



Cornell University Employee Assembly

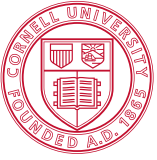
Cornell Employee Assembly

Minutes of the March 1, 2017 Meeting

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

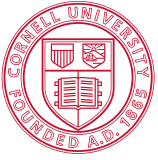
401 Physical Sciences Building

- I. Call to Order
 - a. U. Smith called the meeting to order at 12:18.
- II. Committee Reports
 - a. Communications Committee
 - i. U. Smith said that the committee is working with the Office of Assemblies and that Resolution 5 has been published for public comment on dashboard.
 1. Resolution 5 will be open for public comment for about two weeks and comments will be discussed at the next meeting.
 - ii. U. Smith said that the Employee Assembly newsletter update will come out soon for everyone.
 - iii. K. Fitch asked how comments will be broken up when the report is presented.
 1. U. Smith said that the Executive Committee will organize the comments and create an executive summary.
 - b. Report from the Chair
 - i. U. Smith thanked the assembly for their responses for the Board of Trustees meeting and said that the Employee Assembly will meet with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on March 22nd from 3-4PM.
 - ii. U. Smith said that it is imperative that everyone show up for this event as it is one of the few opportunities for the Employee Assembly to directly engage with the Board of Trustees.
 - iii. G. Giambattista said that it is important that the Assembly be prepared and the Board of Trustees will want to engage with the Assembly about the topics you bring forward.
 - iv. U. Smith said that a response has been received for all resolutions that have been submitted and that Resolutions 6 and 7 will be prepared by the end of the fiscal year.
- III. Ombudsmen Report and Presentation
 - a. C. Walcott said that the Ombudsmen is a safe place to come and talk about issues with the university and that it is a confidential place to do so. He said that nothing is revealed outside of the office and that the office serves faculty, staff and students.
 - b. C. Walcott said that in the past the office has helped 50% staff and the other 50% faculty and students but that there were more students this year than in the past.
 - i. C. Walcott said that exact numbers vary year to year.



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- c. C. Walcott said the job of the Ombudsmen is to outline what the possibilities are and what the consequences could be depending on what you decide to do about the problem.
- d. L. Falkson said that the office operates as a safety net as part of Cornell's caring community. She said they look at conflict where it causes anxiety and concern and what opportunities exist if the conflict can be properly managed.
- e. L. Falkson said the issues that they help address ranges from office politics, micro-aggressions to conflicts with supervisors. She said that they help weigh the options as well as the risks and benefits but do not judge on a course of action.
- f. L. Falkson said they have a function with employee representatives and that they can help explain resources and formal Cornell processes as needed. She said they can serve as a conduit for helping identify an employee representative.
- g. L. Falkson said that they can also answer questions about the annual report. The report is created because they have a responsibility to report to the Cornell community of the basis of what they are doing but in a confidential manner. The issues are reported but not the individuals.
 - i. L. Falkson said that are between 300-400 visits annually and that this year they saw more students than in the past.
 - ii. L.Falkson said that people may visit multiple times but each case is regarded as one visit.
- h. U. Smith asked what some of the resolutions that you help people reach are and what a reasonable outcome is that a visitor can expect.
 - i. L. Falkson said that they work with conflict resolution and to help solve the problem.
- i. U. Smith asked if there is a preference for the office to be or not to be listed in University policies and what capacity they would prefer to be listed.
 - i. C. Walcott said that they do not make decisions but they help people come to decisions by explaining options, opening doors and advocating for fairness.
 - ii. L. Falkson said everyone deserves an adequate opportunity to have their side heard and that they do not advocate for right or wrong, but to be heard. She said that they recommend informal resolution first and that they can be listed in policies as a resource.
- j. J. Kruser asked what information should be provided in terms of the Faculty Staff Assistance Program versus the Ombudsman.
 - i. C. Walcott said that the two offices have a good relationship and that the Ombudsman office serves as situational counselors. People are referred back and forth.



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- k. P. Thompson said even though you do not resolve the issues, are files kept on the issues that you reassess at a later date if individuals return to the office.
 - i. C. Walcott said this does not usually happen and that the office sometimes receives a thank you from individuals but that outcomes are not tracked.
- l. K. Mahoney said that the value and ethics concerns have doubled over the past ten years according to the report and asked if this had been shared with the leadership.
 - i. L. Falkson said that the ethics category was not a category until about seven years ago so the category has existed for fewer years compared to the others. She said that there are a lot of subcategories within that and some are serious and some are just inquiries about existing policies. She said it is too early to say for sure because the subcategories need to be watched more.

IV. Charter and Bylaws

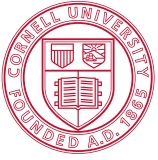
- a. U. Smith said that Resolution 10 will only be introduced at this time and that there can be no votes on the charter but to send ideas for changes.
- b. G. Giambattista said that the Employee Assembly charter had not been updated in a long time and that it did not reflect the composition of the body or the representative nature. She said that there were things that the body has in practice that are not reflected in the governing documents.
- c. G. Giambattista said that the goal is to bring the documents in line with the other assemblies and to make sure that the governing documents are compatible. She said that she recognizes that there might be conflicts.
- d. G. Giambattista said that after the assembly passes the resolution there will be more consistency across the assemblies. The rational within the document is based on other assemblies and how their documents are set up. The Employee Assembly is free to make changes that they would like.
- e. U. Smith said that they are not going through the standing rules and bylaws today in detail but requested that the Assembly look at them. He said that this is where the committee structure.
- f. U. Smith said that they will work on formatting to make it easier to read and reminded the assembly to send points of contention or revisions that the Assembly should consider.
- g. U. Smith said that the Employee Assembly needs to go back to staggering terms and that he will check what was decided last semester and the order of representatives to stagger.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Robinson

Clerk of the Assembly



Cornell University
Employee Assembly