Iroquois" school. Two flags flew in front of that school, the United States and Canada. At Syracuse University, we fly the Haudenosaunee flag wherever the American flag is flown on campus. There is reason for that - acknowledging our past and embracing our present commitment.

So, you will see this flag outside Hendricks Chapel, at the Stadium, in front of the National Veterans Resource Center and wherever a major public event takes place. That flag is a point of pride for our Indigenous students and for all of us.

Many of you will have heard that we plan to install a permanent monument to the Onondaga Nation on the main Quad. We have set aside funds for this important acknowledgment. It is moving forward as quickly as possible. We know, from listening to our Indigenous students, that this monument will be meaningful and a source of pride.

This fall, we welcome almost 100 new Indigenous students to our undergraduate and graduate programs. With our new scholarship winners, we are proud to have 74 Haudenosaunee Promise Scholars and 11 Haudenosaunee Honors Scholars this year. Our students represent all six nations that make up the Haudenosaunee: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora Nations. In addition we have students from 9 other nations: Choctaw, Cherokee, Navajo, Chickasaw, Seminole, Schaghticoke, Qawalangin, Lakota Sioux and Miwok nations.

You new students join more than 175 returning Indigenous undergraduate, graduate and law students.

As you join Syracuse University, the Native Student Program has been working on several initiatives including renovations to the house on Euclid that is home to the program. The team has also worked to expand the Ionkerihonnién:ni Guide Program. This program provides Indigenous students with a space to live their culture and promote community building. I am grateful to Regina Jones, Antonia Roach, Shakaya Wolcott and Neil Powless, as well as other members of the Onondaga Nation, who have participated as leaders and alumni mentors.

This year, we also welcome Diane Schenandoah to the Student Experience team. She is part of the Barnes Center at The Arch's student wellness team and has been appointed to the newly created position of Indigenous healer.

This fall you can anticipate a campus-wide celebration of Indigenous People's Day.

This will be the fifth year of this event, which recognizes issues faced by Indigenous communities and educates others throughout the campus through events and dialogues about world views, cultures and histories.

Also, this fall, the Syracuse University Art Museum will host an exhibit of 52 contemporary artworks by Haudenosaunee artists. The exhibit is called *Each One, Inspired Haudenosaunee Art Across the Homelands*. Please watch the University event calendar for artist talks, tours and receptions associated with this exhibit.

All of these programs enrich our campus, educate our community and make Syracuse University a stronger and more diverse University.

To our new students: I urge you to get involved with your community and with some of our many organizations. You have people at Syracuse University who care about you and are here to help you. This is a big, exciting, and challenging campus. I am reminded each fall of my experience moving from a community, where I had a big extended family, to a college 500 miles away where I knew no one. It was a Catholic school, and I was not Catholic. It was a school filled with people who seemed like they already knew exactly what they were doing, and I did not. It was the first time I was separated from my identical twin brother. It was a struggle. I never asked for help until November. Don't follow my example.

I know that you are smarter than that. If you reach out for help at Syracuse University, you will find that your professors, advisors, mentors, peers and all of our student experience staff are eager to help you. I also encourage you to look beyond our campus boundaries for deeper connections. Visit Skä • noñh - the Great Law of Peace Center on Onondaga Lake. There are many ways to get involved.

To the families with us today, thank you for entrusting your student to us. We care about them, and we are here to teach, support and encourage them. We are only successful if they are successful.

Once more, welcome, and thank you.

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