



# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, March 1, 2018 Meeting  
4:46pm-6:45pm in Willard Straight Hall: Memorial Room

### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. V. Devatha called the meeting to order at 4:46 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
  - i. *Present:* T. Ball [0.5], D. Barbaria [0], A. Chowdhury [2], O. Corn [0], R. Cornell [2.5], V. Devatha [1], O. Din [2], O. Egharevba [0], H. Hassan [3], N. Hernandez [0], R. Herz [5], M. Indimine [1.5], S. Iruvanti [0], G. Kaufman [0], S. Lim [0], L. Lipschutz [4.75], D. Nyakaru [0], S. Park [1.5], G. Park [0], M. Peralta-Ochoa [1], C. Schott [1.25], E. Shapiro [1], J. Sim [1], M. Valadez [1], I. Wallace [1]
  - ii. *Absent:* J. Kim (*unexcused*) [1], S. Romero Zavala (*unexcused*) [3], D. Tokunboh (*excused*) [2.75]

### II. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

### III. Approval of the Minutes:

- a. February 22<sup>nd</sup> Minutes
  - i. G. Kaufman motioned to amend the minutes to read “G. Kaufman” where they had previously read “the committee” – **amended**.
    1. This occurs in section VI, subsection c, subsection viii, subsection 1.
  - ii. D. Barbaria motioned to amend the minutes to read “M. Indimine (*excused*) [1.5] in the roll call – **amended**.
  - iii. Motion to approve the minutes – **approved**.

### IV. Announcements & Reports

- a. Rep Schott – Making the Econ major STEM-certified
  - i. C. Schott said that work is being done to make the Cornell Economics major STEM-certified, such that international students can take the major and be eligible for a work authorization extension. He also said that at this time, faculty in the department have been responsive, but the administration and the Dean of Arts & Sciences has not acknowledged this initiative. He also invited anyone who wanted to provide assistance in this regard to do so.
- b. City and Local Affairs Committee
  - i. Sofia Ellam said that the Committee is working with different groups outside of the Cornell campus, as well as the Office of Community Relations, and that the Committee will be tabling next week to obtain different student perspectives on interactions with the community. She also mentioned an informal speaker series with the Tatkon Center, specifically regarding ways for students to get involved in the community outside of the classroom.
  - ii. D. Barbaria asked the proposed date of an aforementioned town hall.

- iii. S. Ellam said that dates in April are currently being considered, and that these will be solidified at their next meeting.
  - iv. V. Devatha asked whether or not the Committee wanted the Student Assembly to contribute to these initiatives.
  - v. S. Ellam responded in the affirmative, saying that they are still in the coordination stage, but that it would be appreciated if the Assembly were to assist with publicity later on.
  - vi. M. Valadez said that a member of the Financial Aid Review Committee told her that FARC might be invited to the aforementioned speaker series to talk about the Summer Experience Grant, and voiced FARC's openness and willingness to come to any events to which they are invited.
- c. Environmental Committee
- i. Nathanael Cheng provided updates on current Committee initiatives, including improved water infrastructure to lessen the use of disposable water bottles and increase the use of reusable water bottles, as well as the restarting of the Lights Off Initiative.
    - 1. The latter initiative would involve students going around Cornell campus at night and turning the lights off in rooms of buildings that are not being used at that time.
  - ii. N. Cheng clarified that there was no cohesive change in leadership in the Committee following the departure of the previous e-board.
  - iii. C. Schott said that the Campus Infrastructure Committee (henceforth CIC) of the University Assembly is planning a similar initiative to that which N. Cheng mentioned regarding reusable water bottles, and advised that N. Cheng pass these initiatives through the CIC.

## V. Presentations:

- a. Tri-Council D&I Updates
- i. Paul Russell and Tyler Henry of the Interfraternity Council (henceforth IFC) and Christina Nastos of the Panhellenic Council (henceforth PHC) presenting.
  - ii. P. Russell and C. Nastos explained the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Quarter Action Items of the Tri-Council Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
    - 1. First Quarter items include facilitating programming between Zeta Psi membership and the Center for Intercultural Dialogue, as well as collaboration with campus partners to endorse a hate speech provision.
    - 2. Second Quarter items include the planning of New Member Orientation, a revamping of Total Membership Development plans, and the establishment of Citizenship, Diversity, and Inclusion positions on each council and within each chapter at Cornell.
    - 3. Third Quarter items include the execution of the revamped New Member Orientation program and Diversity & Inclusion chairs organizing relevant programming for their respective chapters.
    - 4. Fourth Quarter items include the evaluation and assessment of outcomes from the previous three quarters and the presentation of the Tri-Council Progress Report.
  - iii. C. Nastos said that chapter leaders are being encouraged to have deeper evaluations of their members, and that programming is to be tailored to each chapter's needs.
  - iv. T. Henry commented further on specific Fourth Quarter Action Items.
  - v. I. Wallace said that a previous IFC presentation said that it lacked ways to tackle issues regarding the LGBTQ+ community in Greek life, and asked whether this initiative could be considered comprehensive when many people who identify as LGBTQ+ are being left behind.

- vi. T. Henry said that these issues have been discussed, and that heteronormativity within IFC culture has been an issue, and that they have reached out to some LGBTQ+ organizations on campus.
- vii. I. Wallace asked which organizations had been reached out to.
- viii. T. Henry said that he cannot name the organizations off the top of his head, but that he does have an Excel sheet with the organizations on it that he would be willing to share with I. Wallace.
- ix. I. Wallace asked if he had heard back from any of these organizations.
- x. T. Henry said that other Diversity & Inclusion representatives had sent these emails out.
- xi. Joseph Anderson said that Lavanya Aprameya had never been contacted to this point, and also asked whether anything had yet been done in regard to gender-nonconforming students.
  - 1. L. Aprameya is the president of Haven, the umbrella organization for many LGBTQ+ organizations at Cornell.
- xii. C. Nastos said that Tri-Council does not have as much jurisdiction over things such as this as they would like, and that membership criteria rest within individual chapters, not with Tri-Council. She also said that Alpha Chi Omega has been incredible in this regard, but that Tri-Council, while able to make strong suggestions, cannot regulate chapters.
- xiii. D. Barbaria asked P. Russell to elaborate on his previous point regarding the hate speech provision.
- xiv. P. Russell said that he did not know the specifics regarding progress made by his predecessors, but that they did previously meet with Student Assembly representatives.
- xv. D. Barbaria asked whether Tri-Council would be open to further input as they moved forward in this regard.
- xvi. P. Russell replied in the affirmative.
- xvii. V. Devatha limited time for questions to 30 seconds for each member.
- xviii. M. Valadez asked how many chapters complied in regard to Tri-Council's request for the creation of Expectation of Membership provisions. She also asked whether there has been collaboration between the diversity chairs of each chapter, saying that it is important for the IFC, the PHC, and the Multicultural Greek Letter Council (henceforth MGLC) to meet.
- xix. P. Russell said that expectations of membership are communitywide, but since fraternities and sororities are national organizations, Tri-Council cannot suggest what they can or cannot use as criteria for membership in their organization. He added that Tri-Council would be able to say that a Greek organization could only have a place at Cornell if they followed certain expectations, and that sanctions would be placed on non-compliant organizations.
- xx. T. Henry said that he has met with the Diversity & Inclusion chairs for the PHC and the IFC, but mentioned that scheduling meetings between all three councils is difficult.
- xxi. S. Lim asked how Tri-Council could ensure the quality of each chapter's training, since more in-depth training is left up to the chapters.
- xxii. P. Russell said that a major contributor in this regard is the fact that the Diversity & Inclusion chairs leading these meetings are meeting regularly, and that there is higher involvement throughout the process.
- xxiii. T. Henry said that if scheduling permits, he will be at training sessions to oversee what happens, and that he will attempt to oversee each as it happens.
- xxiv. S. Lim asked how the three councils work in the context of Tri-Council to connect, aside from events such as mixers.

- xxv. P. Russell said that it is difficult, but that Tri-Council has been encouraging chapters in this regard, and that the Vice President of Philanthropy has contacted the philanthropy chairs of each chapter, and asked members of the Student Assembly to contact him with ideas regarding collaboration.
- xxvi. C. Nastos said that she was the president of her chapter last year, and that when she ran for her position that there was an initiative to interact with the MGLC community. She also said that a fundamental problem in regard to collaboration is variability between councils in regard to resources. She clarified that the IFC has a great deal more resources than either the PHC or the MGLC do.
- xxvii. V. Devatha closed the floor on discussion regarding this presentation.

## VI. Business of the Day:

- a. V. Devatha urged Assembly members to use the resolution template when submitting resolutions, and to ensure that each resolution is formatted properly.
- b. C. Schott suggested sending out the resolution template via Google Docs.
- c. V. Devatha said that doing so would greatly interfere with the layout of the template.
- d. D. Barbaria motioned to amend the agenda such that Resolution 31 would present before Resolution 29 – **amended**.
- e. Resolution 31: Adding a Veteran’s Ex-Officio Representative to the Student Assembly
  - i. V. Devatha passed his duties as chair to D. Barbaria so that he could present on Resolution 31.
  - ii. D. Barbaria gave the sponsors of Resolution 31 two minutes to re-present the resolution when ready.
  - iii. V. Devatha proposed to amend line 27 to add the words “This liaison must represent the interests of the United States and its allies”.
  - iv. J. Anderson **called the question** – approved.
  - v. Motion to amend the resolution – **amended**.
  - vi. Luke Opyd said that he is primarily present to answer last-minute questions regarding the resolution.
  - vii. C. Schott said that he has heard concerns from Singaporean and Korean students, and asked L. Opyd if the Cornell Undergraduate Veterans Association (henceforth CUVA) was advocating for veteran students from allied nations.
  - viii. L. Opyd said that the student body has always responded favorably to CUVA issues, and that the organization’s biggest issue is identifying issues that veteran students face. He added that CUVA is more than happy to support the international student veteran community, and that they must identify which issues are similar and which are different.
  - ix. S. Park asked what types of changes they are seeking to make.
  - x. L. Opyd said that the most critical component of this position is that the veteran opinion will always be in the Student Assembly, so that they will be able to leverage the Assembly when necessary to advance the agenda of the student veteran community at large.
  - xi. V. Devatha asked S. Park to clarify her question.
  - xii. S. Park obliged, asking what the Student Assembly could do to support the veteran community should Resolution 31 not be passed.
  - xiii. V. Devatha said that certain hurdles prevent veterans from communicating effectively with other organizations, and that the Student Assembly could help by reaching out to different communities and figuring out how to advocate for the needs of more students on campus.
  - xiv. A representative of the resolution said that the problem with aiming to get a voting seat would be that anyone at Cornell would be able to run for the position, and that veterans’ issues are so esoteric that it is crucial that the seat belong to a veteran.

- xv. A community member said that they contacted the University regarding the number of veterans enrolled at Cornell, and that they found that there are 24 undergraduate veterans and 81 graduate veterans. The community member asked why there is such a discrepancy between undergraduate and graduate numbers, and asked whether the GPSA had done anything in this regard.
- xvi. The CUVA representative said that a big distinguishing factor between graduate and undergraduate veterans is that the former are often officers returning after 4-6 years of service, and that there is a big difference between the two groups socioeconomically and regarding experience.
- xvii. L. Opyd said that he is hoping to create an avenue of communication between undergraduate and graduate veteran students. He added that the largest number of veteran graduate students are business students, and that there are four law students who are veterans.
- xviii. J. Sim said that the resolution does not dive into the structure of the liaison position, and asked how this position would be selected.
- xix. L. Opyd said that the position would be selected in CUVA, and that all candidates will declare themselves when the election cycle begins. He added that the election itself is the last weekend in March before Spring Break, and that at that time, it will be more clear who will fill this role.
- xx. V. Devatha said that L. Opyd would be willing to amend the bylaws of CUVA to ensure this position, and asked whether this sentiment was still true.
- xxi. L. Opyd responded in the affirmative.
- xxii. O. Corn voiced her support for the resolution, saying that there is no member of the Student Assembly who knows the veteran experience.
- xxiii. M. Peralta-Ochoa motioned to vote.
  - 1. G. Kaufman dissented, saying that there are still amendments to vote on.
  - 2. M. Peralta-Ochoa maintained his motion.
  - 3. V. Devatha said that the motion would need 19 votes to pass, and that there are currently 25 members present (one of whom is nonvoting, since D. Barbaria is acting as chair).
  - 4. M. Peralta-Ochoa **withdrew** his motion.
- xxiv. J. Sim said that he has sent an amendment in the Student Assembly Slack that would provide further clarification to the resolution.
- xxv. J. Anderson dissented.
- xxvi. V. Devatha made known his desire to comment on this amendment.
- xxvii. D. Barbaria started a speakers' list on the amendment.
- xxviii. V. Devatha said that the resolution references non-US citizens, but that CUVA is an organization focused on veterans of the United States and its allies.
- xxix. C. Schott motioned to amend the amendment, such that "non-U.S. citizens" now reads "citizens of U.S. allies" – **amended** 16-0-6.
- xxx. M. Valadez told the members of the Assembly that abstentions in voting are to be used when there is a conflict of interest, not when a member does not know what to vote for.
- xxxi. J. Anderson said that he does not believe that the Student Assembly should tell CUVA how to elect its liaison, and motioned to divide the question into two separate amendments – **divided**.
  - 1. The amendment was divided into two amendments; the first being the amendment to line 23 of the resolution, and the second being the amendment to line 26 of the resolution.
- xxxii. J. Anderson **called the question** on the amendment to line 23 – approved.
- xxxiii. Motion to amend line 23 of the resolution – **amended** 23-0-1.

- xxxiv. J. Anderson reiterated his previous point that the Assembly does not make other organizations tell them their process, and that he does not believe that the Assembly should tell another organization how to send its liaison.
- xxxv. V. Devatha said that this amendment is not necessary since the mention of internationalism was incorporated in a previous amendment, and motioned to vote.
- xxxvi. J. Sim motioned to amend the amendment, striking the text from “The liaison shall...” until “...of the academic year in which they were elected”.
- xxxvii. D. Barbaria asked J. Sim to read the amendment as it would read following the proposed amendment.
- xxxviii. J. Sim obliged.
- xxxix. V. Devatha dissented for his aforementioned reasons.
  - xl. J. Anderson echoed V. Devatha’s sentiments.
  - xli. C. Schott said that the concerns of internationalism have already been incorporated.
  - xlii. There was a motion to vote on the amendment – fails 1-21-2.
  - xliii. V. Devatha motioned to amend line 26, such that “University” would read “Undergraduate” – amended 23-0-1.
  - xliv. N. Hernandez motioned to vote on the resolution.
    - 1. S. Park dissented.
    - 2. N. Hernandez maintained her motion.
  - xlv. Greater than 60% of the Student Assembly voted in favor of moving to voting; the Assembly moved to vote.
  - xlvi. D. Barbaria said, since this resolution affects Assembly bylaws, that 19 or more members out of the 24 voting members present must vote in favor of the resolution.
  - xlvii. Motion to vote on Resolution 31 – passed 24-0-1.
- f. Resolution 29: Community Sponsorship Access
  - i. D. Barbaria passed his duties as chair to V. Devatha so that he could present on Resolution 29.
  - ii. D. Barbaria said that this resolution is also an amendment to bylaws, and that there is currently no framework within Assembly bylaws that says who can and cannot sponsor a resolution. He added that the only thing that this resolution does in regard to things currently in bylaws is that it limits the amount of sponsors on a resolution.
  - iii. O. Din said that he has heard many different conversations over the past few weeks, and said that this resolution is not some sort of “sneak attack” to bring up divestment and other related issues in future meetings. He added that when issues are too controversial, Assembly members often do not want to attach their names to it.
  - iv. O. Din motioned to amend the resolution to strike all text in parentheses from line 48.
  - v. S. Park expressed her confusion as to what this resolution accomplishes.
  - vi. D. Barbaria said that the resolution does not change anything, and that it just clarifies Student Assembly procedure.
  - vii. V. Devatha ended the conversation between D. Barbaria and S. Park, and asked that further questions be limited to the amendment at hand.
  - viii. T. Ball asked whether or not the original intent of this resolution was to change Student Assembly bylaws such that community members could introduce a resolution without a Student Assembly sponsor.
  - ix. D. Barbaria said that this was never his intention, and that O. Din would speak in this regard.
  - x. O. Din said that this was his intention, saying that some Student Assembly members like to “play politics” and cause conflict.

- xi. D. Barbaria called the question on the amendment – approved.
- xii. Motion to amend resolution 29 – amended 21-3-1.
- xiii. O. Corn motioned to vote on the resolution.
  - 1. S. Park dissented.
  - 2. O. Corn maintained her motion.
- xiv. The Student Assembly moved to vote on the resolution with a vote of 20-4-1.
- xv. Motion to vote on Resolution 29 – passed 22-2-1.

## VII. New Business

- a. Resolution 32: Accommodating Muslim Holidays
  - i. O. Din motioned to amend Khaddy Kebbeh '19's name to the sponsor line – amended.
  - ii. O. Din motioned to move this resolution to Business of the Day.
    - 1. D. Barbaria dissented, saying that keeping this resolution in New Business will improve discussion.
    - 2. O. Din withdrew his motion.
  - iii. O. Din said that this resolution seeks to rectify academic conflicts with Muslim religious holidays, particularly Ramadan.
    - 1. Ramadan requires Muslims to ingest no food or drink from dawn until dusk during the entire holy month; fasts are broken following sunset, but there is no consumption during daylight hours.
  - iv. K. Kebbeh said that fasting during the month of Ramadan is already difficult, and that fasting during finals only would compound this difficulty.
    - 1. Ramadan begins on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. This is also the second day of scheduled final exams at Cornell.
  - v. O. Din said that many professors are typically willing to accommodate students' religious needs in regard to exam times, but that it would be beneficial for this to be codified.
  - vi. K. Kebbeh said that when speaking with members of other religious groups, there is a consensus opinion that the Cornell calendar is focused on the Christian faith, and that it is important for other faiths to get the same treatment as Christianity in this regard.
  - vii. V. Devatha apologized on behalf of the Assembly for the lack of respect expressed at this time.
  - viii. O. Corn said that she fully supports every person who has religious conflicts, especially when these conflicts extend across a full month, and asked what this resolution would do to fix policies currently in place. She also referenced certain policies that some dining halls have in regard to religious needs.
  - ix. C. Schott said that many of the things that O. Corn mentioned are not formal policies.
  - x. O. Din echoed this, and said that the resolution seeks to make these policies universal.
  - xi. T. Ball motioned to amend the resolution, striking the words “in the evening” from line 61.
    - 1. I. Wallace dissented.
    - 2. O. Din said that this was taken into account in the writing of the resolution.
    - 3. I. Wallace withdrew his dissent.
  - xii. Motion to amend the resolution – amended 24-0-1.
  - xiii. S. Iruvanti said that he was curious about how this resolution could be achieved from a feasibility standpoint, and asked whether the sponsors of the resolution had any information in regard to the number of Muslim students on campus, and

whether their grades are negatively affected while fasting. He added that it might not be feasible for every professor to accommodate students in this regard.

- xiv. O. Din said that it is hard to have a precise estimate of the number of Muslim students on campus, but that current projections lie between 300 and 500 students. He added that while he does not have any specific data regarding fasting and grades, that he has taken finals in the past while fasting. He said that, when this occurred, he essentially had the choice of studying while hungry or forgoing sleep to study.
  - xv. S. Iruvanti said that it would be helpful for the sponsors of this resolution to send out a survey to get actual evidence from Muslim students that fasting does negatively affect their studying.
  - xvi. O. Din agreed.
  - xvii. D. Barbaria motioned to extend the meeting time by fifteen minutes – **approved**.
  - xviii. Brandon Cohen said that New York State law guarantees religious accommodations, and that the current policy at Cornell allows professors to decide what is fair for affected students, rather than the affected students themselves.
    - 1. B. Cohen is the co-president of the Interfaith Council at Cornell.
  - xix. There was a motion to table the resolution – **tabled**.
    - 1. D. Barbaria clarified that tabling a resolution pushes its discussion to the next meeting, not to the next week.
  - xx. Shivani Parikh motioned to amend the agenda such that Resolution 35 would be discussed before Resolution 33 – **amended**.
- b. Resolution 35: Creating an Asian American Living Learning Unit (LLU)
- i. S. Parikh thanked I. Wallace and J. Anderson for their work on the Loving House resolution, and added that other universities have an Asian-American LLU similar to the one that this resolution seeks to create.
  - ii. S. Park asked whether or not a floor of a current building would be enough for long-term interest, and asked about current interest levels.
  - iii. S. Parikh said that N. Hernandez explained that the Latino Living Center was formerly just one floor in another building, but that growing interest forced them to expand to their current location. She added that such a thing could happen with the Asian LLU.
  - iv. S. Park asked why the resolution didn't seek to get a building now as opposed to later.
  - v. S. Parikh said that the plan for a floor is the norm in regard to the procedures undergone at other universities. She added that there has been some criticism from Asian and Asian-American alumni regarding self-segregation, and that she is wary about potentially asking for too much.
  - vi. V. Devatha asked whether or not a survey gauging potential interest had yet been conducted.
  - vii. S. Parikh said that preliminary research had been done, and that she wants to make sure that the request for the LLU is submitted before formal housing plans are sent to developers. She added that their request would be rescinded if, following this, it was found that the LLU is not wanted by the Asian/Asian-American community at Cornell.
  - viii. J. Anderson said that the Multicultural Living Learning Unit (henceforth McLLU) is different from housing options such as Ujamaa, the Latino Living Center, and Akwe:kon. He added that the popularity of Ujamaa is greater than that of McLLU, and that he anticipates that the popularity of an Asian LLU will also be greater than that of McLLU.
  - ix. V. Devatha recommended getting data regarding J. Anderson's comments.
  - x. S. Lim said that students who join Cornell in the spring are especially interested in the Asian-American LLU.

- xi. S. Parikh mentioned that this resolution has the support of the director of the Asian & Asian American Center, as well as other relevant figures in the community.
- xii. O. Egharevba said that he is unsure of the real interest in the Asian LLU.
- xiii. S. Parikh said that it is currently believed that this is what students want, and that if it is found that the Asian-American LLU is not needed, then they will act accordingly. She added that she does not believe that the LLU needs to be demanded (as other similar residences at Cornell have in the past), and that she thinks that the administration would be open to this project.
- xiv. A representative of The Cornell Daily Sun said that he reported on the material in this resolution a few days prior, and found that Kianna Early said that the primary difference between an Asian-American LLU and an Asian fraternity or sorority would be whether a member student lived on or off campus. He asked whether the LLU would divide the community.
  - 1. Kianna Early is the president of the Residential Student Congress.
- xv. S. Parikh said that the mentioned organizations primarily exist for East Asian students, and that the LLU would seek to unite students of all Asian identities.
- xvi. S. Lim said that she did not understand why the Asian community is being attacked.
- xvii. There was a motion to vote on the resolution – **tabled**.
- xviii. D. Barbaria motioned to table the resolution – **tabled**.
- c. Resolution 33: Increasing Gender Neutral Bathrooms
  - i. I. Wallace said that the initial proposal for this resolution was created by L. Aprameya, and supported tabling the resolution until next meeting, since L. Aprameya was not present.
  - ii. Motion to table the resolution – **tabled**.
- d. Resolution 34: Risley Crosswalk
  - i. S. Lim said that this resolution was voted on by the Infrastructure Committee, and that it urges the administration to add another crosswalk outside of Risley Hall.
  - ii. I. Wallace added that this proposal was submitted by two community members who were both unassociated with the Student Assembly. He motioned to table the resolution – **tabled**.
- e. Resolution 36: Supporting the Activism of Prospective Students
  - i. J. Anderson said that this resolution seeks to make the sentiment espoused by Cornell in a Twitter post permanent, and to codify the University’s response to nonviolent protest for the future. He also motioned to table the resolution – **tabled**.
    - 1. The Twitter post was made in reference to the planned “walk-outs” to be conducted by high school students in response to federal governmental response to school shootings, particularly the Parkland shooting.
    - 2. The tweet reads “Cornell University values civic discourse as essential to the academic mission and promotes public engagement as critical to inspiring future leaders. Disciplinary action resulting from responsible engagement in non-violent protest will not jeopardize admission to Cornell”.

## VIII. Adjournment

- a. V. Devatha adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.

## IX. Executive Session

Respectfully Submitted,

*John Hannan*

Clerk of the Assembly