



**Cornell University**  
**Graduate and Professional**  
**Student Assembly**

**Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly**

Minutes of the October 29th, 2018 Meeting

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

I. Call to Order

- a. E. Winarto called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
- b. *Members Present:* D. Arora, A. Barrientos-Gomez, A. Cohn, D. Geisler, R. Harrison, M. Jodlowski, M. Kalaji, J. Kent-Dobias, K. Krishnan, E. Lavin, N. London, C. Mittan, K. Palumbo, C. Pratt, W. Zhang, E. Winarto, J. Bogdanowicz.
- c. *Members Absent:* K. Angierski, A. Viarruel, A. Belen Ruival, N. Carre.
- d. A motion was made to move Approval of the Minutes after Presentations, there was no dissent.

II. Presentations

- a. Chris Payne, Director of Administrator Services, Student Health Benefits Advisory committee, then made his presentation.
- b. C. Payne: all students are required to have health insurance that meets the minimum standards established by Risk Management and Insurance. All students are automatically enrolled in the Student Health Plan (SHP), and have to request a waiver to opt-out.
- c. C. Payne: SHP+ is for anyone who is eligible for NYS Medicaid.
- d. C. Payne: the Cornell Health website has a cost of services chart for the SHP, SHP+, or the Student Health Fee (SHF).
- e. C. Payne: When the Health Fee was implemented, clinical encounters increased. The Health Fee lowered costs, and students now know what they're gonna get when they walk in the door. Cornell Health thought that clinical encounters would increase, but didn't know by how much. The numbers are up: 38% in primary care visits, 26% in CAPS assessments, and 68% in Student Disability Services.
- f. C. Payne: Cornell Health has been increasing the ratio of support staff to clinical staff, which makes clinical staff more productive and lowers costs. Cornell Health is also restructuring administration in order to be more efficient and move money to clinical staff. The number of CAPS counselors and CAPS visits are both increasing.
- g. C. Payne showcased ongoing cost drivers:



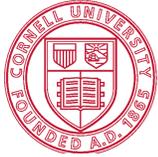
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- i. Annual salaries increase 2.5-3% per year.
    1. Health care salary market pay increases add 1% per year to the above number to remain competitive.
  - ii. Services and supplies inflation is 2% per year.
  - iii. Population growth (campus population) is 1.3% per year.
  - iv. Mental health utilization is increasing and is a national trend with an uncertain trajectory.
  - v. Primary care utilization increased after the Health Fee was implemented. It may be stabilizing.
- h. C. Payne then highlighted major changes in Cornell Health's finances:
- i. Revenue: currently relying on \$800,000 in one time funding (gifts and reserves).
  - ii. Expenses: cost drivers, offset by a \$100,000 expense reduction.
  - iii. Net impact is a \$700,000 operating deficit that needs to close.
  - iv. Cornell needs continual upstream investments. Most of the money is spent downstream (e.g. urgent intervention which has high costs). Up stream includes influencing the environment (e.g. stress and anxiety reduction). Midstream constitutes better access, early intervention, etc.
  - v. Closing the gap will require a 10% base increase in the Health Fee, from \$370 to \$408, to maintain the current response to this increased need.
    1. This includes the CAPS staffing increase.
    2. This will factor into the Student Health Plan premium (many other factors will influence the premium as well).
  - vi. Expanding services: the Student Health Benefits Advisory committee is considering recommendations for multi-year increased investment in upstream measures to improve student health.
- i. M. Battaglia thanked C. Payne for the presentation. He was at Cornell when the Health Fee was first implemented. The way it was sold to shared governance and people on campus then is different from how it is sold now. If this passes, it will have increased \$58 in four years. It was advertised as a fee that wouldn't have to go up by leaps and bounds every year. M. Battaglia asked how student enrollment increases costs (as opposed to bringing in more revenue)?



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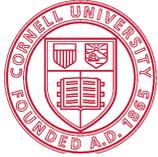
- i. C. Payne: there are a couple of important things to note about that: the SHP capitation and Health Fee are not the only sources of funding, but they are the only sources that grows with population. They make up 40% of funding. Cornell Health has more static money that comes from the University administration from tuition, but it doesn't grow with enrollment. We're not sure where the increase in demand for student services is going to end.
- j. M. Battaglia asked where does C. Payne see demand tapering off? At what point does he think we'll catch up or we'll have projections that overcompensate so that we're better off and don't have to increase the Fee again by 10%?
  - i. C. Payne: at what point we see demand tapering off, that's difficult to answer. We don't have a lot of data to work from. We don't want to assume that we as a community will be static. We don't want to passively respond to what shows up at our door, we want to address causes and act proactively.
- k. D. Geisler: does the SHF increasing from \$370 to \$408 cover the deficit of \$700,000?
  - i. C. Payne: the health fee increase is at 10%, but the student health plan actually provides more per capita funding because students on the SHP use more services. The equivalent from the SHP is roughly \$450, that should help make the math work.
- l. E. Lavin asked who the CAPS visits number represented on one of the graphs.
  - i. C. Payne: all students: undergraduate, graduate and professional.
  - ii. E. Lavin: would you say it follows this trend for graduate and professional students?
  - iii. C. Payne: can't say for sure.
  - iv. E. Lavin: the projected medical cost inflation is only 6%, why would there be a 10% increase?
  - v. C. Payne: why is the percent increase different from the national increase? We are backstopping the current services we are providing with one time funds, and as a result we have to make up that gap as well as inflationary factors.
- m. R. Harrison is not surprised that student behavior isn't static. She is really concerned that we're seeing such significant, unanticipated changes. She asked what did his



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office learn during this change, and how does he plan to change the way this proposed increase will be messaged and rolled out (in regard to increasing trust)?

- i. C. Payne: one piece of important history is when the Health Fee was modeled, they were projecting a 3% increase per year in the Health Fee. It was proposed that it would grow at 3% per year. However, it was held flat, or increased by less than 3%. In part what we're doing now is catching up from when it was held artificially low.
- n. K. Krishnan: why are international students not allowed to opt out of the SHP?
  - i. C. Payne: that policy decision was made because it's typically challenging to navigate international insurance within the US. Students often face high costs trying to do that. International students can appeal this decision if their insurance works well.
- o. K. Krishnan: that appeal process is not very clear. She has heard that CAPS staffing is limited in diversity. How is Cornell Health planning to address this?
  - i. C. Payne: we have had a large focus over several years on diversity. We have gotten approval to go over the budgeted full time employee (FTE) number to search for diverse candidates. The current staff is less diverse than the Cornell community, but is more diverse than the market.
- p. C. Mittan: the upstream changes sound great, but that seems like an issue a lot of people are working on and something that is very complicated. She asked him to speak a little more on Cornell Health's role in that.
  - i. C. Payne: we are proposing that we partner public health professionals with faculty to help them implement data informed methodologies. People need stress to improve, but that stress has to be balanced. The Public health professionals and faculty partnership is what we're proposing.
- q. An audience member asked why did they eliminate the reimbursement for Cornell gym memberships (a good way to reduce stress)?
  - i. C. Payne: we follow New York State's model language. When NYS removed it we removed it. We follow the NYS guidelines exactly.
- r. An audience member asked are students able to waive the Health Fee if they can't afford it?



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- i. C. Payne: no Ithaca campus student can waive it. If a student is eligible for grant aid, they receive additional grant aid to cover it. It is considered part of cost of attendance.
- s. Kriszta Pozsonyi, liaison to Cornell Cinema, then made her presentation on a letter of support for the Cinema.
  - i. K. Pozsonyi: the Appropriations committee recommended a 3-part plan last year: 1) the GPSA would fund the Cinema to the full amount requested, 2) Cornell Cinema and the GPSA would develop an agreed-upon system to ensure a sustainable decrease in SAF funding starting next cycle, while also 3) providing our Assembly's endorsement and assistance for Cornell Cinema's diversification of funding strategy.
  - ii. K. Pozsonyi: This letter is a #3 instance. It is a letter to VP Lombardi and Dean Pendakur.
  - iii. M. Battaglia: do you have more information on how low cost passes affect their budget?
    1. K. Pozsonyi: the University has footed the bill this year. That's why we're trying to figure out for next year. A new low cost all access annual pass would be \$16-20 for undergraduates, and perhaps as low as \$5 for graduate students. The main idea is this would reduce their costs from student-staff because the box office is one of their main expenses. There are other aspects of this, but a big thing is, if the pass is as low as five dollars, as soon as you buy your first ticket, you wouldn't need to buy tickets anymore.
  - iv. D Arora: where will that funding be used if you seek co-sponsorships?
    1. K. Pozsonyi: the majority of their costs will either go to staffing or to rental costs. The main reductions to their budget are reducing the number of screenings and cutting rental and staffing fees.
  - v. A. Barrientos-Gomez: is the new financial model changing advertising prices?
    1. K. Pozsonyi didn't know, but she will ask.
  - vi. K. Pozsonyi: Student and Campus Life has historically worked together with the Cinema even though they haven't co-sponsored it. Currently, the



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Cinema is renting the theater and office space from Student and Campus Life. They are wondering if this rental fee can be waived.

- vii. K. Krishnan: are they modeling how many more people will come in with the low cost passes?
  1. K. Pozsonyi: They're hoping for as many as possible.
  2. K. Krishnan: so they're looking at it as a spending reduction, not a funding increase.
- viii. E. Winarto: the idea with this letter is that the GPSA will approve it, and she will send it to VP Lombardi and Dean Pendakur. In the Bylaws we can't vote on things right away without a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority.
- ix. D. Geisler: how does this differ from a resolution?
  1. A. Loiben: one could make the argument that any formal motion is a resolution. We should treat this as a resolution.
  2. M. Munasinghe: resolutions have to go to the President, this does not.
- x. A. Loiben assumed the chairmanship of the meeting as E. Winarto and A. Barrientos-Gomez were involved in writing this letter.
  1. A. Cohn motioned to have the GPSA consider this letter, there was no dissent. The vote to consider was approved by: 17-0-4.
  2. A. Cohn motioned to waive the Bylaws requirement to wait one meeting to vote on this, there was no dissent. The vote to waive the requirement to wait a meeting to vote was approved by: 17-0-4
  3. M. Battaglia: this is touching the idea that the Assembly values the Cinema. He made a motion to amend the last line of by adding "as well as realize cost savings" in between "...funding sources at Cornell," and "including through providing letters..." (end of first paragraph).
    - a. A motion was made to call the question on the amendment, there was no dissent to voting on the amendment. The amendment passed with unanimous consent.
  4. D. Geisler: when was this written and by whom?
    - a. E. Winarto: the content was from K. Pozsonyi, but she helped put it into words.



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- b. K. Pozsonyi: this came from her as a liaison. The Cinema informed her of a meeting with Student and Campus Life, and K. Pozsonyi contacted E. Winarto and C. Stambuk to write it. This happened right after last meeting.
5. K. Krishnan: how much did we fund them for last year?
  - a. C. Stambuk: \$11 per student.
  - b. K. Pozsonyi: it will go down by two dollars every two year cycle after this one.
6. M. Battaglia made a motion to call the question on approving the letter. It was withdrawn as their was dissent.
7. D. Geisler said he was confused why the GPSA writing this as additional support is necessary since we already provided support in the past.
  - a. K. Pozsonyi: the strategy that we are in support started last year. The specific case of who Cornell Cinema would be contacting we didn't know at the time.
  - b. C. Stambuk: this letter is kind of consolidating everything from our activity fee process. We want to clarify our purpose.
8. M. Battaglia: last year there was a very spirited discussion on the Cinema. The Cinema couldn't stay on the activity fee in its current form. We gave it time to find alternative funds. It's not a good fit for the student activity fee, but that doesn't mean the Cinema isn't a good fit for Cornell.
9. M. Battaglia made a motion to call the question on the letter, there was no dissent to calling the question on the letter. The letter was approved 16-0-5.
  - t. E. Winarto asked if anyone was present to run for the Masters-Engineering Voting Member seat (there was; the election was held during Division Breakout).

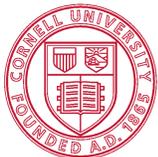
### III. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Minutes from August 27th.
  - i. A. Loiben motioned to approve the Minutes from August 27th, there was no dissent. The Minutes were approved with unanimous consent.



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- b. Minutes from October 15th.
    - i. M. Battaglia motioned to approve the Minutes from October 15th, there was no dissent. The Minutes were approved with unanimous consent.
  - c. A. Barrientos-Gomez motioned to call an election for a Masters of Engineering Voting Member, there was no dissent.
    - i. K Krishnan: we generally open it up to people who aren't here.
    - ii. E. Winarto: A. Barrientos-Gomez sent out an email to all programs who have M-Eng degrees. A. Barrientos-Gomez told them to come to this meeting. There is currently one person here.
    - iii. Shiang-Wan Chin nominated himself. He is studying systems engineering. He was involved in student governance at UC Davis as part of the Transfer Advisory Board. He is interested in increasing financial aid for graduate students and organizing food banks.
- IV. Division Breakout
- a. Voting was held during the Division Breakout.
  - b. M. Battaglia motioned to extend the meeting by five minutes, there was no dissent.
- V. Committee Updates
- a. Committee updates are in the meeting packet.
  - b. Send important information to Alexa Cohn.
  - c. Shiang-Wan Chin was elected the Masters of Engineering Voting Member.
- VI. Open Forum
- a. A. Cohn: GPSA is hosting a 25th anniversary celebration at the BRB from 4:30-5:30pm on Friday. You can get pizza, cake and free beer.
  - b. K. Palumbo: 1) Masters in Health Administration students have started a mobile food pantry, 2) GPWomen is hosting a talk with Beth Prudence of CFP, and 3) the Office of Engagement initiatives is hosting a graduate student institute (see the Committee Updates sheet).
  - c. M. Battaglia: recommended she speak with Anabel's Grocery.
    - i. K. Palumbo stated she was just passing on the message.
  - d. K. Krishnan: Graduate Women in Science is having a lunch discussion tomorrow, noon to 1pm, on Women's sexual and reproductive health, Plant Science 236.
  - e. D. Arora will be sending out a survey to see if people are interested in departmental/division wine and cheese mixers.



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f. A motion was made to adjourn, there was no dissent.  
The meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew Ferraro  
Clerk of the Assembly