



Student Assembly

Resolution 33: University Response to U.S. Department of Education's Threats

Abstract: A call for Cornell University to not comply with the most recent stipulations for funding put in place by the United States Department of Education.

Sponsored by: Adam Vinson '25, Christian Flournoy '27, Niles Hite '26, Simone Chan '25, Saad Razzak '26, David Suarez '27, Mackenzie Barberis '26, Rajat Acharjee '26, Jessica Silverman '26, Thor Waguespack '28, Lydia Blum '27, Sara Almosawi '25, Ezra Galperin '27, Ameera Aftab '26, Zora deRham '27, Karys Everett '25, Nicholas Maggard '25, Daniel Addoquaye '28, Jinzhou Wu '28, Holden Hitchcock '27, John Purcell '28, Eeshaan Chaudhuri '26, Sebastian Bartnik '27, Getulio Gonzalez-Mulattieri '25, Christian Tarala '27, Luigi Berinde '26

Type of Action: Sense-of-the-Body

Originally Presented: 02/20/2025

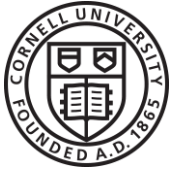
Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, 17-0-3, 02/20/2025

Whereas, on February 14th, acting assistant secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, Craig Trainor, sent a letter to educational facilities ordering Universities under The Department's purview, to comply with a broad ideological goal of ending "D.E.I" based on the Supreme Court case: Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023).

Whereas, the letter issued by the Department of Education, asks that universities not only comply with the ruling of the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023) Supreme Court case in determining university admissions but also actions beyond the scope of the case such as staffing decisions and equity programs.

Whereas, the letter issued by the Department of Education cites the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023) Supreme Court ruling under the guise that it gives the United States Department of Education the legal authority to make these demands, despite only covering undergraduate and graduate admissions.

Whereas, the acting assistant secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, Craig Trainor, has cited his reasoning as "Educational institutions have toxically indoctrinated students



Student Assembly

with the false premise that the United States is built upon “systemic and structural racism” and advanced discriminatory policies and practices.”¹

Whereas, race is defined as “a group of people sharing a common cultural, geographical, linguistic, or religious origin or background”², and the use of race is cited to be prohibited in “decisions pertaining to admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life.”³

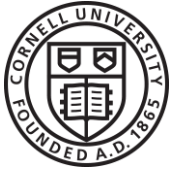
Whereas, the prohibition of race in the above context prevents the presence and expression of Cornell student organizations, including but not limited to those listed within the resolution below, rooted in the representation of varying racial, ethnic, and religious categories.

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following academic and professional programs and more risk of being defunded and shutting down: The Africana Studies and Research Center, Robert S. Harrison College Scholar Program, Black Student Empowerment, Med-In-Black, Black Ivy Prelaw Society, Diverse Leaders for Tomorrow, Scholars Working Ambitiously to Graduate (SWAG), Black Women Support Network (BWSN) Building Ourselves through Sisterhood and Service (BOSS), Black Lives At Cornell (BLAC) book, Black Student Ensemble (Majorrette), UnderRepresented Minorities in Computing, Black Women Support Network, ILR Black Student Union, Black AAP, SoulAAan Nation, Ghanaians at Cornell, National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Phenomenon Step Team, Les Femmes de Substance, Cornell’s Caribbean Student Association Dance Ensemble, Baraka Kwa Wimbo, African Dance Repertoire, 14Strings! Cornell Filipino Rondalla, Asha Cornell, Baraka Kwa Wimbo Gospel Ensemble, Black Auteurs Guild, Chinese Drama Society at Cornell, Collective X, Contigo Peru, Cornell Latinos in Business Club, Dyson Diversity Council at Cornell, First Ithaca Chinese Christian Church, Hawaii Club at Cornell, International Affairs Review at Cornell, International Affairs Society at Cornell, Kaivalya at Cornell, Korean Catholic Community at Cornell, Latinx Association of Pre-laws, LOKO, Mariachi regional en Cornell University, Men of Color in Athletics, Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at Cornell, Minorities in Agricultural Natural Resources and Related Sciences, Movimiento Estudiantil Chican at de Aztlan, Mulmul Collective and Magazine, Project Hope at Cornell, Real A Cappella Group, Shimtah at Cornell, South Asian Business Association, Taiko at Cornell, Women of Color Athletics, Minority Industrial and Labor Relations Student Organization (MILRSO),

¹ [U.S. Department of Education Letter](#)

² [Race Definition – Merriam-Webster](#)

³ [U.S. Department of Education Letter](#)



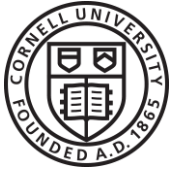
Student Assembly

Multicultural Community-Fueled Activities Board (MCFAB), Nazaquat, OASIS, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, South Asian Council, Underrepresented Minorities in Computing.

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following programming houses would be at risk of being defunded and shutting down: Ujama, Akwe:kon, Wanawake Wa Wari Cooperative.

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following affinity groups and more would be at risk of shutting down: Cornell AAPA Action, MECHA, Black Students United (BSU), Cornell Asian, Pacific Student Union (CAPSU), La Asociación Latina (LAL), Mexican Students Association (MEXSA), Dominican Students Association (DSA), Native American Students at Cornell (NASAC), South Asian Council (SAC), Pan-African Students Association (PASA), Chinese Student Association (CSA), Korean American Student Association (KASA), Grinspoon Hillel at Cornell, Roitman Chabad Center at Cornell, Sephardi and Mizrahi Student Council at Cornell, the Center for Jewish Living (CJL), Albanian Student Association, Arab Student Association, Armenian Student Organization, Asociacion de CentroAmericanos Unidos, Asociacion de Sudamericanos Unidos, Bangladeshi Students Association, Brazilian Student Association, Cambodian Student Association, Chinese Students and Scholars Association at Cornell, Chinese Students Association, Colombianos Unidos, Cornell Filipino Student Association, Cornell Malaysian Students Association, Cornell Undergraduate Turkish Student Association, East African Students Together, Ecuadorian Students' Association, Hong Kong Student Association, Indonesian Association at Cornell, Japan US Association, Kashmiri Cultural Alliance, Korean Student Association, Mainland China Students Association, Mexican Students Association, MiXed at Cornell, Haitian Students Association, The Jamaican Students Association, The Caribbean Students Association, Pan-African Muslim Students Association, Ethiopian Eritrean Students Association, Nigerian Students Association (NSA), Myanmar Students Association at Cornell Nepalese Student Association at Cornell, Organization for Afghan Students, Persian Students Organization, Puerto Rican Student Association, Quisqueya: Dominican Students' Association, Sikh Students Association, Singapore Students Association, Society for India, Society of Polish Students, Sri Lankan Students' Association, Sudanese Student Association, Taiwanese American Student Association at Cornell, The Lebanese Student Association, Vietnamese Student Association, Western Balkan Society, Cornell Asian Pacific Student Union, La Asociacion Latina, Association for Students of Color.

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following Greek life organizations would be at risk of being defunded and shutting down: Multicultural Greek and Fraternal Council, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta



Student Assembly

Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc., Lambda Theta Phi, Inc., Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc., Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Lambda Upsilon Sorority, Inc., Alpha Kappa Delta Phi International Sorority, Inc., Kappa Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., Lambda Phi Epsilon International Fraternity, Inc., Pi Delta Psi Fraternity, Inc. Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, Inc., Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority, Inc., Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, Inc.

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following Byline Organizations that provide funding to smaller organizations on campus would be at risk of being defunded and shutting down: ALANA Intercultural Programming Board.

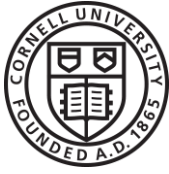
Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following Departmental Funding Sources that these organizations depend on for external funding would be at risk of being defunded and shutting down: Office of Academic and Diverse Initiatives (OADI), Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE).

Whereas, if Cornell University were to comply with the demands made in this letter, the following educational departments, fields of study, and classes within these fields of study, risk of being defunded and shutting down: Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Archaeology, American Studies, China and Asia-Pacific Studies, Communications, Comparative Literature, English, Environment and Sustainability, Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Fine Arts, French, German Studies, Global & Public Health Science, Global Development, Government, Healthcare Policy, History, History of Art, Human Biology, Health & Society, Human Development, Industrial and Labor Relations, Information Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, Italian, Jewish Studies, Linguistics, Music, Near Eastern Studies, Performing & Media Arts, Public Policy, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology, Spanish, Statistical Science, Urban and Regional Studies.

Whereas, many students utilize the aforementioned programs, organizations, and educational institutions as a form of instruction to pursue their academic interests, and their prohibition directly violates students' freedom of academic study.

Whereas, the violation of academic freedoms by the removal of the aforementioned programs, organizations, and educational institutions would directly oppose Cornell University's founding principle of being, "... an institution where any person can find instruction in [any study](#).", particularly since "any study" represents the "freedom to pursue academic interests wherever they lead."⁴

⁴ [Founding Principle · Cornell University Brand Center](#)



Student Assembly

Be it therefore resolved, we ask that Cornell University weigh the demands of its student body above the threats of the Department of Education.

Be it further resolved, while we recognize the potential financial ramifications, we are certain that the removal and reversal of such programs, organizations, and campus communities will undermine Cornell's founding principle of "... any person ... any study.", and directly threaten Cornell's mission to support students of all backgrounds and clearly demonstrate a betrayal of values to the student body that will worsen the climate on campus.

Be it further resolved, we ask that Cornell University continue to uphold its institutional commitment to the values of diversity and inclusivity. As such, we ask that steps be taken to determine if these programs can be maintained through other avenues, and when this is not possible, we ask that the University fight alongside us.

Be it further resolved, we ask that Cornell University actively search for more external donors to fund the programs at risk of being shut down, according to the letter issued by the Department of Education on February 14th, 2025.

Be it finally resolved, we ask that Cornell University actively reassess its financial strategies and obligations in an era where the federal government is increasingly unreliable. The University must do everything in its power to keep in operation the programs and organizations the federal government wishes to end, even if it means relinquishing or cutting salaries for both members of the Board of Trustees at Cornell University (leadership, ex-officio, and general members) and the Officials of the Senior Administration at Cornell University for the duration that federal funding be withheld from Cornell University.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Vinson '25

Executive Vice President of the Student Assembly

Christian Flournoy '27

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion of the Student Assembly

Niles Hite '26

Vice President for Finance of the Student Assembly

Simone Chan '25

Vice President for External Affairs of the Student Assembly

Saad Razzak '26



Student Assembly

- 159 College of Arts and Sciences Representative, *Student Assembly*
160 David Suarez '27
161 *Vice President for Internal Operations of the Student Assembly*
162 Mackenzie Barberis '26
163 Women's Issues Representative, *Student Assembly*
164 Rajat Acharjee '26
165 Dyson School of Business Representative, *Student Assembly*
166 Jessica Silverman '26
167 College of Human Ecology Representative, *Student Assembly*
168 Thor Waguespack '28
169 Freshman Representative, *Student Assembly*
170 Lydia Blum '27
171 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Representative, *Student Assembly*
172 Sara Almosawi '25
173 First Generation Student Representative, *Student Assembly*
174 Ezra Galperin '27
175 Undesignated At-Large Representative, *Student Assembly*
176 Ameera Aftab '26
177 Minority Student's Liaison At-Large, *Student Assembly*
178 Zora deRham '27
179 *President of the Student Assembly*
180 Karys Everett '25
181 Undesignated At-Large Representative, *Student Assembly*
182 Nicholas Maggard '25
183 *Deputy President of the Student Assembly*
184 Daniel Addoquaye '28
185 Freshman Representative, *Student Assembly*



Student Assembly

- 186 Jinzhou Wu '28
187 Freshman Representative, *Student Assembly*
188 Holden Hitchcock '27
189 LGBTQIA+ Liaison At-Large, *Student Assembly*
190 John Purcell '28
191 Freshman Representative, *Student Assembly*
192 Eeshaan Chaudhuri '26
193 Brooke School of Public Policy Representative, *Student Assembly* Sebastian
194 Bartnik '27
195 College of Arts Architecture and Planning Representative, *Student Assembly*
196 Getulio Gonzalez-Mulattieri '25
197 Undesignated At-Large Representative, *Student Assembly*
198 Christian Tarala '27
199 Nolan School of Hotel Administration Representative, *Student Assembly*
200 Luigi Berinde '26
201 College of Arts and Sciences Representative, *Student Assembly*