

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the March 6, 2017 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

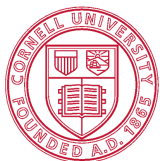
- I. Call to Order
 - a. N. Stetson called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
 - b. *Members Present:* R. Boylan, E. Case, C. Franklin, J. Goldberg, J. Hernandez, S. Hesse, A. Loiben, J. Maynard, E. Michel, M. Milano, M. Munasinghe, L. Munguia, I. Smythe, T. Snider, A. Waymack, E. Winarto.
 - c. *Members Absent:* T. Bollu, M. Jodlowski, Y. Tang.
 - d. *Also Present:* O. Corn, D. Liu, K. Bullis, L. Falkson, C. Walcott, J. Kahabka.
- II. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. The minutes from the February 13, 2017 meeting were **approved** unanimously.
- III. Presentations
 - a. Olivia Corn, a candidate for Student-Elected Undergraduate Trustee, then made her presentation.
 - b. Dustin Liu, a candidate for Student-Elected Undergraduate Trustee, then made his presentation.
 - c. Kent Bullis, M.D., Interim Executive Director, Gannett Health Services, then made his presentation. [Please see Appendix](#) for details (at assembly.cornell.edu).
 - d. Linda Falkson and Charlie Walcott, Director and Ombudsman, respectively, from the University Ombudsman's Office then made their presentation. [Please see Appendix](#) for details.
 - e. Jason Kahabka, Associate Dean for Administration, the Graduate School, then made his presentation on workers' compensation. [Please see Appendix](#) for details.
 - i. Three motions were made to extend the meeting during J. Kahabka's presentation. They were all approved unanimously.
- IV. Breakout Session by Division
 - a. Not held, members signed in while arriving or leaving the meeting.
- V. Old Business
 - a. **Resolution 12: In Support of the March for Science**



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- i. T. McCann reminded the assembly that this resolution is to fund buses for ASAP to take people to Washington D.C. for the March for Science.
- ii. M. Munasinghe motioned to **amend** the resolution to look like the new resolution that was distributed in the meeting packet. The motion was **approved** 14-0-5.
- iii. T. Snider stated that in general he supports the idea, but asked if there is anything ASAP has done to prevent people from skipping if the GPSA pays for 3 buses.
- iv. Everyone who reserves a seat pays \$25 dollars.
- v. S. Solouki stated that the money hasn't been collected yet, but it will be when the resolution is passed.
- vi. R. Walroth asked what is the dollar amount being spent and what is that as a percentage of the GPSA's roll over.
- vii. T. McCann responded that currently they have \$23,000 in the rollover account. Giving a maximum of \$5,600 to ASAP.
- viii. R. Boylan asked if the \$25 fee was the only thing riders had to pay.
- ix. S. Solouki responded that ASAP is hoping to fund transportation, but lodging will be the responsibility of the participant.
- x. T. McCann made a friendly amendment to change "XXX" to "4".
- xi. E. Case stated that she fully supports the March for Science, but asked what if anyone comes to the GPSA wanting to go to a march in D.C, she asked what would the GPSA do then.
- xii. A motion was made to extend the meeting by 10 minutes.
- xiii. E. Case asked where the \$900 that isn't accounted for in the Resolution is going to come from.
- xiv. S. Solouki responded that if ASAP can't raise more money, they will increase the \$25 fee. They are really looking at funding to make this as cheap as possible for students.
- xv. T. Snider motioned to **call the question**. Calling the question was **approved** 12-0-7.
- xvi. Resolution 12 was **approved** 13-0-6.

VI. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates



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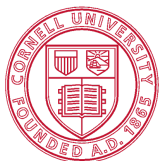
- a. Executive: if anyone has follow up questions about the presenters, email N. Stetson.
- b. Operations: nothing to report.
- c. Appropriations: if anyone has any ideas on how to build outreach on what the GPSA does talk to T. McCann.
- d. Communications: if you're not getting emails from the GPSA, talk to M. Munasinghe.
- e. Finance: nothing to report.
- f. Student Advocacy: there is a meeting on Thursday, they will talk about workers' compensation and a food security task force. They want to investigate the survey findings that 20% of students were food insecure.
- g. Diversity and International Students: they need an interim chair of DISC, if you're interested please step forward. DISC also needs more members. Email an393@cornell.edu with questions.
- h. Programming: Grad Ball is Kentucky Derby Day, Saturday May 6 at the Johnson Museum. Trying to organize a wine tour; it's going to be a week day. Also hoping to have an outdoor event.
- i. Faculty Awards: faculty awards are open, please nominate somebody who's made a difference in your life.
- j. General Committee: nothing to report.
- k. Graduate School: nothing to report.

VII. Open Forum

- a. T. McCann can accept CGSU surveys.
- b. It was asked if the GPSA or programming board was planning on holding an event to encourage voting in the unionization election, N. Stetson replied yes.
- c. J. Goldberg clarified that the Board of Trustees cannot overrule the unionization vote, no matter which way it goes.
- d. A motion was made to close business, it was approved by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Ferraro
Clerk of the Assembly



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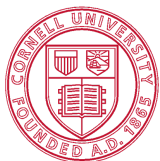
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Appendix of the Minutes of the March 6, 2017 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

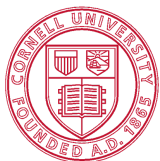
Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

- I. Presentation of Kent Bullis, M.D., Interim Executive Director, Gannett Health Services.
 - a. A. Gagnon asked how is it determined who is consulted in person for CAPS.
 - b. K. Bullis responded that if the caller wants ongoing mental health service, that is outside of the purview of Gannett specialists, not an emergency situation, then they are referred elsewhere. They don't have enough resources to provide long term services for all the students who need it.
 - c. A. Waymack: it's about a 3 week wait right now for getting a mental health consultation. Asked if he is expecting any change on that front.
 - d. Because of health fee they have been able to have a steady income, hire some new CAPS specialists. They're trying.
 - e. A. Waymack took a class on identifying students with distress, asked if there are more sessions going on.
 - f. K. Burris: he's not sure how frequently those sessions occur.
 - g. The old Gannett space made it hard to protect student confidentiality. The new construction increased space and some staffing.
 - h. M. Munasinghe stated that when someone calls in, being deferred can be demoralizing, and asked what happens during that wait period to see if they are actually receiving mental health care.
 - i. K. Burris responded that Gannett has a lot of resources on their webpage, a number of outreach services (e.g. Let's Talk). Trying to push that timeline as short as it can be.
 - j. M. Munasinghe stated that trying to find numbers on graduate and professional student health is extremely difficult, asked if there is a survey being developed to find that information.
 - k. K. Burris: Those statistics don't exist, but they are working on setting up a survey. Beginning this spring, graduate and professional student questions will be added onto an already existing Cornell survey.



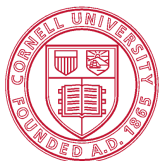
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- l. A. Gagnon asked how reliable the call back rate is for CAPS. Some people weren't getting call backs.
 - m. K. Burris: That should not happen. They work with an answering service which then contacts a nurse who is supposed to call you back. There's no systemic reason why that should happen. In this situation it was probably human error.
 - n. A. Gagnon asked if he had statistics on call back rate.
 - o. K. Burris responded he didn't, asked A. Gagnon to contact him and he'll find out.
 - p. It was asked if the \$10 copays will be in effect next year.
 - q. K. Burris: yes they will be in effect.
 - r. It was asked if it could be possible to have a nap center in Gannett.
 - s. K. Burris: there are no plans for that, but they have some lovely waiting spaces. If you can find a space, napping is fine.
 - t. A. Waymack seconded the request for a nap room.
 - u. Contact K. Burris at kwb47@cornell.edu
- II. Presentation of Linda Falkson and Charlie Walcott, Director and Ombudsman, respectively, from the University Ombudsman's Office.
- a. The Ombudsman's Office is a safe space to come talk about problems. It's an independent office of the university that serves faculty, staff and students. They listen and try to be helpful. It's confidential, informal, neutral, independent. There is almost never a situation where someone can't come in that week, usually within a day or two.
 - b. T. Snider asked what the ombudsman's office stance on the redesign of policy 6.4 is. He asked how many cases has the office seen.
 - c. L. Falkson responded that the office is an informal resource. They don't say whether something is a violation of Cornell policy because they don't do investigations.
 - d. T. Snider stated you advise students on what the best course is to take. You might have a stance on policy.
 - e. L. Falkson. stated the office is here to talk through problems, but they also comment on trends that they're seeing to administration. T. Snider will send them an email.
 - f. P. Berry asked the presenters to clarify what their office does.



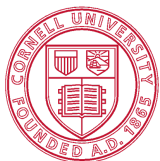
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- g. C. Walcott responded that there are several types of ombudsman. Government/classical ones usually investigate. Cornell's is an organizational one, and doesn't investigate. If you start doing investigations you cease being neutral.
 - h. A. Gagnon asked if the presenters had statistics on how many graduate students there were out of the 327 people the office served last year.
 - i. The answer was 59 graduate and professional students, plus 89 undergraduates.
 - j. A. Gagnon asked, of those 59, do they know the amount of them who received sufficient help from the office, or do they need help outside of the office.
 - k. L. Falkson responded that the Ombudsman's office shows them what options they could take. Helps them determine what would be best. They are not tracking people.
 - l. B. McInnis asked to what extent do you coordinate with other services on campus. CAPS for example.
 - m. C. Walcott responded that they get referrals from Gannett and they also refer people to Gannett.
 - n. A. Natarajan asked what they are doing to reach out and make the office more accessible.
 - o. C. Walcott responded that this is the issue they've been facing forever. If you have any ideas on how to get the word out, please suggest it to the office.
- III. Presentation of Jason Kahabka, Associate Dean for Administration, the Graduate School, to the Assembly.
- a. J. Kahabka stated that he was here to talk about University support systems for student injuries. Having some injuries here is a reality. Cornell is fortunate that in general terms it is a very safe space. Policy that applies to all students: first line of defense is through student health insurance. Try to make sure all students have high quality health insurance. Goal is to have 100% health care coverage.
 - b. Then there's student hourly employment: in most cases, students who are injured from working (under hourly employment, on the clock) are covered under workers' compensation.
 - c. Then there is "what is university's moral obligation to injured student?" (without regard to whether injury occurred during academic/employment/recreational time). Cornell has a Fiduciary obligation at the end of the day, if a student/visitor is hurt on campus, University can be sued.



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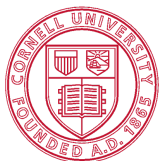
- d. When a student has an injury, first priority is medical treatment.
- e. Workers' compensation is a state led program run by state law. It's dense. The workers' compensation benefits are on a very defined and fixed schedule.
- f. In 2014, this body passed a resolution asking the graduate school to clarify workers' compensation. No changes were made to workers' compensation policy because they are largely defined by law. Changes that really occurred at Cornell have to do with tracking injuries. In 2014 the injury tracking system was modified. If the injury occurred while conducting employment business, it would be handled through workers' compensation.
- g. Found 270 cases at Cornell of workers' compensation for graduate and professional students covering the last 40 years. Between July 1st, 2014 and December 31st, 2016, there were 155 graduate and professional student injuries, of which 13 were work related, all of those 13 injuries were handled through workers' compensation. In that time frame there were no cases denied.
- h. What is work activity for a graduate student? For hourly employment it's simple; if it's on the clock it's work activity. For graduate students it's not always clear though. Assistantships are considered forms of financial aid. The way Cornell is structured, an assistantship should be a small portion of your time, to serve Cornell in exchange for tuition/housing/stipend. Not clear where service component to the university begins and ends.
- i. For international students they are limited to 20 hours a week of work. TAs it's easier to do this. For research it's harder.
- j. Medical leave is available to students and employees. Disability insurance is a very specific thing (statutory). Salary replacement for a defined length of time.
- k. The student disability office provides a formalized process for accommodations. Accommodations are available and routinely utilized.
- l. There are no structural differentiations between types of students. The question is are they employed or not, liability issue or not. No difference between undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.
- m. Encourages GPSA to think very broadly about what is actually most beneficial to injured students. It is actually to the university's advantage to use workers' compensation because it minimizes liability (can't sue if you take workers'



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compensation), there isn't resistance to proper claims being handled by workers' compensation. Sometimes a better accommodation--a more flexible situation--can be forged instead of using workers' compensation.

- n. J. Goldberg pointed out that even though the graduate school sees assistantships as financial aid, Cornell is the employer on tax forms.
- o. Someone pointed out that she works on an assistantship, which involves working with dairy cows, and asked if she would be covered.
- p. J. Kahabka: in this case it's hard to judge. She'd be covered by Cornell Health insurance, if dairy cow interaction was related to employment things, that could be workers' compensation. If Cornell and the individual weren't in agreement it would be the New York state board or a judge that would decide.
- q. J. Kahabka: fellowships are very similar to scholarships from Cornell, the expectation of work in return is not there thought. Student activity is not work. Claim would be handled through insurance first, then moral/fiduciary duty.
- r. A. Gagnon pointed out how the language isn't very clear.
- s. J. Kahabka: there's definitely nuance. Looking back at 40 years of data, only one student was denied workers' compensation here.
- t. J. Kahabka: there is still more interest in clarifying, if that's included in a future resolution they will work on this. It's hard to put it into bullet points. The lawyers don't like talking about liability.
- u. J. Kahabka: in injury reporting tool it asks if the injury sustained is work related. It is possible to do work related activities and not be getting a W2. If you're a volunteer you're still treated like a worker.
- v. M. Munasinghe stated we have to enter if it is a work or student issue on the reporting form, and asked how do we know when we are one or the other.
- w. J. Kahabka: the graduate school can help, they try to be student advocates. But they aren't the ombudsman office, they're not neutral.
- x. It was asked how many students file for workers' compensation who are TAs vs. fellowships, and the number of international students who do this.
- y. J. Kahabka: a workers' compensation claim will not lead to a cash pay out to the student, essentially it's whether the bill goes to an insurance company or the workers' compensation fund.



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- z. P. Berry: I'd like to return to the example of dairy cows, so let's say that a TA, part of their research involves dairy cows. They might be eligible for workers' compensation.
- aa. J. Kahabka: as a student, they wouldn't be eligible for workers' compensation. As a graduate student, an unfunded MS student, in that case they are functionally the same as workers' compensation goes: not work activity. As a TA though, you are being paid to be there, and that would be workers' compensation. But what if you're a PhD student where you're conducting research on the dairy cows? That's the challenging question.
- bb. T. Snider asked has Cornell opposed workers' compensation claims of students who haven't been deemed working.
- cc. J. Kahabka: yes, the one claim. They were not on a paid appointment, and there was not sufficient evidence of work related tasks.
- dd. M. Munasinghe asked what about the 140 other grad students who didn't receive workers' compensation.
- ee. J. Kahabka: some weren't serious enough to need treatment, some were not related to employment at all.
- ff. A. Natarajan asked if there have been students who haven't been compensated in any of the 3 ways.
- gg. J. Kahabka: nobody has records or recollections of cases that weren't handled in one of those three ways. That everyone has health insurance really helps.