

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Resolution 8: On Investment in the Big Red Barn

Abstract: This resolution directs the GPSA Appropriations Committee to distribute \$61,200 to the Graduate School for furniture and space upgrades as recommended by the Special Grants Committee.

Sponsored by: Nicholas J. Brennan, Jason Chobirko

Reviewed by: Executive Committee,

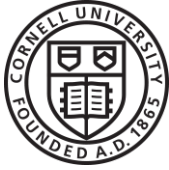
Whereas, the GPSA created the Special Grants Committee by passing [Resolution 9: Special Committee for the Disbursement of Special Grant Funding](#) in FY2024, whose charge was to solicit, review, and recommend funding for grants aimed towards advancing graduate and professional student interests at Cornell University.

Whereas, the Special Grants Committee solicited 58 grant submissions from relevant stakeholders that serve graduate and professional students, such as University departments, offices, graduate and professional student organizations, byline-funded organizations and community groups.

Whereas, the Special Grants Committee, through the collective efforts of its members, scored and reviewed all 58 received grants using the following criteria:

- 1) **Plan:** How detailed is the timeline for implementing the proposed event(s)? Are the event(s) well-reasoned and supported by grant materials?
- 2) **Accountability:** Does the grant clearly state who is responsible for implementing the proposed event(s)? Did the sponsor detail steps for grant supervision and implementation?
- 3) **Impact:** Will the proposed event(s) meaningfully impact the well-being of graduate and professional students throughout Cornell?
- 4) **Need:** Does the grant highlight a need, lack of support or otherwise unaddressed issues for graduate and professional students? And will the proposed event(s) address this need?

Whereas, the Special Grants Committee, through the majority agreement of its members, curated a list of reviewed grants which, when funded partially or in-full, would best improve graduate and professional student well-being at Cornell.



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Whereas, the Special Grants Committee voted to recommend funding two proposals addressing the Big Red Barn, hereafter “the Barn”: [proposal #29](#) relating to refurbishing the Barn (\$60,000) and [proposal #22](#) relating to upgraded lighting and disco ball (\$1,200).

Whereas, the Barn is a unique feature and privilege of graduate student life at Cornell University, serving 10,000 graduate students across schools and departments.

Whereas, the Barn is a high-demand and high-use space on Cornell’s campus, hosting over 500 programming events annually ranging from Write-In Workshops, Salsa Nights, Trivia Nights, and perhaps its most signature event: TGIF (“Tell Grads It’s Friday”), serving as a community hub for graduate students to congregate and exchange across divisions.

Whereas, the Barn’s furniture has remained largely unchanged since it was established as a graduate student center over 30 years ago. The Barn’s furniture is old, worn, and consequently requiring frequent repairs, diverting time and resources from programming.

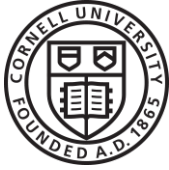
Whereas, dated Barn furniture is heavy and challenging to move, creating barriers to accessible use of the space for students with different mobility needs.

Whereas, the estimated cost of refurbishing the Barn’s main area, second floor, and greenhouse areas is \$80,000 to \$110,000 based on consultation with Sedwick Business Interiors.

Whereas, the Graduate School has endorsed proposal #29, including an endorsement letter from Dean of the Graduate School Thomas A. Lewis. This includes a commitment to cover 40% of the cost to replace the Barn’s furniture (up to \$40,000).

Whereas, proposal #29 includes a collaborative and consultative plan with the graduate student community, including but not limited to channeling graduate student input through a Graduate Student Advisory Committee, soliciting design ideas in-house (Design Connect, AAP faculty, and Design Consulting at Cornell), and finalizing and presenting a recommendation for approval of the full GPSA.

Whereas, proposal #22 outlines the one-time purchase of a new disco ball and lighting system for the Big Red Barn.



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71 **Whereas**, the Barn hosts weekly dance events and further receives weekly requests for adjusting
72 lighting beyond the capabilities of non-dimmable fluorescent lights by both event organizers and
73 attendees.

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75 **Whereas**, the Special Grants Committee completed its charge on January 26th, 2026 by
76 presenting a final recommendation of reviewed grants to fund, either partially or in-full, to the
77 GPSA.

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79 **Be it therefore resolved**, the GPSA Appropriations Committee move \$61,200 from the
80 GPSAFC reserve account (Campus Groups) to the GPSA Operating Account (G943704) for the
81 purpose of supporting proposals #22 and #29.

82
83 **Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Appropriations Committee directs \$1,200 from the GPSA
84 Operating Account (G943704) to the Big Red Barn (S700122) for supporting proposal #22 by
85 the end of the Spring 2026 semester.

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87 **Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Appropriations Committee direct \$60,000 to the Graduate
88 School in advance of the time of procurement.

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90 **Be it further resolved**, that the funding be provided on the following conditions as specified in
91 the Special Grants Committee funding recommendations as follows:

- 92 1) \$60,000 dollars be distributed to the Graduate School for the purpose of refurbishing the
93 Big Red Barn's main area, second floor, and greenhouse spaces.
- 94 a. The Graduate School should use all available opportunities to involve graduate
95 and professional student input.
- 96 b. The selected furniture preserves the charm and character of the Bid Red Barn's
97 signature carriage house aesthetic.
- 98 2) \$1,200 dollars be distributed to the Graduate School for the purpose of purchasing a new
99 disco ball and lighting system.

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101 **Be it further resolved** that all proposals funded herein must additionally comply with the
102 following conditions:

- 103 1) All promotional / advertisement / event materials, printed and digital, must bear the
104 "Supported by GPSA" seal visibly.



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- 2) For each year of funding offered, a budget for planned activities must be submitted for review and approval by the GPSA Appropriations Committee in advance of disbursement.
- 3) For each year of funding offered, an Impact and Visibility Report must be compiled and submitted to the GPSA Appropriations Committee detailing the use of Special Grant funding, the benefits conferred to the graduate student community (including photo documentation of the event / renovation / installation), and (if applicable) the feasibility of event implementation in future years under funding continuation. Reports must also contain all relevant receipts, detailed attendance at event(s) and any additional information requested by the GPSA Appropriations Committee. It is required that this report be submitted by the deadline set by the Appropriations Committee before any subsequent year(s) of funding may be offered. Designation of requirements for Impact and Visibility Reports and Report approval is charged to the GPSA Appropriations Committee.

Be it finally resolved, that funding is contingent on each grant applicant following the specified purpose and conditions laid out above as well as annual submission of the Impact and Visibility Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas J. Brennan

President

Jason Chobirko

Faculty Advising, Teaching, and Mentorship Awards Committee Chair