

Undergraduate Student Representative Report

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Representatives to the Board of Trustees
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What it's like to be a student right now

The issues we are posing before the Board of Trustees are issues of student equity and access on campus. These are issues that leave a disproportionate impact on students who are unable to cover high out-of-pocket costs. We bring these to the Board because we believe that every student deserves an unsurpassed student experience. No student should have to rely on out-of-pocket expenses to access what this campus offers.

Food Accessibility

Coming to college is a stressful and complex time in anyone's life. For many students, this is the first time in their lives that they have to live on their own and create schedules that work for them. Students are trying to figure out when to eat, how to balance challenging coursework, and make friends along the way. Amidst all of this complexity we hope to increase accessibility to food resources on campus to help eliminate part of that burden. Currently there are **118 classes that end after 9pm, which is the latest time that any dining hall is open and serving food to students**. Because of this, many students have been forced to skip meals in order to attend their classes. This forces students to go out and purchase food from an off campus vendor or to spend more money to purchase food and save it in their dorm room. This exacerbates the disparity between students with the means to use out of pocket funds to supplement their experience at Syracuse against those who cannot. Access to food should not be contingent upon access to personal funds, especially when main campus students are required to pay thousands of dollars to have a meal plan.

To remedy this **we recommend a system in which students can convert 2 meal swipes per week into dining dollars to increase their accessibility**. We recommend that each meal swipe be worth \$15, which is in line with what they were worth when this system existed for the 2020-21 academic year. This would allow students to purchase non perishable or reheatable meals which they can store in their dorm room without needing access to transportation to a grocery store. This would allow students to have more variety and control over their health, while also making dining more accessible in general.

Food accessibility is a consistent concern amongst our students, whether that be due to the hours of dining halls or insufficient funds. For the health and well-being of our campus community, we highly urge the Board to consider remedying these obstacles to food accessibility.

Transportation - Ride Call Service

The Safety Escort Shuttle service is touted as a safe form of transportation for students to use to travel to and from a campus location, but has fallen short of providing reliable transportation to students. Students are currently experiencing an average wait time of 37.6

minutes per ride, which is a decrease from last year, but still shows a much longer wait time than what students expect. The importance of this service is its late night services where many public transportation routes end after 8PM. As we move into colder months, students will be waiting over a half hour at night in the cold just to get home. Others do not feel safe walking home alone at night, and having someone potentially wait alone in the middle of the night for over 30 minutes is concerning. We recommend an expansion of the Safety Escort Shuttle service or to reevaluate regular routes to alleviate the burden on this service during late hours.

Transportation – Busing

Students are consistently facing issues regarding the consistency of bussing and how buses reach capacity during peak hours. Students have been reporting that buses are extremely crowded and usually reach capacity before picking up from later stops. These capacity issues are worse around 9am, noon and 5pm. This forces students to wait for another bus which can take 10-30 minutes and may make them miss their class depending on the wait time. This leaves students with the option to spend money out of their own pocket to use a rideshare app, rent a VEO bike/scooter (which may not be available), or walk, which they may not be able to do. Moreover, these wait times are more difficult to endure during the colder months—the majority of the time on-campus.

Over the 4 years we have been in Student Association, transportation has consistently been an issue that students have raised any chance they have. We believe that this indicates that there needs to be an examination of transportation capacity, traffic, routes, and student satisfaction to create a larger strategic plan on how to better serve the needs of Syracuse University Students equitably.