Bylaws

Cornell University Employee Assembly

As amended on May 29, 2026

PREAMBLE

The Employee Assembly (herein after referred to as the Assembly) establishes these Bylaws under the authority granted by Article IV Section 7 of the Charter of the Employee Assembly.

ARTICLE I: PROCEDURES

Section 1.1: Protections

A. The Assembly and its committees shall respect and protect the rights of individuals. When a subject under discussion or examination requires the use of confidential information, all reasonable efforts shall be made to safeguard the confidentiality of this information.

Section 1.2: Regular Meetings

A. Regular meetings of the Assembly are on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 12:00 - 1:15 p.m., except University holidays and other dates cancelled at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The Assembly may adopt a different schedule of regular meetings by majority vote.

Section 1.3: Organizational Meeting

A. The Chair sets a date for the organizational meeting to occur as soon as possible after the conclusion of employee elections, but no later than May 1st. In this meeting, the Assembly:
    i. Elects the officers of the Assembly for the next session in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article II, Section 2.2 of these Bylaws;
    ii. Receives nominations and appoints representatives to the University Assembly and any other committees or commissions with vacancies that occur in the next session; and,
    iii. Sets a schedule of regular meetings for the next session.

B. All members who will be seated as of the start of the next session of the Assembly are voting members for the purposes of the meeting and must make every reasonable effort to attend and participate. The meeting must be held in closed session. The first order of business for the meeting must be appointment of a temporary chair who will preside until the Chair is elected for the next session. The temporary chair may be any voting member who does not seek election as Chair. The second order of business must be election of the Chair for the next session. The temporary chair must yield to the newly elected Chair immediately after their election.

C. If any positions are uncontested, the Chair may decide to vote by hand instead of by secret ballot.

Section 1.4: Special Meetings

A. The Chair may call special meetings to consider matters demanding immediate attention, or such meetings shall be called when requested by one-fourth of the seated members of the Assembly.

Section 1.5: Quorum

A. A quorum of voting members is required for the Assembly to do business at a regularly scheduled meeting.

B. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.

Section 1.6: Executive Session

A. The Assembly may go into executive session to discuss confidential matters by majority vote of those seated members who are present.

Section 1.7: Agendas, Resolutions, and Minutes

A. Agenda items will be compiled by the Executive Vice Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Executive Vice Chair must post and distribute the agenda at least twenty-four hours prior to a meeting of the Assembly.

B. All resolutions must be sponsored by at least one voting member of the Assembly. All resolutions shall be reviewed by an appropriate committee of the Assembly for no more than thirty days before introduction at a regular meeting of the Assembly. Approval by the reviewing committee shall be a majority vote of the committee members present. The chair of the committee that reviewed the resolution shall provide a brief summary of the committee's thoughts and/or concerns on the resolution when it is presented at a regular meeting of the Assembly. Under extenuating circumstances or time pressures, the Chair can determine that a resolution should be brought to the floor without committee review.

C. The Office of the Assemblies prepares minutes of each meeting and makes them available to the university community after approval by the Assembly.

Section 1.8: Attendance

A. Attendance is required at all scheduled meetings for all voting members. Voting members:
   i. Must notify the Executive Vice Chair in advance of any absence.
   ii. May be unseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee if they have more than two unexcused absences from regular meetings of the Assembly during a given term. Unseated members neither count toward the total vote, nor quorum.
   iii. May be reseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 1.9: Voting

A. The Chair may count any proxy vote that is received before the question to which it pertains is called. Votes submitted by proxy do not count towards quorum.
B. Voting may be conducted by electronic means at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
C. EA members may abstain from voting at regularly scheduled or special meetings of the Assembly. However, if the total number of abstentions is greater than the total number of votes in favor of a resolution or motion, the resolution or motion fails.
D. Abstentions do not count toward quorum.

Section 1.10: Parliamentary Procedure

E. Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be the basis for determining procedures for debate and general conduct of business not covered in this document.
F. The Assembly is not constrained to use parliamentary procedure for all discussions.

ARTICLE II: OFFICERS

Section 2.1: Officers Defined

A. The officers of the Assembly are the Chair, the Executive Vice Chair, the Vice Chair for Operations, the Vice Chair for Communications, and the Parliamentarian.

Section 2.2: Election of Officers

A. The officer elections occur in the following order: Chair, Executive Vice Chair, Vice Chair for Operations, Vice Chair for Communications, and Parliamentarian. For each office, the chair presiding over the meeting:
   i. Entertains nominations of members for the position to be filled;
   ii. Closes nominations;
   iii. Allows each candidate to make an opening statement of specified duration;
   iv. Allows all members present to ask questions of the candidates for a specified period of time;
   v. Closes question and answer period;
   vi. Moves to a vote by secret ballot; and,
   vii. Repeats voting as needed until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast and eliminates the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting.

Section 2.3: Terms

A. The term of office is concurrent with a session of the Assembly. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same role.

Section 2.4: Recalling Officers

A. The Assembly may remove any officer by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of seated members. The Assembly then immediately elects a new officer to serve the remainder of the term.
B. The above procedure shall also apply to chairs and members of committees of the Assembly.

Section 2.5: Executive Committee

A. The Executive Committee consists of the officers of the Assembly. The Executive Committee:
   i. Formulates and approves an agenda for each meeting of the Assembly;
   ii. Formulates, in consultation with the chairs of the Assembly's committees, a budget of expenses for the Assembly and presents this budget to the Assembly for approval at the first regular meeting of the Assembly;
   iii. Conducts an orientation meeting at the beginning of each term with the members of the Assembly. The agenda of the orientation meeting includes:
      a. Dissemination of written and verbal guidelines which articulate expectations for membership and for efficient operation of the Assembly and its committees;
      b. Continual communication with the Executive Committee and the roles of the officers;
      c. The role of committees and best practices for committee operations;
      d. The legislative process and the setting of priorities for committees and the Assembly.

Section 2.6: Officer Responsibilities

A. Chair
   a. Assures the smooth and effective operation and maintenance of the Assembly;
   b. Presides over meetings of the Assembly;
   c. Delegates responsibilities as needed to accomplish the duties of the office and the goals set forth in the Charter and these Bylaws;
   d. Transmits notice of the actions and recommendations of the Assembly;
   e. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the disposition or current status of its actions and recommendations; and,
   f. Serves as spokesperson of the Assembly, corresponds with the President of the University, enumerating actions taken by the Assembly, and submits an annual year-end report to the University President.

B. Executive Vice Chair
   a. Assists the Chair as needed;
   b. Chairs the meetings of the Executive Committee and distributes the agenda and meeting materials for regular and special meetings of the Assembly;
   c. Reviews minutes prepared by the Office of the Assemblies and distributes drafts to Assembly members;
   d. Notifies individuals and units directly affected by pending business of the Assembly or its committees which includes:
      i. The chief contact for the resolution or committee action being undertaken; and,
      ii. The charge to the committee conducting the business and the dates of meetings when the business will be considered, if applicable.
   e. Presides in the absence of the Chair.

C. Vice Chair for Operations
   a. Monitors and supervises the operations of the Assembly's committees and the Assembly's appointees to other committees;
   b. Advises committee chairs on issues of process and directs inquiries as needed;
   c. Receives nominations and expressions of interest in membership in the Assembly and presents slates of candidates to fill incidental vacancies as needed;
   d. Oversees and tracks the finances of the Assembly with assistance of the Office of the Assemblies;
   e. Monitors financial statements and authorizes expenditures in consultation with the Executive Committee;
   f. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the status of the funds;
   g. Prepares a yearly expenditure report outlining the use of funds for the past fiscal year; and,
   h. Prepares the annual fund request and budget proposal.

D. Vice Chair for Communications
    a. Chairs the Communications Committee;
    b. Develops and executes communications plans for significant Assembly actions, projects, and initiatives;
    c. Arranges for advertising, postering, email campaigns and outreach programs;
    d. Prepares and distributes the Employee Assembly newsletter in consultation with the Communications Committee; and,
    e. Reviews and approves internal and external communications of the Assembly in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Communications Committee.

E. Parliamentarian
    a. Assures that meetings follow procedures found within the Charter and the Bylaws of the Assembly and rules on questions and disputes related to interpretation of those rules.
    b. Coordinates with the Office of the Assemblies to ensure that the governing documents of the Assembly are public and reflect any changes made by the Assembly.

ARTICLE III: COMMITTEES

Section 3.1: Generally

A. The Assembly may establish standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate by a majority vote of the seated voting members of the Assembly.

B. Except where otherwise indicated, any employee is eligible to serve on any committee of the Assembly and the term of membership on committees is concurrent with a session of the Assembly.

Section 3.2: Ad-Hoc Committees

A. For each ad-hoc committee, the committee charge shall be written prior to the formation of the committee and the appointment of its members.

B. Every ad-hoc committee charge shall include a “sunset” clause with a specific date by which the committee is expected to report back to the Assembly.

Section 3.3: Standing Committees

A. Unless otherwise specified in its charge, each committee will be chaired by a voting member of the Assembly and will consist of eleven voting members:
   a. Six members appointed by and from the voting membership of the Assembly, one of whom serves as chair;
   b. Five members appointed by the Assembly from the employee community who are not members of the Assembly.

B. Each standing committee must:
   a. Hold and publicize at least two meetings per semester that are open to the staff community where it receives and discusses items of business relevant to its charge;
   b. Publish and submit, in a timely fashion, agendas and minutes of each meeting and make every reasonable attempt to ensure that members of the staff community affected by its recommendations are informed of the agenda of its meetings and of its recommendations.

Section 3.4: Charges of Standing Committees

A. Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee
   By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:
   a. Publicize the activities of the Assembly and its committees, including the agendas of meetings, actions taken, and events organized by the Assembly through all available and appropriate media;
   b. Develop and execute communications plans for significant Assembly actions, projects, and initiatives;
   c. Review and approve internal and external communications of the Assembly
   d. Support and facilitate activities which raise awareness in the employee community of the Assembly's role and function;
   e. Coordinate and execute staff events and recognition activities sponsored by the Assembly, including the annual President's Address to Staff;
   f. Identify and examine opportunities for staff recognition by the Assembly and the university;
   g. Review the Assembly's staff recognition programs and recommend changes; and
   h. Review nominations and approve staff recognition awards, including the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service, according to rules and selection criteria adopted by the Assembly.

   The committee shall be chaired by the Vice Chair for Communications. The HR Employee Program Coordinator, HR Communications Manager, and a representative from the Cornell Chronicle, shall be invited to serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

B. Employee Education and Development Committee

By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

a. Review programs and proposals affecting employee education, including work-related and elective educational activities, and recommend changes;
b. Identify employee education needs and opportunities for employees to engage in the academic mission of the university through research and programmatic activities;
c. Review and recommend proposals for pipeline development and professional advancement opportunities for employees; and,
d. Recommend actions the university may undertake to address employee education needs.

A representative from Benefit Services, a representative from Organizational and Workforce Development, and a representative from the School of Continuing Education shall be invited to serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

C. Employee Welfare Committee

By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

a. Review and recommend proposals and initiatives related to employee health and wellness, work/life, dependent care and family support, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, transportation, compensation, and any other topic deemed relevant to employee welfare.

The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

D. Elections Committee

By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

a. Review Assembly election rules and procedures and recommend changes as needed;
b. Apply election rules and procedures approved by the Assembly; and,
c. Plan and support, in collaboration with the Communications Committee, efforts to solicit candidates for vacant positions in the Assembly.

The Elections Committee consists of all members of the Assembly whose terms continue beyond the current session of the Assembly. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

E. Benefits and Policy Committee

By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

a. In collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, review and recommend changes to endowed and statutory benefits and personnel policies of the university, and other policies affecting the work environment at Cornell;
b. Solicit from employees and university departments opinions, information, and advice relevant to issues before the committee; and
c. In collaboration with the Faculty Senate, evaluate and make recommendations for changes to the University Benefits Committee, which is chartered jointly by the Employee Assembly and the Faculty Senate.

The Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer or a delegate shall be invited to serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of the committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote. The committee will appoint members, as needed, to serve on the University Benefits Committee.

F. Priority Committee

By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

a. In collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, the Committee shall design and administer a comprehensive survey intended to inform and strengthen the work of the Assembly. The survey shall be structured to identify pain points, trends, and patterns across staff communities. The Committee shall coordinate distribution with consideration of other surveys administered to the staff population to avoid duplication and survey fatigue. The survey shall be conducted on a regular basis, and no less frequently than every other year.
b. The Committee will uphold institutional best practices, university policy, and HR recommendations when collecting, storing, analyzing, and presenting employee data, including the anonymization of individual employee responses.
c. The Committee will present and receive approval for the final survey from both the EA Executive Committee and the VPCHRO (or their designee) prior to distribution to employees through the Office of Assemblies.
d. The Committee shall analyze survey findings and translate the results into clear, actionable recommendations for the Assembly and its standing committees. The Committee shall uphold principles of accountability and transparency in its review and response to the findings. A summary report of the results and recommended actions shall be presented at a regularly scheduled public meeting of the Assembly.
e. In addition to compiling and analyzing survey data, the Committee shall produce a formal report identifying priority areas for improvement. Subsequent annual reporting shall include a documented update outlining actions taken in response to prior survey findings, thereby ensuring continuity, transparency, and sustained accountability over time.

The Committee shall be chaired by any voting-eligible Employee Assembly Member. A representative of Cornell's Human Resources team will be invited to serve on this committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred to for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

Article IV: Suspension of the Bylaws

A. A seated voting member of the Assembly may make a motion to suspend an Article of these Bylaws for a specified duration of a meeting.
B. The Article of these Bylaws is suspended with two-thirds of the seated voting members voting in favor.
C. Article V, in its entirety, may not be suspended.

Article V: Amendment

A. Except where otherwise indicated, these bylaws are subject to amendment by a majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.