

## **Newhouse School Encourages Student Participation in Search for New Dean**

*By Madeline Hunt*

**SYRACUSE, N.Y., Jan. 28, 2020** – On Monday, Jan. 16, 2020, the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications gave its students a valuable role in the search for the school's new dean, inviting them to participate in the first of three dean candidate sessions.

The Newhouse School began its search in April of 2019 when the former dean, Lorraine Branham, died of cancer at age 66. Immediately after the news of Branham's death surfaced, Amy Falkner, a senior associate dean for academic affairs and an associate professor in the advertising department, took over as interim dean.

Finding a candidate to fill this role at such a profound school is not an easy task. In early July, the Newhouse School formed a search committee of 12 people, including several directors of different departments, board of trustee members and, most notably, two students. This was the first sign that alerted students that not only would they see and experience this transition, but they would also participate in it.

After months of searching and partnering with Korn Ferry, a worldwide management consulting firm, on Dec. 3, 2019, the search committee co-chairs sent an email to the Newhouse School community informing them that the search had been narrowed down to three candidates. The email also stated that students would receive invitations to participate in meetings with the candidates and their feedback would heavily affect the final decision.

Newhouse students now realized that the two student representatives would not be the only ones with a voice during this process. The Newhouse School was giving them all a voice.

Jessica Stern, a second-year student in the Newhouse School, talked about how important it is that the administration is including students in this decision.

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“Sometimes as a student,” she said, “we feel forgotten. We see these changes being made that affect us without having a say in any of it. The new dean will definitely affect us, so it’s relieving and comforting that they are giving us this opportunity and that our feedback will actually mean something.”

About 10 days after the initial email was sent out, Falkner emailed Newhouse students personally inviting them to participate in the candidate visits. She emphasized that during this process, the school greatly values student input and there would be a survey post-session to give feedback. These sessions took place on Jan. 16, 22 and 24.

On Jan. 24, after the last of three dean candidate sessions, Olivia Sharf, a senior advertising student, stopped to talk about her involvement in the session.

“Students were given the floor and asked really thoughtful questions. We all clearly cared about what the candidate had to say. I was really impressed and am definitely going to send in plenty of feedback.”

Now that all three candidate visits are over, it is up to the administration to take the information they have and make a decision that will affect the Newhouse School and its students for years to come. In a transitional time such as this one, Newhouse sets a precedent for all universities that students are at the heart of the institution and their value should never be underestimated.

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Students patiently awaited the arrival of the third dean candidate for the last of the interactive sessions on Jan. 24 outside of Newhouse’s I-3 Center. Source: Madeline Hunt