

Student Assembly

Student Assembly of Cornell University

Minutes of the **April 24, 2025** Meeting

4:45 PM

Room 407, Willard-Straight Hall

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair Z. deRham called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM.
- b. *Members Present:* R. Acharjee (Late); D. Addoquaye; A. Aftab; M. Barberis; Sebastian B.; L. Berinde; S. Chan (Late Excused); E. Chaudhuri; C. Flournoy; E. Galperin; D. Gekman; G. Gonzalez-Mulattieri; H. Hitchcock; N. Hite; C. Kim (Late); J. Lederman; J. Purcell; S. Razzak; D. Suarez; C. Tarala; A. Vinson; T. Waguespack; J. Wu; E. Yao
- c. *Members Absent:* S. Almosawi (Excused, Proxied by S. Arnold); Z. deRham (Proxied by N. Maggard); K. Liu; F. Meng; M. O'Donnell (Proxied by D. Gekman; J. Silverman
- d. *Also Present:* A. Coleman; S. Arnold; N. Maggard; C. Grove

II. Reading of the land acknowledgement

- a. A. Vinson stated the land acknowledgement.

III. Approval of the minutes

- a. A. Vinson motions to approve the April 17th minutes, this motion passed with unanimous consent.

IV. Announcements

- a. N. Maggard reported that the administration has responded to Resolution 36, but noted that the response to Resolution 40 may fall outside the 30-day window, depending on the President's timeline.

V. Reports of Officers, Committees, and Liaisons

- a. E. Galperin acknowledged that today is Holocaust Remembrance Day, emphasizing the importance of remembering and preventing such atrocities. He also commended President Kotlikoff for canceling the Slope Day headliner, aligning with the day's significance.



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VI. Open Microphone

- a. S. Arnold provided an update on an Office of Ethics violation and report.

VII. Consent Calendar

- a. Nothing on the consent calendar.

VIII. Presentations

- a. Co-Chair of the Climate Change Curriculum Working Group, Professor Emeritus Michael Hoffmann
 - i. Professor Hoffmann provided an update on the Climate Change Curriculum Working Group, part of the Sustainable Cornell Council. He highlighted recent efforts, including the launch of new courses, a community-engaged learning competition, and a faculty training program to help integrate climate change content into existing curricula. He answered questions about how students can support these efforts, promote new courses, and ensure topics like environmental racism are included in the curriculum.

IX. Second Readings

- a. Resolution 46
 - i. N. Hite presented amendments to the charter, outlining provisions for disclosing conflicts of interest, formalizing support for special project funding, standardizing Student Assembly logo usage, and prohibiting discrimination.
 - ii. C. Kim asked why the name of the Appropriations Committee was being changed to the Finance Committee.
 - iii. C. Tarala expressed support, noting he had drafted a similar resolution but would withdraw it in favor of this one. He proposed amendments to expand the role of liaisons, which were included in the box and passed with majority consent.
 - iv. E. Chaudhuri motioned to close debate, which passed with unanimous consent.



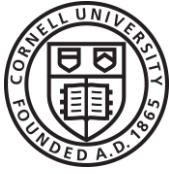
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b. Resolution 52

- i. E. Chaudhuri proposed reviving the university's theme year initiative, requesting that the next theme be sustainability, noting it would enhance public relations and student engagement.
- ii. J. Wu recalled visiting Cornell during the Freedom of Expression theme year and asked why no theme was implemented this year. E. Chaudhuri explained that the previously proposed theme, "Right to Bear Arms," was controversial, and the initiative had been tied to the prior administration, making President Kotlikoff hesitant to move forward.
- iii. G. Gonzales-Mulatieri supported the sustainability focus but proposed broadening it to "Sustainability in Transition", highlighting the need to address its social, economic, and environmental dimensions.
- iv. E. Chaudhuri responded that the vagueness was intentional due to tensions with the City of Ithaca, following Cornell's withdrawal from a renewable energy plan. He argued that a broad theme like "sustainability" could still prompt meaningful participation and climate-related initiatives across campus.
- v. C. Flournoy expressed support and asked about potential events. E. Chaudhuri noted that while there are many sustainability efforts at Cornell, they lack centralized coordination, which the theme year could help address.
- vi. A. Vinson motioned to amend the resolution to add a representative as a sponsor—motion passed unanimously.
- vii. G. Gonzales-Mulatieri motioned to add himself as a sponsor, but E. Chaudhuri declined.
- viii. A. Vinson motioned to close debate—motion passed unanimously.

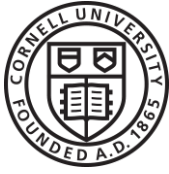
c. Resolution 53

- i. D. Gekman introduced a resolution to expand Medicaid and Medicare coverage at Cornell Health, noting that while Medicaid covers doctor visits, it is not currently accepted for pharmaceutical prescriptions, creating a critical gap in care.
- ii. G. Gonzales-Mulatieri suggested exploring a VA-style partnership model, where the federal government subsidizes care through local clinics, as a potential addition.



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- iii. J. Lederman asked for clarification on the difference between Medicaid and Medicare coverage.
 - iv. D. Gekman explained that under the current system, a student with Medicaid can attend an appointment but may be unable to obtain prescribed medications.
 - v. C. Flournoy added that certain pharmaceuticals are not covered by government programs, further complicating access.
 - vi. E. Chaudhuri agreed with the resolution in principle but questioned its feasibility and how thoroughly it had been vetted.
 - vii. D. Gekman emphasized his commitment to working with Cornell Health to ensure proper implementation if the resolution is passed.
 - viii. S. Razzak motioned to close debate; the motion passed unanimously.
- d. Resolution 54
- i. D. Gekman introduced a resolution aimed at addressing parking affordability for low-income students, calling current permit costs unmanageable and proposing a need-based waiver program to subsidize costs for up to 200 students. He acknowledged that the number was arbitrary but emphasized the resolution's intent to start a broader conversation.
 - ii. S. Chan raised concerns about limited parking space and how reduced costs might worsen access. C. Flournoy questioned how the university would select which students receive waivers.
 - iii. E. Chaudhuri stressed the need for due diligence, urging outreach to Cornell's Parking Office before making policy demands, and warned against passing underdeveloped resolutions.
 - iv. C. Grove shared that SHAC found three Ivy League schools offer free parking, emphasized the equity implications, and encouraged inclusion of student-athletes.
 - v. A. Aftab and S. Razzak supported moving the resolution forward as a conversation-starter, noting the importance of pushing the university even in the face of anticipated resistance.
 - vi. T. Waguespack agreed in principle but questioned passing a resolution without a detailed plan.



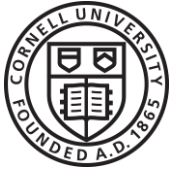
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- vii. G. Gonzales-Mulatieri argued that student demands shouldn't be filtered through political feasibility, while E. Chaudhuri countered that concrete, actionable policy gives the assembly power and meaning.
- viii. D. Gekman maintained that the goal is to initiate dialogue, not present a final solution, and cited previous resolutions (like Resolution 20) that succeeded in prompting administrative responses.
- ix. N. Hite criticized the idea that advocacy is mere "virtue signaling," arguing that action—not just emails—pressures institutions to respond.
- x. Z. deRham motioned to close debate; the motion passed unanimously.

X. Third Readings

a. Resolution 50

- i. C. Grove and a co-sponsor introduced a resolution proposing that student-athletes receive early enrollment access—one hour ahead—to better manage conflicts between graduation requirements and practice schedules. They cited testimonies from Columbia University, where early enrollment for athletes is already in place.
- ii. Maddie, a pre-med student-athlete, shared that she was unable to enroll in General Physics II due to a schedule conflict with practice, delaying her MCAT and pushing her into an additional gap year.
- iii. M. Barberis, a former student-athlete herself, opposed the resolution, arguing that the solution lies in holding coaches accountable and exploring options like block enrollment, not giving enrollment advantages. She warned this could compromise fairness and noted that being a student-athlete is a privilege and a choice.
- iv. C. Grove responded that lines 57–61 of the resolution acknowledge block enrollment as a possible solution and emphasized that their proposal reflects the unique scheduling pressures athletes face—not a disregard for other students' needs.
- v. C. Flournoy spoke in strong support, stressing the time commitment required by student-athletes and how it limits access to certain academic opportunities.
- vi. C. Kim acknowledged the challenges but disagreed with early enrollment as a solution. She argued that highly competitive courses should not be more



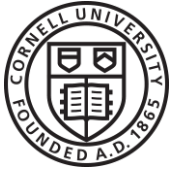
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accessible to athletes and suggested that coordination with coaches is a better path.

- vii. Z. deRham clarified that the resolution is not about altering course content for athletes but focuses on multi-time-slot classes, as detailed in lines 66–68.
- viii. T. Waguespack warned that granting privileges like early enrollment could “other” student-athletes and feed into the problematic trend of treating college sports like professional athletics.
- ix. C. Grove responded by noting she maintains strong academics while balancing athletics.
- x. A. Vinson motioned to close debate, but before voting, Z. deRham motioned to table the resolution for one week to allow for further edits. The motion to table passed with unanimous consent.

b. Resolution 43

- i. S. Razzak presented updates to the resolution, noting changes to the resolved clause and acknowledging that implementing changes by the next academic year is likely not feasible. However, he proposed that if the study period cannot be extended, Slope Day should be counted as a day off, effectively reducing the study period from three to two days.
- ii. D. Gekman proposed amendments encouraging the university to urge the Faculty Senate to take action, arguing that this would make the resolution more tangible and action-oriented.
- iii. S. Razzak shared that he researched legal concerns and found that New York State requires semesters to be at least 15 weeks long, meaning adjustments are possible, though logistically difficult.
- iv. J. Lederman questioned whether this issue had already been thoroughly addressed by past assemblies. L. Blum followed up to clarify if it had been explored in depth.
- v. S. Razzak replied that he located a 2010 Faculty Senate report recommending Cornell shift from a 5-day to a 2-day study period, and confirmed he has reached out to relevant contacts without response. He emphasized that emails alone are not always effective in promoting action.
- vi. D. Gekman reiterated that the resolution provides a framework and asks the President to advocate to the Faculty Senate.



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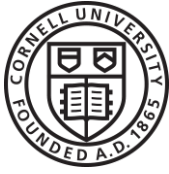
- vii. A. Vinson noted that amendments were included in the version in the box.
- viii. S. Razzak motioned to adopt the amendments, which passed unanimously, and the resolution was adopted with unanimous consent.

c. Resolution 44

- i. C. Tarala clarified that after reviewing Eduroam policies, all relevant restrictions are based on Cornell's own policies, not external ones.
- ii. E. Chaudhuri motioned to close debate, which passed unanimously.
- iii. The resolution was then adopted with unanimous consent.

d. Resolution 51

- i. E. Chaudhuri clarified that while some changes were made, the overall intent of the resolution remains the same—not to dismantle Robert's Rules, but to make Student Assembly procedures more efficient and accessible.
- ii. D. Gekman confirmed with Parliamentarian A. Coleman that she had reviewed the resolution, and all concerns had been addressed. E. Chaudhuri confirmed.
- iii. Z. deRham expressed concern over subjective language in the amendments, warning that it could lead to an overly authoritative role for the chair, which goes against the role's intended neutrality.
- iv. E. Chaudhuri downplayed the concern, stating he doesn't anticipate filibustering or misuse of power.
- v. A. Coleman added that while she disagrees with framing the resolution as a change to Robert's Rules rather than an addition, she is satisfied with the final version.
- vi. E. Chaudhuri motioned to adopt the proposed amendments, which passed unanimously.
- vii. G. Gonzales-Mulatieri asked about procedural safeguards against obstruction; E. Chaudhuri confirmed that while filibustering is theoretically possible, it hasn't occurred.
- viii. H. Hitchcock noted that the day's capped 15-minute debate showed how effective time limits can be.
- ix. A. Coleman clarified that the resolution ensures a minimum of 10 minutes for debate.



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- x. T. Waguespack added that while filibusters are unlikely, contentious topics could prompt them.
- xi. H. Hitchcock then motioned to amend line 47, reducing the minimum debate time from 10 to 5 minutes—the amendment passed unanimously.
- xii. D. Gekman motioned to close debate—passed unanimously.
- xiii. Resolution is passed with 22 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions.

XI. Appointments and Vacancies Calendar

- a. No appointments or vacancies.

XII. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kennedy Young
Clerk of the Assembly