



GSO Senate Resolution 25.05

A Resolution Calling on the Syracuse University Chancellor to Establish a Mutual Academic Defense Compact with Peer Institutions to Ensure Cooperation in Defending Academic & Civil Liberties

Author(s): Samuel Prescott (GSO Senator At-Large); Daniel J. Kimmel (President of the Graduate Student Body & Chief Executive Officer of the Graduate Student Organization)

Sponsor(s): See Appendix to the Resolution: Sponsors from the Syracuse University Community

Date(s): 30 April 2025 (Introduced)

Action(s): Passed (30 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain)

Chair of the Senate: Roger Rosena

President Pro Tempore of the Senate: Avery A. Welna

Parliamentarian: Joseph Beckmann

President of the Student Body: Daniel J. Kimmel

Whereas, recent actions by the Federal Government and its leadership demonstrate a willingness to encroach on the academic and civil liberties of students, faculty, staff, and organizations, thereby threatening the pillars of American higher education, including university autonomy, the integrity of academia and research, and First Amendment rights; and,

Whereas, the Trump administration and its political allies have taken legal, financial, and political actions intended to undermine the public mission of individual institutions, suppress dissent, and exert undue influence over academic inquiry; and,

Whereas, the Big Ten Academic Alliance, comprising 18 universities, has initiated efforts to establish a Mutual Academic Defense Compact to collectively respond to political and legal

threats against academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and the integrity of research, demonstrating the power of collaboration in safeguarding higher education;¹ and,

Whereas, Syracuse University is a member of numerous academic and athletic alliances, including the American Council of Education (ACE), Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), and the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), among others; and,

Whereas, delaying action to protect academic and civil liberties could leave institutions vulnerable to immediate and escalating political and legal incursions, risking irreparable harm to university autonomy, academic and civil freedoms, and public trust in higher education, underscoring the necessity of establishing a Mutual Academic Defense Compact without delay; therefore, be it,

Resolved, that the Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization calls on Chancellor Kent Syverud to formally initiate talks and facilitate the establishment of a Mutual Academic Defense Compact in collaboration with Syracuse University's peer institutions and alliances both regional and national; and, be it,

Resolved, that the Graduate Student Organization calls on the Syracuse University Student Association and the Syracuse University Senate to formally endorse this initiative and to advocate for its implementation by the Office of the Chancellor and the Administration of Syracuse University; and, be it,

Resolved, that under the Mutual Academic Defense Compact, all participating institutions commit funding and resources to a shared defense fund to provide strategic support for any member institution facing political or legal incursion; and, be it,

Resolved, that upon request, participating institutions will provide legal counsel, governance expertise, and public affairs resources to assist member institutions under political or legal incursion. This may include legal representation, public communication, legislative advocacy, coalition building, and other necessary actions; and, be it,

Ordered, that the GSO President & Chief Executive Officer transmit this Resolution to Syracuse University Leadership and University Senate Leadership, urging Chancellor Kent

¹ See, e.g., Rutgers University Senate, [*Resolution to Establish a Mutual Defense Compact for the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance in Defense of Academic Freedom, Institutional Integrity, and the Research Enterprise*](#).

Syverud and his Office to lead outreach efforts to partner institutions and initiate the Mutual Academic Defense Compact; and, be it,

Ordered, that the GSO Executive Board & Cabinet, under the guidance of the GSO President & Chief Executive Officer, advocate for the establishment of a Mutual Academic Defense Compact and collaborate with other units of the Syracuse University community until such is achieved or no longer needed.

Appendix to the Resolution: Sponsors from the Syracuse University Community

Savanna Capdeville (MPA)
Evan Schmidt (International Relations)
Julia Liebell-McLean (MPA/MAIR)
Nicholas Piro (MPA)
Reed Cleland (Masters in Public Administration)
Jonathan Garcia (MPA)
Nicole Gaston (MPA)
Colter Mazur (MPA/Atlantis)
AJ Hyatte (MAIR)
Jake DeCarli (MA International Relations)
Aidan O'Connell (MPA)
Jordan Braunstein (MPA)
Tristan McPartland (MPA)
Christopher Bezdedeanu (MPA)
Gracie Gilcrist (Conservation Biology)
Victoria Murphy (Conservation Biology)
Katie Hardash (Environmental Biology)
Gwendolyn Kosciolek (Environmental Biology)
Kathryn White (Environmental Resources Engineering)
Samantha Wysocki (Forest Ecosystem Science)
Samuel Honig (MPA)
Camryn Corbett (MPA)
Hamza Khan (MPA)
Claire Weinstein (MAIR)
Dalia de la Fuente-Carr (MAIR)
Scott Newman (Environmental Health)
Natalie Villalba (Natural Resources Management)
Lizmarie Montemayor Robles (MPA)
J Sanchez (Public Administration)
Kaitlyn Carney (Environmental Studies)
Logan Fetterman (MAIR)
Rachel Miniman (Psychology)
Mariel Flint (Environmental Studies)
Margaret Engel (MPA/MAIR)
Jamie Gentry (Mass Communications)
Ethan Jackson (Special Education)
Claire Bush (Earth & Environmental Sciences)
Avery A. Welna (Public Diplomacy, GSO President Pro Tempore of the Senate)