

# Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

## Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the November 26th, 2018 Meeting

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

### I. Call to Order

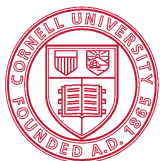
- a. E. Winarto called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.
- b. *Members present:* K. Angierski (late), A. Barrientos-Gomez, R. Harrison, A. Cohn, K. Krishnan, C. Mittan, D. Arora, D. Geisler, N. London, J. Bogdanowicz, E. Winarto, W. Zhang, C. Pratt, K. Palumbo, S. Chin, M. Jodlowski, M. Kalaji.
- c. *Members absent:* J. Kent-Dobias, A. Viarruel, S. Theobald, E. Lavin, A. Belen Ruival, N. Carre, D. Parker.

### II. Approval of the Minutes

- a. A. Cohn motioned to approve the Minutes from November 12th, there was no dissent. The minutes were **approved** with unanimous consent.

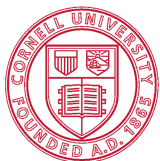
### III. Presentations

- a. Dean Knuth and Associate Dean Kahabka, both of the Graduate School, then made their presentation on Graduate Assistantship packages.
- b. J. Kahabka: the Graduate School compiles data on a number of things to understand how stipend rates are positioning students and graduate programs. The question is are they set at the right place? The University sets a minimum stipend for the 9-month academic year at \$26,426. The summer funding rate is \$5,568. The 12-month rate is \$35,235.9
- c. J. Kahabka: we compare to our peers (the Ivy+ peer group and large state research universities). Cornell is in the middle of the Ivy+ group and at the top of the state schools. Cornell has the same assistantship minimum for GRAs and standard TAs and RAs. The Graduate School wants to see prospective budgets for students and wants to see students' purchasing power.
- d. J. Kahabka: the Graduate School would like to know what's your experience with it? Is it meeting your basic needs? Are there comments for us?
- e. E. Law: the monthly budgets are omitting a couple important things: one is a car loan. Having to pay the travel amount up front is detrimental. Are there ways to have need based grants for certain things?



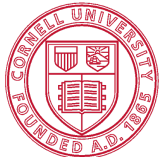
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- i. J. Kahabka: what we've tried to do is standardize things that don't change and can be considered fixed in this local economy. A car loan is a harder thing to put in; it's hard to measure transportation in general. They are thinking about travel, and there are travel grants for conferences.
- f. S. Chin: can you clarify this, does it apply to Masters students?
  - i. J. Kahabka: anyone who is offered an assistantship operates with these minimums.
  - ii. B. Knuth: the question is is there anything being done for professional students? That is really the purview of the Deans of the professional schools. There is a lot of pressure on professional schools to increase financial aid, and most professional students aren't on assistantships of this kind.
- g. K. Krishnan: how do the 9-month vs. 12-month differentiations change across disciplines?
  - i. J. Kahabka: students are fully supported for 5-6 years for the academic year. We are working on summer funding.
  - ii. K. Krishnan noted that different fields get different assistantships.
  - iii. J. Kahabka: both are defined as working 15 hours a week.
- h. K. Palumbo: TA's in my program are paid hourly, how does this fit into University guidelines?
  - i. J. Kahabka: we should differentiate between a TA in Workday vs. a "TA" colloquially. University policy 1.3 breaks down the criteria.
  - ii. K. Palumbo: are the requirements the same for domestic and international students?
  - iii. J. Kahabka: mostly, although there is a language requirement for international students.
- i. D. Geisler: how does this compare for external campuses?
  - i. J. Kahabka: the Tech Campus receives a supplement to compensate for the higher cost of living in New York City.
  - ii. D. Geisler: the federal poverty rate is fairly high for those with one child.
  - iii. J. Kahabka: that is for a family of five (two students on assistantships with three children). The question is is the stipend package adequate? We think yes, but that's why we're here.



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- iv. D. Geisler: are there any data on single parents or those with a spouse who can't work?
    - v. J. Kahabka: we do have some data on that, particularly for international students whose spouses can't work in the US.
  - j. R. Harrison: she was intrigued that it seems like we are ok with being in the middle of the pack in the Ivy+ group?
    - i. J. Kahabka: he was not saying that as a judgement on whether it's good or bad.
    - ii. B. Knuth: there's a whole range of factors that have to be considered that relate to financial matters. When competing for grants with land grant state schools it's difficult because they ask for lower grants. And when you look at the endowments for some of our Ivy peers they're very different.
  - k. D. Geisler: medical expenses aren't listed.
    - i. J. Kahabka: we don't put it in as a fixed line because it varies so much among students.
- IV. Division Breakout
  - a. B. Knuth and J. Kahabka circulated between divisions during Division Breakouts to answer questions and hear concerns over assistantships.
- V. Elections
  - a. Appropriations Chair (AC)
    - i. The Appropriations Committee works on the activity fee, oversees bylined organizations, and sets the Finance Commission guidelines.
    - ii. J. Bogdanowicz nominated himself.
      - 1. Voting was subsequently held. The winner was announced during Committee Updates.
  - b. Finance Commission Chair (GPSAFC)
    - i. The Finance Commission reviews budgets.
    - ii. B. Yarze nominated Eszter Otott-Kovacs.
      - 1. Voting was subsequently held. The winner was announced during Committee Updates.
    - iii. M. Battaglia motioned to extend the meeting by ten minutes, there was no dissent.
- VI. Results of the Cornell Health Survey



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

- a. While votes were being counted, E. Winarto presented results from the Cornell Health Survey.
- b. There is an information breakdown in the meeting packet. The survey was a collaboration with the Student Assembly and Cornell Health.
- c. K. Palumbo: it would be interesting to know a break down on the people willing to pay the cost, like what percent are fully paying it.
- d. M. Battaglia: why don't we publish the data set so people can analyze it?
  - i. E. Winarto: We can do that.
- e. D. Geisler: have you reviewed it for anonymization?
  - i. E. Winarto: SRI asked us if we wanted to know identity and we said no.
  - ii. M. Munasinghe: there's not even data differentiating graduate vs. professional students.
- f. A. Barrientos Gomez: the survey questions are in the meeting packet.
- g. K. Krishnan: how was the survey sent out?
  - i. Via email and two reminder emails.
- h. D. Geisler motioned to extend the meeting by five minutes, there was no dissent.

VII. Committee Update Q&A

- a. James Bogdanowicz and Eszter Otott-Kovacs were announced as the winners of the Appropriations Chair and Finance Commission Chair Elections, respectively.
- b. M. Battaglia motioned to adjourn the meeting without Committee Updates or Open Forum, there was no dissent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew Ferraro  
Clerk of the Assembly