

# Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

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## Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the March 23rd, 2026 Meeting

5:04 PM – 6:12 PM

401 Physical Sciences Building | Zoom

### I. Call to Order

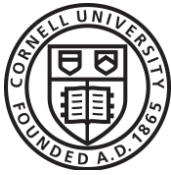
- a. N. Brennan called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.
- b. **Members Present:** N. Brennan, A. Cardenas, P. Caruso, J. Chobirko, I. Di Tomassi, E.R. Gallant, A. Garcia-Ortiz, I. Gatimi, D. Hwang, C. King, Z. Liu, Z. Lynch, T. Nguyen, R. Prude, S. Sepp, I. Smith, Y. Wu
- c. **Members Absent:** L. Alshameh, J. Alzayer, V. Baruah, B. Candelaria, C. Chappel, A. Coogan, K. Ellis, D. Freeman, M. Hassler, M. James, Y. Khaled, C. Meffert, M. Ortiz, K. Rohrbaugh, J. Wan, H. Zhang
- d. **Also Present:** E. Nizalowska, G. Sekeres, S. Wagner, M. Fan, J. Marvin, D. Chowdhury, M. van Leerdam

### II. Approval of the March 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes

- a. S. Sepp motioned to amend “renewing data” in 6(d) to “renew Appendices A and B.” The motion passed with unanimous consent.
- b. D. Hwang motioned to amend “IGSA” in 3(i)(i) to “IGPS.” The motion passed with unanimous consent.
- c. J. Chobirko motioned to approve the meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

### III. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee
  - i. A. Cardenas reminded the assembly of the elections after spring break.
- b. Operations and Staffing Committee
  - i. Z. Lynch emphasized that the upcoming elections are not only for executive board positions but also for every voting member position.
- c. Appropriations Committee



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- i. S. Sepp said that the committee's main goal is getting the special grants out.
  - d. Communications Committee
    - i. No report.
  - e. Finance Commission Chairperson
    - i. C. King mentioned that the committee had been working on FC guidelines and that there is a meeting to discuss these guidelines on March 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - f. Student Advocacy Committee (SAC)
    - i. I. Gatimi reported that the town hall happened on March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Big Red Barn from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The town hall addressed questions from the anonymous Qualtrics form and the event.
  - g. Programming Board
    - i. P. Caruso noted that the second drop of gala tickets happened on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and that the links and relevant materials were in the communique. In addition, the board is also collaborating with the Big Red Barn to host a Masquerade themed event in early April.
  - h. Faculty Advising, Teaching, and Mentorship Award Committee (FATMAC)
    - i. J. Chobirko stated that the awards ceremony is planned for April 30<sup>th</sup>. All awardees had been selected at the March 24<sup>th</sup> FATMAC meeting.
  - i. Diversity & International Students Committee (DISC)
    - i. D. Hwang said the committee had been working on the Cultural Festival.
  - j. Graduate School
    - i. T. Lewis mentioned the Student Progress Reports (SPRs) for doctoral students in years 2+ and how they are a great opportunity to check in with advisors. In addition, the Graduate School had also been actively engaged in the graduate and professional student admissions process.

## IV. Presentations

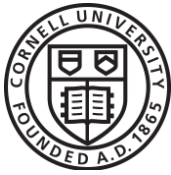
- a. Presentation I: Cornell Graduate Students United from E. Nizalowska, *President of the CGSU*, G. Sekeres, *Vice President for Membership*, S. Wagner, *Region 4 Steward*, M. Fan, *Region 6 Lead Steward*, J. Marvin, *Campus Head Steward*, and D. Chowdhury, *Recording Secretary*



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- i. E. Nizalowska provided a brief introduction of the Cornell Graduate Students United, a union that represents Cornell's graduate student workers. The organization aims to advocate for the working conditions and needs of graduate workers. The union will soon bargain for a second contract and is collecting input from Cornell's graduate students through a survey at [my.cgsu.org](http://my.cgsu.org). The speaker encouraged the assembly to get involved by filling out the survey and joining the union or Contract Action Team (CAT).
- ii. The CGSU representatives addressed questions from the assembly regarding main points for expansion in the second contract bargain, the role of the steward for graduate students, utilization and transparency of the union's funds, visions for collaboration between the GPSA and CGSU, and more.
- b. Presentation II: Updating Appendices A and B in the GPSA Charter from S. Sepp, *Vice President of Finance*
  - i. S. Sepp proposed the various edits for Appendices A and B, such as removing the words "final" and "primary" as it pertains to applications, removing the contract with Cornell Cinema, changing the funding application criteria for organizations, and replacing International Student Association (ISA) with International Graduate and Professional Student Organization (IGPS). N. Brennan noted that the byline revisions for Appendices A and B will be voted on at the next meeting.
  - ii. The assembly discussed Appendix B's change in evidence of engagement rate from 10% to 5% and whether organizations should submit event promotions to the communique as an additional obligation along with advertising on Campus Group.
  - iii. P. Caurso reminded the assembly of the distinction between the Cornell University Programming Board and the GPSA Programming Board, which is important when going through revisions.
  - iv. N. Brennan closed the discussion floor and moved onto Presentation III.
- c. Presentation III: Review of Election Timeline for the Spring 2026 Election from A. Cardenas, *Executive Vice President*



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- i. A. Cardenas spoke on the positions that are up for re-election, the election timeline during April after spring break (from solicitation of candidates to result announcements), and new things happening this election (such as decreasing the amount of info sessions and candidate town halls).
- ii. A. Cardenas answered questions from the assembly about the amount of candidate town halls, measures taken to increase graduate student engagement, and specific promotional content for different fields.

## V. New Business

- a. None.

## VI. Open Forum

- a. S. Sepp noted that the Graduate Student Veteran Association's Baby Brigade event on March 21<sup>st</sup> was one of the first events funded through the special grants. The event served over 180 families and distributed more than \$65,000 in baby supplies.
- b. J. Chobirko emphasized the duty of assembly members to maintain the livelihood and dedication of the GPSA in making a difference at Cornell.
- c. Meike van Leerdam, *Vice President of the Animal Science Graduate Student Association*, noted lags in requesting event funds through Campus Groups to receiving funds.

## VII. Adjournment

- a. I. Gatimi motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting had been adjourned with unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Yao

Clerk of the Assembly