

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Agenda of the Thursday, October 29, 2020 Meeting
4:45 – 6:30 on ZOOM

I. Call to Order

II. Announcements and Presentations

- a. Cornell: a History of Indigenous Dispossession and Genocide by Former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion Colin Benedict '21

III. Open Microphone

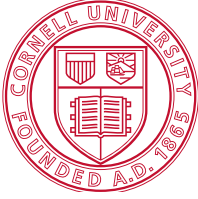
IV. Approval of the Minutes

- a. [October 22, 2020 Minutes](#)

V. New Business

- a. Resolution #7: [Support for Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell's Demands](#)
- b. Resolution #8: [Cayuga Land Acknowledgement](#)
- c. [Statement for Antonio Tsialas](#)
- d. Resolution #9: [Demanding Cornell Absolve All Relations with the Ithaca Police Department](#)

VI. Adjournment



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, October 22nd, 2020 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:47pm.
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, D. Anadkat, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Bentley, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chukwukere, L. Contreras, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Moy, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, S. Zverev, C. Huang
 - ii. *Members Absent:* A. Gleiberman, J. Noriega, E. Perez, L. Zumpano

II. Announcements

- a. N. Watson stated that internal elections will be this coming weekend, 10/24 and 10/25, for committee chairs and the Vice President of Research and Accountability.
 - i. If any questions, reach out to N. Watson, C. Huang, or L. Abd Elmagid.
- b. C. Huang stated that a socially distanced meet-up will occur tomorrow, 10/23, in the Arts Quad and more information is in Slack channel.
- c. C. Huang clarified the procedural rules that if a member had a Point of Information, Point of Order, or Point of Privilege, which would allow them to interrupt the Speaker's List, the member should type said information into the Zoom chat.
- d. L. Smith announced that OSGR is holding the Collegetown Neighborhood Council on Tuesday, 10/26, from 4pm to 5pm.
- e. T. Reuning informed that VP Lombardi stated that CARES Act funding will be distributed by the end of October and COVID SSE Relief Grant is separate from the CARES Act.

III. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at open microphone.

IV. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 15, 2020
 - i. Motion to approve the October 15th minutes – **approved** 25-0-1

V. Business of the Day

- a. SA R6 – Amending the Rank Choice Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections
 - i. Abstract: This resolution is intended to amend the Rank-Choice system for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections.
 - ii. U. Chukwukere states that main purpose is to not force voters to rank every single candidate in elections where Rank-Choice voting is being used.
 - iii. A. Miramontes Serrano asked what the origination of this resolution.

1. U. Chukwukere explained that this resolution stemmed from past elections, including the most recent Fall 2020 SA President and Undergrad Representative to the UA elections.
 2. Many votes were being invalidated because the voter had not ranked every candidate. There were cases where voters did not feel comfortable ranking certain candidates.
- iv. L. Smith asked what sections on the resolution were added and if this change will be applied to UA Representative elections.
1. U. Chukwukere stated that sections in red are what the amended sections of the charter and believed this should apply to that election.
- v. L. Smith proposed the amendment to add in on Line 61 to specify the President, Vice President, and Directly Elected UA Representatives elections.
1. Motion to amend Resolution #6 – amended 25-0-1
- vi. A. Miramontes Serrano asked if this proposal will address lack of voting in SA elections.
1. U. Chukwukere stated that he believed that lack of voting in recent election was due to voter fatigue. In past years, voter turnout was around 30% to 40% and was much less in the most recent election.
- vii. D. Anadkat expressed his support for this resolution and asked whether they could extend this to all positions on the SA.
1. U. Chukwukere stated that he believed the other elections were fine the way they were
 2. T. Reuning said this resolution is not relevant to the other elections. As the issue that is being addressed is that voters who do not rank every candidate is invalidated, this resolution addresses the Rank-Choice voting system. The other elections are based Plurality voting system, so that issue of voter disenfranchisement does not exist in those elections.
 3. T. Reuning stated that changing the election style for the other positions is a different conversation and more research would need to be done in the history of those elections.
- viii. S. Zverev stated that he believed D. Anadkat's question was relevant towards this resolution, as he believes this resolution affects every election.
- ix. M. Shardow expressed her support in the Rank-Choice voting system, as she believes it is important for voters to rank each candidate. It will get more votes for each candidate and requires voters to research each candidate.
1. T. Reuning clarified that this resolution does not get rid of Rank-Choice voting, it just allows for voters not to have to rank each candidate. In some cases, voters do not want to vote for certain candidates, especially if said candidate has said harmful remarks about different communities.
- x. M. Baker expressed her support for this resolution, as it addresses the concerns with invalidated votes from past elections, and encourages fellow members to vote to approve the resolution. M. Baker also agrees with T.

Reuning that there should be more research into changing all elections before adding to this resolution and it should be its own resolution.

- xi. A. Ononye expressed her support for this resolution and encouraged the SA to vote in favor of it. It will ensure that votes will not be invalidated, and voters will be ensured that their vote is counted. Historically, there has been a lack of transparency in current voting system and voters were not aware their votes were being invalidated.
- xii. D. Anadkat expressed concern over the fact that some voters received confirmation emails about their votes, but votes were actually invalidated. Ballots need to be clear about the rules, which will lead to more voter turnout. D. Anadkat stated that the line “all other elections will be chosen by a plurality voting system” should not be included in this resolution.
 - 1. Point of Information from M. Baker that the wording is already in the charter and is not what is being added to the charter.
 - 2. U. Chukwukere states that changing all the elections should be a separate conversation.
- xiii. Motion to vote – approved 23-2-1
- b. L. Smith asked if it was possible to task the Executive Archivist to research into the precedent of the adoption of plurality versus ranked choice.
 - i. Executive Archivist M. Silaban agrees to look into this.

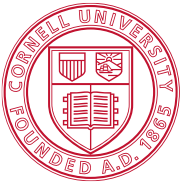
VI. Adjournment

- a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 5:22pm (EST)

Respectfully Submitted,

Ciara Shanahan

Clerk of the Student Assembly



Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	10/29/2020
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #7

Support for Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell's Demands

ABSTRACT: This resolution calls for the Student Assembly to support the demands of Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISAC)

Sponsored by: Colin Benedict '21

Whereas, the Gayogohó:no (Cayuga) Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy have a historic and contemporary presence in the Ithaca area;

Whereas, the Gayogohó:no people were displaced and forcibly removed from this region by the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign in 1779, an act of attempted genocide sponsored by the United States;

Whereas, the land claims filed by the Gayogohó:no people in the courts of the United States have proven to be largely unsuccessful in reestablishing a land base for themselves in the Finger Lakes area;

Whereas, the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 established a land-grant college for each state to support higher education;

Whereas, each state received 30,000 acres of land from the federal government for each member of Congress to support the funding of the land-grant college. If the state had no available lands in its boundaries, it was issued paper scrip to acquire lands in other states;

Whereas, Cornell University was established as the land grant institution for the state of New York, and 990,000 acres of land were granted to support the University endowment;

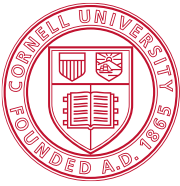
Whereas, New York had no available lands within its borders due to parceling of land in the post-Revolutionary War era;

Whereas, Ezra Cornell, John McGraw, and other Cornell founders selected land in 15 other states to fund the endowment of Cornell University;

Whereas, much of the land chosen by the University was available due to Indigenous dispossession and acts of genocide enacted by the United States;

Whereas, the University did not immediately sell the land, but let it accrue value over time, slowly selling it off years later;

Whereas, by 1914, an estimated 5.7 million was raised from the land sale (approximately \$148 million in 2020 dollars);



Cornell University Student Assembly

45 **Whereas**, Cornell had raised over 4.5 times as much money as the second most profitable land-
46 grant university, creating the basis for the endowment of Cornell University that we know
47 today;

48
49 **Whereas**, Cornell prides itself on Diversity and Inclusion, where any person can study any subject,
50 yet still refuses to publicly acknowledge the history of the territory that the University's
51 Ithaca campus occupies;

52
53 **Whereas**, as an academic institution that occupies land in the Ithaca area, Cornell has a
54 responsibility to acknowledge this history of violence, the Cayuga Nation's history with this
55 land, and support the Cayuga Nation as they seek to recover from this history, and reclaim
56 their territory;

57
58 **Whereas**, to this day, the University upholds a tradition of profiting from acts of colonial violence
59 and Indigenous erasure;

60
61 **Be it therefore resolved**, in order to begin to rectify these crimes, the members of Native American
62 and Indigenous Students At Cornell put forward the demands in Appendix A to the
63 University Administration;

64
65 **Be it further resolved**, the undergraduate Student Assembly will recognize these demands, and
66 support the efforts of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, in moving these demands into
67 practice;

68
69 **Be it finally resolved**, that the Student Assembly calls on the University to meet these demands,
70 acknowledge the historical and contemporary relationships that Indigenous people have with
71 the Ithaca campus, and make steps towards a more inclusive and reconciliatory relationship
72 with Indigenous people in the Ithaca area and beyond.

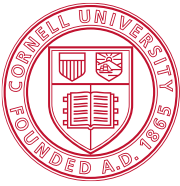
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75 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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77 Colin Benedict '21

78 *Former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Assembly*

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80 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-2, 10/28/2020)*

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Cornell University Student Assembly

86 *Appendix A:* Cornell University was founded on Indigenous dispossession and genocide. To this day,
87 the University upholds a tradition of profiting from acts of colonial violence and Indigenous erasure.
88 In order to begin to rectify these crimes, the members of Native American and Indigenous Students
89 At Cornell put forward these demands to the University:
90

- 91 1. The American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program shall transition to department status;
92 this transition is to be completed within the next four years.
- 93 2. Increased funding shall be granted to the AIISP for the recruitment and retention of new
94 Indigenous faculty members, to support the transition of the program to department status.
95 A minimum of five new faculty members shall be hired within the next four years.
- 96 3. Increased funding shall be granted to the AIISP to support increased recruitment and
97 retention efforts of Indigenous students. In 2017, there were only 67 Native Americans
98 enrolled across all colleges, undergraduate and graduate. We only make up 0.3% of the
99 overall Cornell student population¹. We demand that the number of enrolled Native
100 American/Alaska Native students be increased to 1.7% of the total Cornell student
101 population, equal to the percentage of Native American/Alaska Natives in the United
102 States². The University shall make efforts to increase the number of enrolled
103 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students to 1% of the total student population. In order to
104 support increased rates of retention, an additional staff member shall be hired to separate the
105 duties of recruitment and retention efforts within the AIISP. Recruitment conducted by the
106 University shall focus on Indigenous students from communities historically affected and/or
107 displaced by the Morrill Land Grant Act. Any student coming from a community affected
108 and/or displaced by the Morrill Land Grant Act shall receive a free education, regardless of
109 field of study.
- 110 4. An Indigenous therapist will be hired by Cornell Health, to aid in addressing the unique
111 mental health struggles affecting Indigenous students, staff, and faculty.
- 112 5. The University shall include a land acknowledgement of the Gayogohónq' (Cayuga) people
113 before all Ithaca-based University-affiliated events. The land acknowledgement used will be
114 the AIISP-approved version.
- 115 6. The University shall put out a statement acknowledging the amount of land acquired,
116 interest accrued, and mineral rights funds received through the Morrill Land Act and thus
117 through Indigenous dispossession. The University shall commit to a policy of refraining
118 from mineral and resource extraction on lands gained through the Morrill Land Grant Act.

¹ <https://datausa.io/profile/university/cornell-university>

² <http://www.ncai.org/about-tribes/demographics>



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 119 7. The University shall return all lands in the Ithaca area not immediately utilized for
120 educational purposes to the traditional Gayogohó:nq' leadership. The University shall build
121 and maintain channels of communication with the traditional Gayogohó:nq' leadership until
122 the land return process is complete.
- 123 8. To ensure that all students have a basic understanding of the gravity of Indigenous genocide
124 and their own positionality on stolen Indigenous land, the University shall mandate that all
125 students take an introductory Indigenous Studies course during their first year of study.
- 126 9. To ensure that monuments to historical figures of colonization and violence against
127 Indigenous people are removed, the University shall rename Morrill Hall on the Arts Quad.
128 Consultation with AIISP Faculty and Students in the renaming is required.
- 129 10. The Ad-Hoc Committee on Native American Affairs shall be reinstated to oversee the
130 approval of these demands. The Committee shall be made up of Indigenous students, staff,
131 faculty, local Indigenous leadership, and delegates from University administration.

132
133 *Supported by:*

134 Native American and Indigenous Students At Cornell
135 the American Indian Science and Engineering Society
136 Indigenous Graduate Students' Association
137 Cornell Asian Pacific Islander Student Union
138 Black Students Union
139 People's Organizing Collective
140 Black Women Support Network
141 South Asian Council
142 The Puerto Rican Students Association
143 The Cornell Abolitionist Revolutionary Society
144 Climate Justice Cornell
145 the Caribbean Students' Association
146 Cornell Welcomes Refugees
147 Cornell Vietnamese Association
148 Cornell Dream Team
149 Thread Magazine
150 The Gender Justice Advocacy Coalition
151 International Students' Union
152 First Generation Students' Union
153 Haven
154 Cornell Higher Education Review
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Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	10/29/2020
Type of Action:	Internal Policy
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #8 Cayuga Land Acknowledgement

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4 ABSTRACT: This resolution calls for the Student Assembly to amend the Standing Rules to include
5 a land acknowledgement of the Cayuga Nation, on whose territory the University occupies. This
6 land acknowledgement will be issued before all SA-affiliated events.
7
8

9 **Sponsored by: Colin Benedict '21**

10
11 **Whereas**, the Gayogohó:no (Cayuga) Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy have inhabited the
12 Finger Lakes region of New York since immemorial;
13

14 **Whereas**, the Gayogohó:no people were displaced and forcibly removed from this region by an
15 attempted act of genocide enacted by the United States in 1779 widely known as the
16 Sullivan-Clinton Campaign;
17

18 **Whereas**, Cornell currently occupies the territory of the Cayuga Nation;
19

20 **Whereas**, Cornell prides itself on Diversity and Inclusion, where any person can study any subject,
21 yet still refuses to publicly acknowledge the history of the territory that the University's
22 Ithaca campus occupies;
23

24 **Be it therefore resolved**, that as an academic institution that occupies this land, Cornell has a
25 responsibility to acknowledge this history of violence, the Cayuga Nation's history with this
26 land, and support the Cayuga Nation as they seek to recover from this history of violence
27 and reclaim their territory;
28

29 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly will amend Section 6, Line 200 of the Standing
30 Rules to include the following:
31

32 "Rule 1: The Student Assembly will issue a land acknowledgement of the of Gayogohó:nq'
33 (Cayuga Nation) before all affiliated meetings and events";
34

35 **Be it finally resolved**, that the Student Assembly will issue the land acknowledgement approved by
36 the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (AIISP) cited in Appendix A before
37 all affiliated meetings and events. (including all affiliated committee meetings). This land
38 acknowledgement will be updated and revised in accordance with the release of the final
39 version by the AIISP.
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Cornell University Student Assembly

44 **Respectfully Submitted,**

45

46 Colin Benedict '21

47 *Former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Assembly*

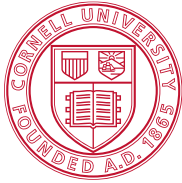
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49 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-2, 10/28/2020)*

50

51

52 *Appendix A:* Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq' (the
53 Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq' are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of
54 six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy
55 precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York State, and the United States of
56 America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq' dispossession, and honor the
57 ongoing connection of Gayogohó:nq' people, past and present, to these lands and waters.



Cornell University Student Assembly

October 29th, 2020

In Remembrance of Antonio Tsialas

Earlier this week marked the one year anniversary of Cornell student Antonio Tsialas' passing. Antonio was a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences and, shortly before his passing, had become involved on campus through club soccer and the Cornell Tour Guides. He had only been a student at Cornell for two months when his body was discovered on October 26th, 2019. The Cornell Student Assembly and the student body was deeply grieved to hear of his passing and offered our deepest condolences to Antonio's friends, family, and the Cornell community as we mourned together.

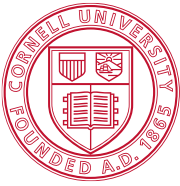
A year has passed since the Cornell community lost a beloved student, friend, and son. In that time, his death has been determined to be in relation with unsanctioned fraternity events, sparking reforms to our Greek Life system and university culture.

The Student Assembly would like to extend our continued support for the Tsialas family as they seek justice and truth and continue their investigation against Cornell University. The Assembly also expresses disappointment with Cornell administration's failure to offer public support for the different communities and student groups Antonio touched while on campus, or even recognize the anniversary of his passing.

Above all, the Student Assembly would like to remember Antonio and honor his memory, especially in the midst of a momentous semester and past year of great change and action. We cannot let his passing fall into the annals of Cornell history, to be forgotten and unheard of by future students. We must move forward in ensuring student safety while continuing to honor and remember the students who have passed.

We encourage our community to reach out to one another, as well as to the support services available. Cornell Health offers 24/7 phone consultation, as well as telehealth counseling and other mental health services via appointment at 605-255-5155. The Student Assembly supports the positive change that has resulted from Antonio's passing and asks that Cornell provides not only greater support for students still in mourning, but also greater transparency surrounding Antonio's case.

In support,
The Cornell Student Assembly



Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	10/29/2020
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #9

Demanding Cornell Absolve All Relations With The Ithaca Police Department

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this resolution is to call for Cornell University to absolve all ties with the Ithaca Police Department

Sponsored by: Uche Chukwukere '21 , Moriah Adeghe '21 , Tomas Reuning '21, Estefania Perez '21, Lucy Contreras '21, Kat Restrepo '21 , Amber Haywood '21, Cat Huang '21, Sherell Farmer '22

Whereas, Policing in America is rooted in a racism and slavery and has evolved today to embody the same ideals and same oppressive standards against marginalized groups and individuals

Whereas, Policing in America upholds a system that terrorizes, murders, oppresses, and incapacitates individuals whose identities are marginalized.

Whereas, The first primitive versions of policing in America stemmed from “Slave Patrols” which were used “to chase down, apprehend, and return to their owners, runaway slaves; (2) to provide a form of organized terror to deter slave revolts; and, (3) to maintain a form of discipline for slave-workers who were subject to summary justice, outside of the law, if they violated any plantation rules.”

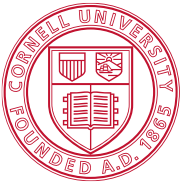
Whereas, The police systems eventually evolved into police departments tasked with controlling and terrorizing freed slaves, as well as denying them equal rights, bureaucratic processes, and equity in America

Whereas, Modern policing in America has reached a point where the system can no longer be reformed nor should it given its sinister history and complicity in the suffering of historically marginalized groups of individuals.

Whereas, America is becoming a police state with a reward system at the expense of individuals who are BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Low SES, Immigrant, and etc. and has made no true efforts at bringing justice and equity

Whereas, Ithaca Police Department is complicit in the suffering of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people of color, especially within the Ithaca Area and have made no true attempts to bring true conflict resolution to the community

Whereas, On October 11th, 2020 the Ithaca Police Department violently arrested two peaceful protesters by dragging them out of the crowd and putting them into custody.



Cornell University Student Assembly

44 **Whereas,** During the unlawful arrests, Ithaca Police Department refused to read the Miranda rights
45 to the two protesters that were arrested as well as purposefully misgendered one of the
46 protesters that was arrested
47

48 **Whereas,** Present at these protests were many Cornell students who firsthand witnessed and
49 experienced the brutality and injustice exhibited by Ithaca Police Department
50

51 **Whereas,** Ithaca Police Department is no stranger to committing acts of violence and
52 discrimination against BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Low SES, and Immigrant status individuals.
53

54 **Whereas,** Cornell University Police Department and Ithaca Police Department have worked
55 together in the past and have a working relationship
56

57 **Whereas,** Cornell University Police Department officers were said to have been deployed to act
58 alongside the Ithaca Police Department during the protests in downtown against students
59 and Ithaca residents
60

61 **Whereas,** Cornell University cannot uphold its motto of “Any Person, Any Study” and its other
62 values while also being complicit in the suffering of its marginalized students by partnering
63 with a system that also oppresses many of our marginalized Cornell students.
64

65 **Whereas,** Failure to absolve relations with the Ithaca Police Department will further validate
66 Cornell University’s complicitness in upholding the violently oppressive police system rooted
67 in America and the suffering of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Low SES, etc. groups of individuals
68

69 **Be it therefore resolved,** Cornell must immediately absolve all ties and relations with the Ithaca
70 Police Department and all of its subsidiaries and explore alternative community solutions.
71

72 **Be it finally resolved,** Cornell must use its position and influence within Tompkins County to urge
73 for greater community oversight over the Ithaca Police Department
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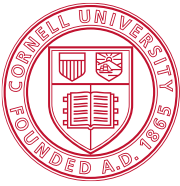
76 **Respectfully Submitted,**
77

78 Uche Chukwukere ‘21
79 *Vice President for Finance*
80

81 Cat Huang ‘21
82 *President*
83

84 Tomas Reuning ‘21
85 *LGBTQIA+ Representative At-Large*
86

87 Estefania Perez ‘21



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 88 *Arts and Sciences Representative*
89
90 Lucy Contreras '21
91 *First Generation Students Liaison At-Large*
92
93 Kat Restrepo '21
94 *Director of Finance, Office of the Student Advocate*
95
96 Amber Haywood '21
97 *Co-Founder, DoBetterCornell*
98
99 Sherell Farmer '22
100 *Co-Founder, CornellStudents4BlackLives (C4BL)*
101
102 Moriah Adeghe '21
103 *Co-Director of Elections*
104
105 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 6-0-1, 10/29/2020)*