

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Agenda of the Thursday, April 22, 2021 Meeting
4:45 – 6:30 on ZOOM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (Cayuga Nation)**
- III. Announcements and Presentations**
 - a. Student Advocate Confirmation – Anuli Ononye ‘22
 - b. Slope Day Media Announcement – Estefanía Perez ‘21
- IV. Open Microphone**
- V. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. [April 15, 2021 Minutes](#)
- VI. New Business**
 - a. Resolution #44 – [Petition for Better Lighting on Cornell Owned Student Dormitories](#)
 - b. Resolution #45 – [Petition to Renew Housing Amenities](#)
 - c. Resolution #46 – [Petition for University Owned Residence Security](#)
- VII. Adjournment**



Cornell University
Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, April 15, 2021 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:46pm (EST).
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chukwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Perez, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Templeman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, S. Zverev, C. Huang
 - ii. *Members Absent:* Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, L. Zumpano

II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohó:nq' (Cayuga Nation)

- a. Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq' (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq' are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York State, and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq' dispossession and honor the ongoing connection of the Gayogohó:nq' people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

III. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers present at open microphone.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

- a. April 8, 2021
 - i. Motion to approve the April 8th minutes – **approved** Unanimous Consent

V. New Business

- a. There was a motion to amend the agenda to begin discussion on the SAIFC Proposal regarding a Rain Garden.
 - i. Motion to amend the agenda – **amended**
- b. SAIFC Proposal – Rain Garden
 - i. A. Lampert explained that this is a proposal for the funding for a rain garden outside of Corson Hall that has been in the works since the Fall 2020 semester led by Dr. Nina Bassuk.
 - ii. L. Smith stated that the site where the rain garden is going to be is currently just grass and it will be very excited to see its transformation in conjunction with class being taught on it.
 - iii. C. Huang asked where on campus this will be located.
 1. L. Smith stated it is near Plant Science and the Agricultural Quad.
 - iv. V. Xu asked how many students this will actually impact as it \$12,000.
 1. A. Lampert stated that it is actually around \$9,000. The classes that have been working on it are around 20 students, but they have been working on this project for a long time. They've done a lot of



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- research which has shown that rain gardens have been very impactful on college campuses.
2. L. Smith explained that additionally it will be featured on a map of spots on campus that are environmentally designed and will be an attraction to visitors.
 - v. Motion to vote on the proposal – **approved** 20-0-2
- c. SA R41: Disengaging Cornell from the War in Yemen
- i. Abstract: This resolution calls for an end to Cornell's relationship with Saudi Arabia and arms manufacturers involved in war crimes in the War in Yemen.
 - ii. J. Mullen explained this resolution builds on the presentation about the War in Yemen last SA meeting and includes support from several professors and faculty and the Arab Student Association at Cornell.
 - iii. L. Abd Elmagid stated that this is very good initiative that J. Mullen did extensive work and research on. It ties into the growing theme of asking Cornell to be transparent with its engagements and uphold its ethical standards in every partnership.
 - iv. L. Smith asked if the administration has responded to Resolution #39.
 1. C. Huang stated that the administration has not responded to Resolution #39.
 - v. A. Miramontes Serrano expressed support for the resolution but stated that the Engineering communities have expressed concern over the employers being singled out.
 1. J. Mullen stated that the four companies singled out in the resolution have been committing war crimes by providing weapons to Saudi Arabia.
 2. M. Shardow explained that Cornell students could still apply for jobs at those companies, they just would not be allowed to recruit on campus.
 - vi. A. Gleiberman asked if there has been discussions where potentially other funding could come from for diversity programs, as many of these programs are funded by these companies.
 1. J. Mullen stated they have not directly brought this specific question up with the College of Engineering, but perhaps the funds that are



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- already provided by companies that are more ethical could be prioritized.
2. L. Abd Elmagid stated that this question is more for administration rather than the organizers. It is up to administration to reevaluate their partnerships and make sure they are ethical.
- vii. L. Smith asked if there were any precedents on donations being publicly disclosed and redirected to another location.
1. J. Mullen explained this demand came from the professors that called upon the university to have transparency.
 2. L. Smith asked if it would be more fitting to just not accept those funds in the first place.
 - a. J. Mullen stated that part of disclosing previous donations would be advocating to not accept these donations. There is no justification to take these funds now.
- viii. M. Baker asked what the four companies being discussed are.
1. J. Mullen stated that the four companies are BAE, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, and Boeing.
- ix. L. Smith asked if this would continue after the conflict is resolved.
1. J. Mullen stated that, following the guidelines established by Resolution #39, these practices would be held up as long as Saudi Arabia continues with other human rights abuses and unethical practices.
- x. There was a motion to amend line 80 in Resolution #41 to state Resolution #39.
1. Motion to amend Resolution #39 – **amended**
- xi. V. Xu stated that when discussing Resolution #39, there were parallel discussions going on in the Faculty Senate and asked if the Faculty Senate is planning to discuss this as well.
1. J. Mullen stated that currently they are not discussing it, but in 2018 there was more momentum around it. If you look on the cosponsor page of the resolution, there are several cosponsors who are also in the Faculty Senate.
 2. V. Xu asked how the administration responded to the efforts in 2018.
 - a. J. Mullen stated this was mentioned in the last meeting, but administration did not respond.
- xii. M. Baker stated they have had discussion with Engineering students on their perspective on how beneficial job fairs are in general and how we can diminish the negative impacts of this resolution. M. Baker expressed concern over first-generation students whose parents are not engineers and don't know much about these companies and job opportunities in general.
1. L. Abd Elmagid stated that many questions being asked are very similar. Additionally, the focus should be on the positive impact that



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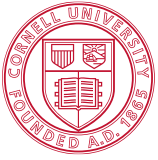
Cornell would not be complicit in the killing of millions of people and the manufactured famine that is starving children.

2. T. Reuning asked for representatives who are not members of marginalized communities or first-generation communities to not speak for them, as many who are actually members of those communities would rather students do not go work for these companies and contribute to the war crimes being committed.
 3. L. Contreras reaffirmed T. Reuning's statements and stated their community would care more about a genocide occurring than four companies coming to a job fair.
 4. E. Perez emphasized the previous statements and that this is bigger issue.
- xiii. Motion to vote on Resolution #41 – **passed** 17-1-3
- d. SA R42: Adding Mental Health Checks to the Daily Check
- i. This resolution calls for the addition of a mental health and wellbeing related question on the Daily Check Portal to better connect students with mental health resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ii. A. Ononye stated that this resolution focuses on adding Mental Health checks to the Daily Check portal. This is obviously a temporary fix to the mental health challenges faced on campus, but hopefully would provide an increased opportunity for students to seek help and identifying people in need and care on campus. It does not automatically sign a student up for a CAPS session, but it gives students access to mental health resources on campus they may not have known existed.
 - iii. Motion to vote on Resolution #42 – **passed** 20-0-1
- e. There was a motion to amend the agenda to include Resolution #43.
- i. Motion to amend the agenda - **amended**
- f. SA R43: Demanding Cornell Implement a University-Wide Slip Day System
- i. Abstract: This resolution calls on Administration to create an academic policy that grants each student 10 slip days to be used at their discretion in each enrolled course per semester.
 - ii. N. Watson stated this resolution is calling on administration to implement a new university wide policy allowing for slip days in every academic class. The Information Science Department currently has this policy for slip days,



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- which act as extensions that do not require the student to ask the professor for them.
- iii. K. Butler asked if they apply for exams, homework, and all assignments and for more clarification on what a slip day is.
 1. N. Watson stated that a slip day is a one-day extension on an assignment and generally applies to any assignment except for prelims and finals.
 - iv. L. Smith stated that this resolution was reviewed by committee today and asked if they would consider tabling until next week to allow people to read through it.
 1. N. Watson stated that this resolution was born out of the events of the past week and it would look favorably on approving this today as it is beneficial for all students.
 - v. K. Santacruz asked if the Information Science Department gives out 10 slip days.
 1. N. Watson stated that 10 is kind of an arbitrary number and is open to suggestions, but 10 is the standard.
 2. K. Santacruz if it 10 per semester or 10 per class.
 - a. N. Watson explained it is 10 per class.
 - vi. J. Bansah asked if there is a timeline for when administration would approve this to move forward and if it applies to seven-week courses.
 1. N. Watson stated that if it approved by the SA today, C. Huang will convey this to the President as a recommendation for administration. There are also avenues through the Faculty Senate they can go through. In regard to seven-week courses, it would most likely be half the number so 5 slip days.
 - vii. T. Reuning expressed support for this resolution as it would assist all students, especially first-generation students and other marginalized communities that are shown to be less likely to ask for extensions.
 - viii. L. Smith stated it may be helpful to work directly with the Academic Policy Committee.
 1. N. Watson thanked L. Smith for their input and stated they will work the committee to add pressure to administration to get this approved.
 - ix. S. Kapoor stated they are a member of the Academic Policy Committee and expressed their support for the resolution. S. Kapoor asked if there is any



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plans of speeding this resolution up, as it tends to take a very long time to implement academic policy change.

1. N. Watson stated they do not have a timeline, but President Pollack must respond with 30 days of receiving the resolution.
- x. Motion to vote on Resolution #43 – **passed** 19-0-1

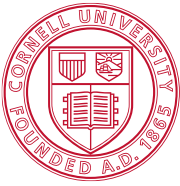
VI. Adjournment

- a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 5:32pm (EST).

Respectfully Submitted,

Ciara Shanahan

Clerk of the Student Assembly



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Originally Presented on:	(04/01/2021)
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

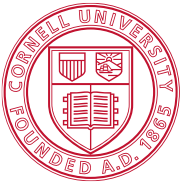
1 S.A. Resolution #44
2 Petition for Better Lighting on Cornell Owned Student Dormitories
3
4 ABSTRACT: Call for action on insufficient dormitory light and subsequent poor student academic
5 performance.
6
7 **Sponsored by: Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24**
8
9 **Whereas**, currently some of the Cornell provided on campus housing has insufficient lighting for
10 students to perform optimally in their studies, and
11
12 **Whereas**, Cornell University sets high academic standards for its students, demanding excellence
13 inside and outside of the classroom, and whereas Cornell University's number one priority is
14 to facilitate the learning and scholastic thriving of its students,
15
16 **Whereas**, the significant coursework delivered requires high concentration, which in itself demands
17 set of work conditions that enable such concentration. Without the proper lighting, however,
18 some students find themselves incapable of focusing,
19
20 **Whereas**, with the novel Coronavirus pandemic, online instruction has further confined students to
21 their personal dormitories, thus increasing students' susceptibility to cabin fever, frustration,
22 or subsequent poor academic performance, and hence augmented the need for an optimal,
23 private work environment,
24
25 **Whereas**, the places on campus can qualify as well-lit private rooms, and whereas the few that do
26 have limited time access or are often unavailable because 1) their success, 2) the high student
27 population in need of such study spaces,
28
29 **Whereas**, most communal and quiet, on-campus study spaces – such as libraries – have closing
30 hours and limited time availability. When students are asked to leave a study space without
31 having planned ahead, they are likely to find no near options available, and thus lose
32 significant amounts of time looking for an alternative study space. If in the end they do not
33 find an area to concentrate, they will return to their dormitories, where they may be even
34 more incapable of concentrating and hence be prone to even more frustration,
35
36 **Whereas**, the Mental Health Review Committee concluded in their April 2020 Final Report that
37 there is a need to increase student autonomy to satisfy the University's high academic
38 standards, and whereas the dependency on outside study spaces directly contradicts such
39 ambitions,



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- 40
41 **Whereas**, students living on insufficiently lit dormitories pay the same housing bill as their luckier
42 peers in well-lit rooms, yet must allocate extra resources on purchasing their own personal
43 lighting, and
44
- 45 **Whereas**, oftentimes these purchases include but are not limited to string lights, spider lamps or
46 light bulbs that exceed the recommended wattage for lamps, which violate the Fire Safety
47 Guidelines¹ yet are still used by students for their effective lighting, or
48
- 49 **Whereas**, the extra cost of acquiring lamps is not covered by Financial Aid and can signify enough
50 of a financial impediment for students to avoid acquiring the needed lighting, and thus
51 making these students study under lower conditions than their luckier or more resourceful
52 peers,
53
- 54 **Whereas**, if Cornell University provided dormitories lacking sufficient lighting with a previously
55 approved, effective lamps, then 1) fire security related threats would decrease, 2) students
56 would feel more productive fulfilling academic work in their rooms and would have less
57 concerns to distract them from performing well in their classes.
58
- 59 **Whereas**, these changes need not be exceedingly laborious, as the university has already succeeding
60 in installing effective lighting systems and hence knows which ones are proper for
61 concentration. The university can thus purchase additional, secure and luminous lamps and
62 place those in dormitories alongside the pre-incorporated ones.
63
- 64 **Whereas**, the most imminent, specific complaints have been placed on the Dormitory of Clara
65 Dickson Hall, where students are only given one desk lamp and the light incorporated in
66 their desk shelves,
67
- 68 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell University Housing will begin supplying its dormitories with
69 the necessary lighting for student academic success, starting with the older, less lit residences
70 but aiming for simultaneity among all Cornell owned housing if possible.
71
- 72 **Be it further resolved**, that additionally Cornell University will revise its library closing hours,
73 allowing some to open 24h before the Final Exam season of this Spring 2021 semester.
74
- 75 **Be it further resolved**, that the action taken should be sufficient for the issue of insufficient lighting
76 not to be brought up again, as Cornell University's predominant goal is ensure student

¹ Information about Cornell University's Fire Security Guidelines can be found [here](#).



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77 success, and a prestigious, resourceful institution such as Cornell University should not have
78 to have its Student Assembly petition for such a thing.

79

80 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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82 Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24

83 *Freshman Representative, Student Assembly*

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85 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 3-1-2, 04/21/2021)*



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Originally Presented on:	(04/01/2021)
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

1 S.A. Resolution #45
2 Petition to Renew Housing Amenities
3

4 ABSTRACT: Demand to renew outdated facilities in on-campus residences, specifically targeting
5 communal kitchens and bathrooms.
6

7 **Sponsored by: Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24**
8

9 **Whereas**, Cornell University is directing funds to build more modern housing facilities while there
10 are pre-existing residence halls with lacking or outdated installations,
11

12 **Whereas**, Cornell University owned housing rates are more costly than apartment rentals¹, yet often
13 do not provide better accommodations, as is the case of the older residence halls,
14

15 **Whereas**, frequented communal spaces constitute a part of the student's living environment and
16 highly contribute to the students' social experiences, which are crucial for their mental
17 wellbeing
18

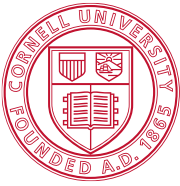
19 **Whereas**, regarding communal kitchens, there is an increasing amount of students who rather cook
20 their meals, and thus partly depend on kitchen amenities for their nutrition, and whereas in
21 both usual and in current circumstances, students cook as a recreational, community-
22 fostering activity
23

24 **Whereas**, the Mental Health Review Final Report published in April 2020 identified student
25 feedback suggesting that finances are a major source of stress, and whereas primary factor
26 when dropping Cornell Dining's meal plan is not necessarily convenience but the cost and
27 financial advantage of cooking one's own food, and
28

29 **Whereas**, said report also identified student feedback suggesting a desire for multicultural
30 competency, and likewise further concluded that "Progress in providing students with
31 equitable access to and experience with the abundant offerings of the institution must
32 accompany Cornell's progress in cultivating a more diverse student body.", and
33

34 **Whereas**, alongside with seeking inexpensive experiences, Section B of said report also disclosed the
35 need for promoting social connectedness and resilience, and whereas Cornell University
36 aims its public living centers to foster such qualities and experiences
37

¹ Comparison: \$1200 per month as opposed to an average of \$1000 per month for the location in College town closest to the University.



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38 **Whereas**, obsolete amenities are less likely to be used, and will therefore likely fail to facilitate
39 student encounter or fail to host the development of the tight, diverse communities that students
40 need to feel accepted and enjoy their college experience

41
42 **Whereas**, obsolete amenities and lack of enjoyable living spaces are also major factors of students'
43 deciding to live off-campus,

44
45 **Whereas**, in some cases the obsolescence of the kitchen equipment and amenities causes
46 malfunction, and - for the common example of sinks – result in unpleasant incidents such as clogs
47 and odors,

48
49 **Whereas**, some residence halls also have obsolete bathrooms that could be renovated to improve
50 students' living conditions and match the installations of the newer residences, and

51
52 **Whereas**,

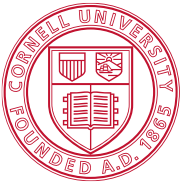
53
54 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell University renew and re-emphasize the importance of
55 communal amenities in its on-campus housing, particularly with regards to bathrooms and
56 kitchens, with the additional task of reequipping the latter.

57
58 **Be it further resolved**, for future housing projects, more abundant and attractive communal spaces
59 be strategically located to foster community growth and student encounter, likewise aiming
60 for larger kitchens.

61
62 **Respectfully Submitted**,

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64 Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24
65 *Freshman Representative, Student Assembly*

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67 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 3-1-2, 04/21/2021)*



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Originally Presented on:	(03/29/2021)
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

1 S.A. Resolution #46
2 Petition for University owned residence security
3

4 ABSTRACT: This resolution calls for action on the growing issue of theft and offence in University-
5 owned residence halls.
6

7 **Sponsored by: Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24**
8

9 **Whereas**, regarding the issue of food theft, an increasingly large part of the student body has
10 downgraded or discarded their meal plan and therefore relies partially or completely on
11 communal kitchens.
12

13 **Whereas**, Cornell university cares for the mental and physical wellbeing of its students, and
14 acknowledges the weight of financial matters in student's living decisions (MHR Report,
15 April 2020), and the decision to cancel dining meal plans are often tied to students' finances,
16

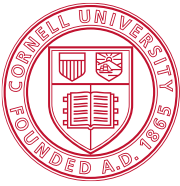
17 **Whereas**, said report also highlights the importance of balancing Cornell University's demand for
18 academic excellence with non-curricular experiences, and whereas large body of students
19 cook in the University's owned residences for recreational purposes or as community
20 fostering activities,
21

22 **Whereas**, Cornell University has enabled progress towards the food independence of its student
23 body by reopening *Annabel's* subsidized, student-run grocery store, yet does not fully provide
24 a convenient environment to cook for on-campus residents,
25

26 **Whereas**, the increasing theft reports, out of which a concerning percentage regards the
27 disappearance of food and kitchen supplies even when said goods were appropriately labeled
28 is preventing students from engaging in such experiences and activities,
29

30 **Whereas**, one possible response to the issue of food theft could be to reserve one fridge per fixed
31 amount of residents – as it has been established with pandemic restrictions – while
32 implementing locks to ensure said fridges are only accessed by the corresponding students,
33 yet
34

35 **Whereas**, the communal kitchens in Cornell University's residences do not accommodate enough
36 fridges for this system to be viable, as the current amount ranges between 1 and 3 fridges per
37 kitchen, and whereas providing too many student access to the same fridge would virtually
38 equate not having any system at all, heighten the risk of other, unauthorized students also
39 using the fridges - i.e. peers without granted access to the kitchen.



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40
41 **Whereas**, implementing security cameras could be more cost-effective than possibly another option
42 replicating West Campus' restricted kitchen pantry system as it also combats other security
43 issues faced on gathering spaces by not only avoid consistent theft but also enable
44 identifying both offenders and offences in the event of misbehavior,
45

46 **Whereas**, there has been an increasing debate on the University's response to security threats, and
47

48 **Whereas**, Cornell University Housing should have already implemented a security system to avoid
49 or respond to such incidences on Cornell University owned housing property.
50

51 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell University will begin to implement security camera systems
52 Cornell owned housing property, focusing on public spaces where communal food storage is
53 located (i.e. kitchens and lounges).
54

55 **Respectfully Submitted,**

56
57 Andrea Miramontes Serrano '24
58 *Freshman Representative, Student Assembly*

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60 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 3-1-2, 04/21/2021).*