

# Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

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## Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the February 23rd, 2026 Meeting

5:00 PM – 6:44 PM

401 Physical Sciences Building | Zoom

### I. Call to Order

- a. N. Brennan called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
- b. **Members Present:** N. Brennan, A. Cardenas, P. Caruso, C. Chappel, J. Chobirko, A. Coogan, I. Di Tomassi, K. Ellis, D. Freeman, E.R. Gallant, A. Garcia-Ortiz, I. Gatimi, M. Hassler, C. King, Z. Liu, Z. Lynch, T. Nguyen, R. Prude, K. Rohrbaugh, S. Sepp, Y. Wu, J. Wan, H. Zhang
- c. **Members Absent:** L. Alshameh, J. Alzayer, V. Baruah, B. Candelaria, M. James, Y. Khaled, A. Koyyada, C. Meffert, M. Ortiz, I. Smith
- d. **Also Present:** M. Kotlikoff, R. Lombardi, T. A. Lewis, M. Love, D. Hwang, L. La Guerre, F. Gutierrez Aparicio, V. Mills

### II. Approval of the February 9th Meeting Minutes

- a. Z. Lynch motioned to approve the meeting minutes. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

### III. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee
  - i. A. Cardenas gave updates on the April election preparations.
- b. Operations and Staffing Committee
  - i. Z. Lynch reminded the assembly of the opened chair position on the committee, as well as bylaws and provisions coming later in the semester.
- c. Appropriations Committee
  - i. S. Sepp stated that the committee is preparing the funds for the special grant recommendations after they have been approved.
- d. Communications Committee



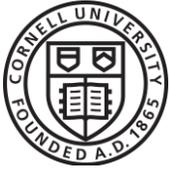
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- i. A. Garcia-Ortiz mentioned the communique is going out tomorrow and various upcoming events, such as the collaboration event between the GPSA and the Future of American University at the Big Red Barn.
  - e. Student Advocacy Committee (SAC)
    - i. I. Gatimi noted plans on expanding Town Halls due to upcoming elections.
  - f. Programming Board
    - i. P. Caruso gave a reminder that the first tickets will be dropping this Thursday at noon and that the Gala is on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.
  - g. Faculty Advising, Teaching, and Mentorship Award Committee (FATMAC)
    - i. J. Chobirko reminded the assembly to nominate any post doctorate, colleague, or faculty who made an outstanding contribution to excellence at Cornell for the FATMA.
  - h. Graduate School
    - i. The Graduate School reported a focus on the admissions process. In addition, the Big Red Barn's manager position opened, and the Graduate School hoped for one representative from GPSA to serve on a committee.
  - i. A. Garcia-Ortiz motioned to move nominations and appointments to the top of the agenda. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

## IV. Nominations & Appointments

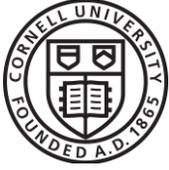
- a. Diversity & International Students Committee Chair
  - i. A. Garcia-Ortiz motioned to open the floor for Diversity & International Students Committee Chair nominations. The floor opened with unanimous consent.
  - ii. Z. Lynch nominated D. Hwang. D. Hwang accepted the nomination.
  - iii. J. Chobirko motioned to close the floor for nominations. The floor closed with unanimous consent.
  - iv. D. Hwang has been named the Diversity & International Students Committee Chair.
- b. Finance Commission Chair



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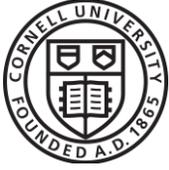
- i. S. Sedd motioned to open the floor for FC Chair nominations. The floor opened with unanimous consent.
      - ii. S. Sedd nominated C. King. C. King accepted the nomination.
      - iii. A. Garcia-Ortiz motioned to close the floor for nominations. The floor closed with unanimous consent.
      - iv. C. King has been named the Finance Commission Chair.
- V. Presentation I from M. Kotlikoff, *President of Cornell*, R. Lombardi, *Vice President of Student and Campus Life*, T.A. Lewis, *Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education*
  - a. M. Kotlikoff gave comments regarding campus climate and expressive activities.
  - b. M. Kotlikoff, T. A. Lewis, and R. Lombardi responded to the assembly's pre-submitted questions regarding the balance between campus codes and freedom of expression, GPSA fund regulations, campus surveillance, federal influence and institutional autonomy, and more.
  - c. The speakers took follow up questions and comments from the assembly regarding the university's 2016 divestment guidelines, resolution response times, external factors for consideration when addressing religious harassment, nuances in using AI for monitoring and detecting criminality purposes, and more.
- VI. Legislation
  - a. Resolution 11: Implementing Special Grants Committee Funding Recommendations on Proposals Addressing Novel Programming
    - i. Sponsor Z. Lynch introduced the goal of this resolution: to make lasting improvements and to help kickstart new programs. The speaker provided examples of such programs, such as the Indigenous Graduate Student Association, Graduate Student Veterans Association, helping new families with childcare materials, and the Lindseth Climbing Center.
    - ii. N. Brennan moved on to a questions and comments period.
    - iii. C. Chappel motioned to amend lines 68 through 122 to list the proposed amount out of the amount requested for each of the grants.



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1. After a debate and voting procedure, the amendment failed, and the bill remains in its original state.
  - iv. N. Brennan returned to the question-and-answer period for 1 minute.
  - v. N. Brennan moved to a comment period on Resolution 11 as it is written.
  - vi. Z. Lynch motioned for a 3-minute recess. The motioned passed with unanimous consent.
  - vii. N. Brennan moved into a voting period on the resolution in its current form. Resolution 11 **passed** with a roll call vote of **21-0-0**. (*Yeas*: N. Brennan, A. Cardenas, P. Caruso, C. Chappel, J. Chobirko, A. Coogan, I. Di Tomassi, D. Freeman, E.R. Gallant, A. Garcia-Ortiz, I. Gatimi, M. Hassler, C. King, Z. Liu, Z. Lynch, T. Nguyen, R. Prude, K. Rohrbaugh, S. Sepp, Y. Wu, D. Hwang, L. La Guerre, V. Mills)
  - viii. A. Garcia-Ortiz motioned to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. The motioned passed with unanimous consent.
- b. Resolution 12: Implementing Special Grants Committee Funding Recommendations on Proposals Addressing Student Lounges
- i. Sponsor A. Cardenas brought up the lack of accessible, welcoming, and functional student lounges on campus. The speaker placed an emphasis on the limitations that this has on opportunities for collaboration, peer support and wellness, and community building for graduate students.
  - ii. Sponsor J. Chobirko highlighted the long-term benefits that this grant can have on the graduate and professional student community.
  - iii. N. Brennan moved into a question-and-answer period.
  - iv. Z. Lynch motioned to amend Point 2 for Grant #23 to preserve bullet A and B with the addition of bullet C, that \$4,500 may be used to fund a temporary partition as an exception to bullet A.
    1. The sponsors took the amendment as friendly; the resolution is therefore amended as such.
  - v. N. Brennan moved into a comments period.
  - vi. N. Brennan moved into a voting period on the resolution. Resolution 12 **passed** with a roll call vote of **21-0-0**. (*Yeas*: N. Brennan, A. Cardenas, P. Caruso, C. Chappel, J. Chobirko, A. Coogan, I. Di Tomassi, D. Freeman,



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E.R. Gallant, A. Garcia-Ortiz, I. Gatimi, M. Hassler, C. King, Z. Liu, Z. Lynch, T. Nguyen, R. Prude, K. Rohrbaugh, S. Sepp, Y. Wu, D. Hwang, L. La Guerre, V. Mills)

- vii. Z. Lynch motioned to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

## VII. New Business

- a. None.

## VIII. Open Forum

- a. I. Gatimi noted that the Brooks School of Public Policy and Black in Public Policy is hosting a fireside chat with Kareem Jean-Pierre on February 27<sup>th</sup> at Warren Hall B25 and encouraged assembly members to attend.
- b. N. Brennan invited assembly members to free pizza and soft drinks at the Big Red Barn on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM as The Committee on the Future discuss what the future of graduate education will look like 50 years into the future.
- c. P. Caruso said that the Cornell Negotiation Student Society is hosting Interpersonal Skills of Negotiation workshop on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM in MVR 4301.
- d. A. Garcia-Ortiz brought up that the Botanic Gardens is looking for student input sometime in March. Listening sessions with updates on the new East Asian Garden is to be held at the Botanic Gardens Welcoming Center.

## IX. Adjournment

- a. Z. Lynch motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned with unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Yao  
Clerk of the Assembly