



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Agenda of the Thursday, April 18, 2019 Meeting
4:46pm-5:17pm in Memorial Room, Willard Straight Hall

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. V. Devatha called the meeting to order at 4:46 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
 - i. *Present:* M. Adeghe [0], J. Anderson [0], D. Barbaria [0], C. Benedict [0], U. Chukwukere [1], V. Devatha [0], O. Din [2.5], J. Dominguez [0], O. Egharevba [2], S. Iruvanti [2], K. Kebbeh [1], N. Matolka [0], G. Park [1.5], I. Pavlov [0.25], E. Shapiro [0], M. Shovik [2.25], J. Sim [0], M. Smith [0], B. Weintraub [1], K. Wondimu [0], V. Xu [0.75]
 - ii. *Absent:* S. Harshvardhan [2], C. Huang [0], A. Jain [0], S. Lim [1.5], U. Mustafa [2], M. Stefanko [2], F. Uribe-Rheinbolt [0]

II. Approval of the Minutes

- a. V. Devatha asked that the assembly members actually read the minutes for March 28th.
- b. Motion to approve the March 7th minutes – approved.
- c. Motion to approve the March 28th minutes – approved.
- d. V. Devatha asked if the April 11th minutes were available.
- e. John Hannan replied in the negative.

III. Open Microphone

- a. A community member introduced herself as a senior food science major, and said that after debriefing the divestment campaign, she and others wanted to point out things done carelessly, especially regarding the community vote. She added that there was concern regarding the safety of those voting, especially students of color and international students, who were asked upon voting to state their vote out loud as well as their NetID. She also said that the entire meeting was recorded by the SA and by Cornellians for Israel, and that there was a picture taken of a student's laptop and posted to Facebook, and that these oversights are beyond careless. She added that these requests were not made on a whim, and that people of color have been targeted for their support of Palestinian human rights, and that websites for this purpose such as Canary Mission do exist. She also said that this trivializes the real danger that proponents of Palestinian freedom face, and that they don't want for their supporters' futures to be jeopardized due to carelessness.
- b. Julian Kroll said that he would like to apologize if any harm came to anyone because of this, but that they did the best with their resources to make it as confidential as possible, and that they tried to verify NetIDs against student IDs as much as

possible, but that some students didn't know their student IDs, and so he couldn't ask people not to vote because of that. He added that concerns were raised during the meeting about the voting, and that they continue to take privacy very seriously, and that he deleted the document with the votes, but that he doesn't know what further proof would be satisfactory.

- c. The community member said that it is great that the document was deleted, but that it is frustrating that people came up and said that they were able to vote without their ID, and that if there is a community vote being conducted, they need to make sure that these things are in place. She added that it would be great if they could figure out a better system for this, and that it seems careless even if pictures are being deleted because people were saying their votes out loud, and that people against the resolution could hear her vote for it which is not okay. She also said that having voters type out their vote rather than say it out loud would be better.
- d. J. Kroll said that he is sorry that this made her feel uncomfortable, but they needed to get a system where 600 students could all give their votes in an hour with a planning time of about three hours. He added that this is not an excuse, and that he hopes in the future they take into account what happened last Thursday.
- e. The community member said that if they can't do it properly, she would suggest not doing it, and that it's not always worth it to sacrifice their futures for something like this.
- f. J. Kroll said that he agrees, but that it was introduced as a Sense-of-the-body resolution, so the sponsors of the resolution would have known that there would be a community vote.
- g. M. Shovik said that they did introduce it as Sense-of-the-body, but that it also says in the bylaws that votes must be verified with a form of ID, and that she thinks that even if it were done in the beginning, they had this whole discussion about secret ballots and following the rules, so the fact that it didn't apply to the community vote is weird.
- h. J. Kroll said that they checked the NetID against the directory for every vote, and that in rare cases they did let it slide, but only because they had 600 students in a matter of an hour.
- i. Another community member introduced herself and said that she wanted to give the complaints of the 24 student organizations signed on with the resolution, and that it was incredibly disappointing to hear that SA members were too uninformed or too complicated to vote on this, and that is academically lazy. She added that members had the time to do the research, and that it comes down to not caring, and that she expects all SA members to inform themselves such that they can vote. She also said that the community had a stake in this, and to not learn about this beforehand is unacceptable, and that it is their job to do the research before voting. She added that they also want to call to attention the way the community vote disadvantaged students of color, and that in the future, there should be ways to allow all students to vote, disadvantaged or otherwise, such as remotely, and that it is not surprising that a system made by the privileged to favor the privileged has these problems.
- j. J. Anderson said that Open Microphone is not normally a time for SA members to respond, and asked the community members if they would like responses from SA members.
- k. G. Park said that she is one of the members who strongly believed that she was uninformed, or not prepared enough, and that she still believes the same, and that in

the past two months leading up to the point of her voting, she strongly believed that she was no expert. She added that there are even students who are sharing articles and videos, and that she is constantly hearing more information, and even toward the end, there were students who wanted to speak with her one-on-one, and that she believes that it is an issue that has been going on historically and is incredibly nuanced. She also said that this involves 60 or 70 years of history that cannot be completely understood on both sides in only two months, and that she believes that they all tried their best to educate themselves, but that she thinks that it's unfair for them to pretend to understand this in only two months.

- l. The second community member said that two months is ample time, and that no one is asking SA members to solve a geopolitical crisis, and that they are asking them to vote on a resolution. She added that they have the time and resources to learn about the issue if they claim to represent the issues on campus.
- m. The first community member said that they keep referencing history, but the resolution had nothing to do with the past, and that they are talking about human rights violations going on right now, and that that is a misconception that got thrown around a lot to distract throughout this entire campaign. She added that most countries recognize what is happening right now, but that they're not talking about land issues or anything, and that they are trying to pull money out of oppression, and that when people talk about the situation being complicated, they're referring to the geopolitical conflict, which is not what the resolution is about.
- n. G. Park began to speak.
- o. J. Anderson said that there will be no solution to this back-and-forth, and that Open Microphone is a time for community members to speak, and that if SA members want to engage afterward, that is their prerogative.
- p. Community member Ezra Stein introduced himself as a junior and said that he just wanted to add about their concerns of safety, and that throughout their entire campaign, the opposition was talking about feeling safe, but that there was concern on the SA about the secret ballot which is unfair, and the fact that anyone given these threats would prioritize transparency over safety is appalling. He added that given the nature of the discussion, it becomes clear that SA members aren't comfortable discussing their position, and that the majority of the SA voted in favor, but only two members spoke in favor of it, and that there is a clear discomfort which made the secret ballot important. He also said that he would suggest that the SA should come up with a mechanism to allow a secret ballot to occur outside of executive session, and that he doesn't think that the legality of the measure should have been a focus, since there are very real risks for people who speak up for Palestinian rights. He added that over 25 states, including New York, have legislation against people in business who speak for boycotts and divestment, and that there are very real risks at hand. He also said that another community member brought up Canary Mission, which is a very real concern, and that they could be labeled as anti-Semitic or racist which are very real terms that would be used by employers and peers to screen them out. He added that they do not take this lightly, and that he hopes that the SA takes this into consideration in the future.

IV. Announcements and Reports

- a. D. Barbaria said that he and V. Devatha approved funding for a popup event but Hotelier Entrepreneurs at \$350, and asked if there were any objections to this funding.
 - i. There were no objections.
- b. B. Weintraub said that there was an editorial published in the Sun about meal swipes not rolling over, and that this is something they will bring up in Dining Committee at their next meeting, and that there have been conversations about meal plan reform, so this will be addressed as much as they are able to address it.
- c. V. Devatha said that tonight at 8:00 pm, there will be a keynote event, and that tomorrow at 5:00 pm in Willard Straight Hall will be a cultural remembrance of the occupation of Willard Straight, and that there are many more events that he encourages SA members to look up.

V. New Business

- a. Resolution 37: Denouncing White Supremacist Paraphernalia at Cornell-Affiliated County Fairs
 - i. J. Anderson said that he erred in making the agenda by listing this resolution as Business of the Day, rather than as New Business. He added that he is going to ask for this to be tabled quickly and to push discussion on this to a later date, and that he is not the main organizer for this campaign and so he would not want to misrepresent anything that the campaign is actually doing. He also said that he is not the best person to answer questions unless they are very general, and that there is a website and Facebook page about it.
 - ii. Motion to table Resolution 37 – tabled.

VI. Adjournment

- a. V. Devatha adjourned the meeting at 5:17 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Hannan
Clerk of the Assembly