



# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 30, 2017 Meeting  
4:45pm-6:30pm in Willard Straight Hall: Memorial Room

### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. J. Kim called the meeting to order at 4:53pm.
- b. Roll Call:
  - i. *Present:* T. Ball, D. Barbaria, A. Chowdhury, O. Corn, R. Cornell, V. Devatha, O. Din, O. Egharevba, R. Herz, M. Indimine, G. Kaufman, J. Kim, S. Lim, L. Lipschutz, T. Magloire, A Martinez, S. Park, M. Peralta-Ochoa, S. Romero Zavala, J. Sanon, C. Schott, E. Shapiro, J. Sim, D. Tokunboh, M. Valdez, I. Wallace
  - ii. *Absent:* H. Hassan (excused), C. Schott (excused)

### II. Open Microphone

- a. Vice President of Community Relations from La Asociación Latina requested that the resolution for Providing Financial Support for Visiting Students (Resolution 23) be pushed to the front of the meeting.
- b. Resident of the Latino Living Center also requested that the resolution be pushed forward.
- c. Representative from Cornell Cinema said that the cinema is happy to allow discussion to this resolution before the discussion on the cinema.
- d. Pastor Michael-Vincent Crea '77 said he comes here today because of the assault on the African American student and also pushes for equal respect. He has attempted requests to meet with President M. Pollack but never received a response. He has had hate crimes committed against him, as well as injustices committed against him on Cornell campus regarding his service dog.
- e. SA representative made a motion to move Resolution 23 before byline reports – **passed** with no dissent.

### III. Announcements and Reports

- a. Rep Sim: NetPrint Task Force
  - i. J. Sim gave an update and will share a report at the beginning of next semester. He told SA members to contact him if they are interested.

### IV. New Business

- a. Resolution 23: Providing Financial Support for Visiting Students from the Universidad de Puerto Rico
  - i. O. Din said he, along with M. Valadez and M. Peralta-Ochoa have been working on the language on the details of the resolution, so he requested to end the resolution as forth. However, he does have some amendments to present.

1. O. Din made a motion to amend line 49 to strike “finally” and replace it with “further,”
  2. strike “towards the university’s fundraising campaign in order to support the visiting students” and change to “the School of Continuing Education’s University of Puerto Rico support fund, and;”
  3. add “Be it further resolved, that those funds are earmarked to only be allocated to, and limited to, the visiting students from the Universidad de Puerto Rico for the spring 2018 semester, and;”
  4. add “Be it further resolved, that the University be charged with the responsibility of distributing the money from the University of Puerto Rico students support fund, as fairly as possible, taking into consideration the actual needs and interests of the University of Puerto Rico students themselves, and”
  5. add “Be it finally resolved, that the guidelines for granting the Student Assembly’s contribution to the aid be as follows:  
‘Allowable expenses include (but are not limited to): books, school supplies, food, winter clothing, and moving and travel expenses. Prohibited usage of the grant includes (but is not limited to): substitution for income and transfer of funds to other students.’”
  6. Amendments **adopted** by unanimous consent.
- ii. O. Din made a motion to move this to Business of the Day because there is not another meeting to go over this – **passed** by a vote of 25-0-1.
  - iii. O. Din said the visiting students from the Universidad de Puerto Rico do not have financial aid. The university’s goal is to raise \$40,000, but many members of the community did not feel the amount divided among 58 students (averages about \$600/student) was adequate to cover the costs of moving to and living in Ithaca for a semester, especially when these are students are coming from a troubled time. The SA has a surplus of over \$150,000. O. Din wants to contribute \$10,000 of the surplus to the things items specified. He did not want this to go through FARC (SA Financial Aid Review Committee) because it is not actually part of the SA but rather in the Financial Aid Office, and the office follows rules it is given. Creating a separate fund would cause students to have to apply to both, doubling bureaucratic steps. He would like to put the money into the School of Continuing Education’s University of Puerto Rico support fund.
  - iv. R. Herz said each student should realistically be able to donate a dollar.
  - v. M. Peralta-Ochoa said they did reach out to the Puerto Rican Students Association and La Asociación Latina and has received positive feedback. Cornell does not know which students are being admitted yet. One concern is that some who will be admitted are not going to be facing such a financial struggle as others, but they have to take into consideration that everyone lost their home. Even if the \$10,000 is administered equally, it will not be enough, but will be a step of good faith. If more money is needed, he is hoping the SA or other organizations will help.
  - vi. M. Peralta-Ochoa said the SA is not doing all it can to help the students. He requests the community to continue putting pressure on the SA.
  - vii. Community member told the SA members to think more about the good they can do rather than their egos and re-elections.

- viii. Chris Arce, Co-President of Puerto Rican Student Association, emphasized the importance of helping Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican students. Puerto Rico receives no care from the federal government, but the SA has the opportunity to show compassion to a group of people who have been historically oppressed.
- ix. Community member urged people to push the Board of Trustees to step in and help with the costs.
- x. Motion to move to the question – dissent from M. Valadez as she has an amendment.
- xi. J. Kim said he is limiting the speakers on the speakers list to one minute.
- xii. M. Valadez, Chair of Financial Aid Review Committee and Chair of Diversity Committee, was concerned about the resolution passing through the SA, specifically how they were going to follow the money and how it will be allocated by the School of Continuing Education. They still do not know, but it is time-sensitive that they pass this.
  - 1. Motion to extend – **passed**
- xiii. M. Valadez made a motion to add “Be it further resolved that the School of Co School of Continuing Education will report back to the Student Assembly at the end of the spring semester regarding the number of students who have been served through the Student Assembly's contribution.”
  - 1. O. Din suggested adding this at the very end as a “Be it finally resolved” clause. M. Valadez agreed.
  - 2. Motion to vote on the amendment – **passed** with a clear majority
- b. Motion to vote on the resolution – **passed** with a vote of 25-0-1.

## V. Byline Reports

- a. Cornell Cinema
  - i. J. Kim said he is not confident he can maintain partiality in good conscience, so he will be stepping down as Chair for the discussion regarding Cornell Cinema. Executive Vice President V. Devatha is also not impartial and so Vice President of Internal Operations D. Barbaria will be stepping up as chair.
  - ii. D. Barbaria clarified that the majority of the SA, or 15 members, will have to vote in the affirmative to approve the Appropriations Committee funding decision that will allow the SA to fund the cinema at an amount other than \$0.00/student. To overturn the funding decision, they would need a 2/3 approval in the room, which is 18 votes.
  - iii. G. Kaufman said the primary issue is that salaries and compensation for the cinema is currently paid out of the earned income from the programming that the SA is being asked to be paid for. They have stated this is not an appropriate arrangement and the provost’s office was not able or willing cover the cost. The SA has been forced in a situation to make human resource management decisions as 18-21 year olds facing public scrutiny as many in this room have direct financial interest in this vote. He pushes for a complete divesture from byline funding for Cornell Cinema.
  - iv. Cornell Cinema student advisory board and undergraduate staff said the provost has agreed to provide \$40,000 and additional funding which would cover the portion for the student activity fee that provides for staff wages. Cornell Cinema is a significant student activity and should be funded with a requested \$8.50/student to make sure the program continues the way it

currently does. Many students have supported Cornell cinema these past few weeks. This appeal process has been demoralizing and made it nearly impossible for professional and student staff members to do their jobs. A restructuring will take time, in which we can jointly work towards a mutually acceptable funding structure. It is evident the university will not provide more funds than already specified and so it is up to the SA to decide whether or not the cinema should continue to exist.

1. Motion to extend – passed
- v. R. Herz said her concern was that about 70% of the budget, or \$370,000, goes to salaries for 4 people, even with program cost cutting measures.
- vi. A. Martinez said no other byline funded organizations uses student money to pay for full time staff.
- vii. G. Kaufman said at the meeting to negotiate, he was negotiating in good faith. I told the administration if they were able to put in \$87,000 to fill the gap in addition to the \$40,000, the SA would be willing to put in enough to make undergraduate students ticket free.
1. Motion to extend a minute – passed
  2. Motion to extend by another minute – D. Barbaria said he cannot recognize that motion
- viii. Cornell Cinema member is upset at the attitude of the SA and Appropriations Committee. SA members are presented with empirical evidence against defunding the cinema but continue to maintain their misguided positions.
1. Motion to extend by a minute – passed
  2. Motion to extend by another minute – passed
- ix. G. Kaufman said they ask almost all byline organizations to prepare for a 10%, 22%, 35% cut and for an organization whose programming is based entirely off of the income from the activity fee, this would represent this cut. A 22% cut is not a death blow.
- x. Cornell Cinema representative said that they are a nonprofit organization and break even every year. This cut is a huge and it would not just be a cut to programs, but also staff. He would like to defer his time to Vice President for Budget and Planning Paul Streeter.
- xi. VP Streeter explained the rationale behind the provost's decision. After meeting with the Director of Cornell Cinema, they concluded that roughly at least 57%, and arguably 80%, of programming is direct student entertainment related, and not academically based. The current funding level is reasonable and fair.
- xii. J. Kim said the provost believes that in fair funding, the school pays for academic films while students pay for entertainment films. The university pays its own employees. The SA's understanding was that they would have several meetings over the next few weeks, but there were no meetings. The SA had no input and there was no transparency on how the decisions on which programs were academic and which were entertainment were made between the cinema and the provost's office. The SA did not agree this was their definition of fair funding.
1. Motion to extend – passed
- xiii. Cornell Cinema said concerns about staff wages were brought up last semester and they did make attempts to cut costs to cover staff wages.

- xiv. V. Devatha read a statement to show it was inaccurate that concerns were introduced the previous semester. In 2009, the university's executive sent an email to the SA about the previous decade's concerns. There is a lot of information about the cinema which had an activity fee allocation as of 1999. The list outlines the lack of student involvement in cinema administration and the issue of staff salaries had been brought up multiple years. The allocation has been appealed and debated nearly every funding cycle with the cinema always pointing out a significant deficit should its request not be fully fulfilled.
- xv. Cornell cinema member asked why there have there been no legislative change. This is the first time in 20 years the cinema has asked for a decrease in funding, which is a sign of good faith.
- xvi. V. Devatha said there is institutional knowledge, such as staff that have been here for decades, and have had plenty of time to address this. It is unrealistic to pass and enforce this legislation as the process is difficult.
- xvii. G. Kaufman said this is the first time the cinema provided staff salary information and found that the activity fee was used for wages.
- xviii. M. Fessenden said Cornell Cinema started with full understanding that there would be professional staff running the program and have always provided wage information. None of the recommendations from the Appropriations Committee said we could no longer use a small portion of the activity fee to cover a small portion of staff wages. Our budgets show we will no longer need to use any of the activity fee at \$8.50/student to cover staff wages. The first she has heard of concerns about the use of ticket income to cover staff wages was on Tuesday with VP Streeter and representatives from the SA. Cornell Cinema is completely different from other byline groups, as we only receive 30% of our budget from the SA.
- xix. M. Valadez said having a sober space on campus is vital for student safety. The cinema proves a lower cost alternative to low-income students. The question of whether or not someone gets to keep their job should not be the responsibility of this assembly. She does not agree funding the full \$8.50, but disagrees more strongly with the decision to fully defund.
  - 1. Motion to extend – passed
- xx. J. Sanon, the SA First-Generation Student Representative At-Large and member of Appropriations Committee, said she voted to fund the cinema from \$5.20 down. The SA should focus more on the role of the administration.
  - 1. Motion to extend – passed
  - 2. Motion to extend – passed
- xxi. V. Devatha made a motion to vote – dissent from S. Park who pushed for continuing along the speakers list.
  - 1. V. Devatha maintains his motion
  - 2. D. Barbaria asked the assembly to hold up placards to count attendance. There are 27 members present.
  - 3. D. Baabaria said on the speakers list is O. Egharevba, S. Romero-Zavala, K. Early, S. Park, Director Bell, T. Ball, R. Herz.
  - 4. D. Barbaria asked for a vote to vote – failed to pass
  - 5. D. Barbaria said they will continue with the speakers list.
  - 6. Motion to overturn Appropriations Committee decision – dissent

7. D. Barbaria said a motion to overturn would require 2/3rds of the assembly voting in favor. A vote to overturn could allow funding at another value.
8. SA member had a point of order about approving the appropriations committee recommendation – D. Barbaria said in order to approve we need 15 votes. If it constantly falls short, we will keep discussing.
9. Motion to extend the meeting until 7pm – **passed** with no dissent.
10. Motion to overturn the Appropriations Committee decision that will allow for funding consideration at a value between \$0.50 and \$8.50.
11. V. Devatha made a motion to go into voting to approve the Appropriations Committee decision – dissent from T. Ball
  - a. V. Devatha maintains his position – **fails** with a vote of 16-7-2.
  - b. G. Kaufman made a motion for an attendance roll call.
- xxii. VP Streeter said there are revenues from the operations on campus that pay staff. They do not pay every staff dollars out of university resources. Cornell Cinema is an enterprise and the consideration now is rather of the amount of activity that is benefitted by the students and the academic program. They never really asked the question of whether they are paying staff or not.
- xxiii. SA member said there is a difference with the Cornell Cinema enterprise in that students are subsidizing the cinema. They are giving money for programming, not staff wages. Does not think this argument is really fair, the cinema is a byline funded organization, so it is different than other enterprises on campus and the university's responsibility.
- xxiv. Motion to vote – dissent from S. Park
- xxv. Motion to vote – **passes** with a vote of 19-7-1. Assembly is going into voting on the Appropriations Committee recommendation.
  1. Motion to approve the Appropriations Committee decision to fund the Cornell Cinema at \$0.00 – **approved** with a vote of 19-5-3.
- xxvi. Community member Noelle LaDue said this was the most disrespectful process she has ever been a part of and pointed out G. Kaufman for personal insults.
- xxvii. M. Peralta-Ochoa said the moment they are elected, there is so much more scrutiny and pressure. He apologizes for G. Kaufman.
- xxviii. Community member Nathan David Chazan interrupts and says he is going to lose his job and blames the SA for taking away a safe space.
- xxix. J. Kim asks for decorum.
- xxx. M. Peralta-Ochoa apologizes that their job security was on the line. The Provost should be paying their salaries, not the SA.
- xxxi. J. Kim said because this is an extraordinary circumstance, even though the vote has passed, they will continue a short discussion.
- xxxii. T. Cabbell said he has not heard a single solution on how to move forward.
- xxxiii. Community member said they cannot keep pointing at the administration. The SA is the last line of defense to maintain its cultural relevance to the student body. The SA should be uniting with Cornell Cinema.
- xxxiv. Community member urged the SA to undo the vote.
- xxxv. Community members shared their disappointment.
- b. Outdoor Odyssey
- c. Alternative Breaks
- d. Club Insurance

- e. Slope Day Programming Board
- f. Senior Days
- g. CU Tonight Commission
- h. SAFC
- i. Athletics & Physical Education
- j. Cornell Concert Commission
- k. Collegiate Readership Program
- l. Student Assembly

**VI. Business of the Day**

- a. Resolution 14: Increasing the Transparency of WCM-Q
- b. Resolution 17: Declaring Support for Wind Development on Campus
- c. Resolution 22: Spring 2018 Election Rules
  - i. Rules Attachment

**VII. New Business**

**VIII. Adjournment**

- a. J. Kim adjourned the meeting at

**IX. Executive Session**

- a. SAIFC Chair Nominations & Voting
- b. CRPC Nominations & Voting

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Catherine Tran*  
Clerk of the Assembly