



**Inauguration Speech of President Gianni L. Quattrocchi**  
**April 25th, 2022**

Thank you,

It is an honor and a privilege to be here today. When I first arrived at Temple, in the fall of 2020, I would never have imagined to be here giving this speech to such a distinguished audience as the student body president.

Let me begin by thanking my predecessor, Brad Smutek, for presiding over the student government in what has been one of the most difficult years for Temple. Through each trial, he has shown steadfast strength and leadership with this student government administration. I would also like to thank my parents, friends, and family for whom this opportunity would not have been possible for me to achieve.

At this moment, this university and our world are facing some of the most difficult trials we have ever endured: a global pandemic, a struggling economy, an attack on the national capital, war in Europe, and an impending climate and environmental crisis. It should not come as a controversial statement to say that the past two years have tried and tested our will, our spirit, and our resolve. And though these have been tested, they were not shattered.

As we exit this strange time in our history, flaws and areas for improvement are more present and noticeable than ever before. We need to look facts square in the eyes and decide what type of university we want to be. For the student body, this student government, the Temple Student Government, is the greatest tool in their arsenal to make that change. There must always be a body to represent student needs and demands, and I have full and utmost confidence that this administration will represent our student body well and leave Temple University in a better place than how we found it.

What does that mean? That means ensuring that TSG continues to advocate for low tuition costs to both Temple University and the commonwealth government so that students can continue to afford college when this country faces growing costs, stagnant wages, and a 1.75 trillion dollar student debt

crisis. That means ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals and affordable food when one in three students at four year institutions suffer from food insecurity. That means ensuring students have access to affordable housing when 41% of students at four year institutions experience housing insecurity, and most importantly, it means ensuring that students have a seat at the table when the university makes decisions that impact the most fundamental unit of any university: the students.

Right now, our world is at a crossroads. We can keep charging full speed ahead in the old direction: the wrong direction. The direction that leads to more inequality, a more extreme wealth disparity, a more damaged environment, a weakening democracy, and an unengaged and cynical population, or we can change for the better.

In 1961, while addressing the State Government of Massachusetts, President-elect Kennedy said “the eyes of all people are truly upon us--and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, state and local, must be as a city upon a hill--constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities.” When our world is at the crossroads we are at now, the responsibility of being that city on a hill falls to us, to our university, and to our student body.

When you talk to a Temple student, what do you hear? You hear concern about the state of our democracy, concerns over lack of equality, concerns about our environment and our planet, and most of all, concerns about the state of our world. But Temple students are not the type to see something they’re dissatisfied with and take a seat. Just as they voice their concerns, they also act upon them. They put their money where their mouth is by voting, by working towards a more free and equal society, by volunteering, by working to improve our environment and calling on the university to divest from fossil fuels and big oil, by organizing rallies and collecting donations to aid our allies in Ukraine, and by getting involved.

You hear many things about Temple students but one commonality I have heard across the board is the Temple students work harder. When Temple students see something they don’t like, they roll up their sleeves and get to work. It’s one thing to complain, but it is another thing to act for the better world that you want to see. Temple students understand that. As I prepare to take office now, I recall the problems I saw and how I was not content voicing them and calling it a day.

When I saw the historically low number of voter participation rates from college students, I realized that this is an opportunity for change, and that’s why I am fully committed to helping establish Temple University as a debate venue for local, state, and federal elections to improve candidate-student interactions and boost our voter turnout numbers. That’s why, after seeing the damaging effects it has

on health and the environment, I am fully committed to working towards a total divestment and ban of styrofoam food packaging on campus. That's why, after seeing the collapse of the Afghan government and the invasion of Ukraine, I am fully committed to helping establish an international student assistance program to help our international students apply for refugee and asylum status in the unfortunate event that they need it. That's why, after seeing students struggle with food insecurity, I am fully committed to helping expand the Cherry Pantry to support more students struggling with food insecurity.

Because when Temple students see something they don't like, they don't say "we don't like this" and call it a day. They roll up their sleeves and get to work.

Our school and our country face many challenges. But with work ethic, our ingenuity, our dedication, and our action for a better world make us the blueprint for a better world. When we see a challenge, we don't give up or dig trenches. We don't retreat into isolationism or name-calling. We don't become cynical about what we "can't do" or what we don't "have the power to do." We work together and make change. Because, together, at Temple University, we are better. And because we are better, we are that city on the hill.

Thank you! I am Gianni Quattrocchi and I am honored to be your student body president.