Student Assembly

Student Assembly of Cornell University

Minutes of the September 3, 2026 Meeting

4:45 PM – 6:30 PM

218 Robert Purcell Community Center (RPC218ABC)

I. Call to Order
   a. H. Watkins called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM.

II. Call of the Roll
   a. *Members Present:* S. Agarwal, J. Anand, S. Augustin, T. Aye, A. Ayoola, L. Blum, M. Causey, E. Chaudhuri, J. Chung, S. Dunn, C. Flournoy, T. Japal, J. Kimball, D. Lee, A. Lyons, Y. Masoud, J. Orief, E. Porter, J. Swavy, A. Sendelbach, C. Tarala, A. Vink, A. Walters, H. Watkins, K. Young
   b. *Members Absent:* D. Addoquaye, A. Fard, K. Krishtopa
   c. *Also Present:* Z. deRham, M. Friedman

III. Reading of the Land Acknowledgment
   a. H. Watkins stated the land acknowledgement.

IV. Approval of the August 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes
   a. H. Watkins ceded the chair to E. Chaudhuri.
   b. The members noted some clerical errors on the minutes.
   c. The motion to approve the minutes passed through unanimous consent.
   d. The chair smiled favorably upon a motion to suspend the rules due to a delay in sending out resolution forms.
   e. J. Chung motioned to suspend the rules, passed by a vote of 18-0-6.
   f. The chair smiled favorably upon a motion to add Resolutions 3, 4, and 5 to the Second Reading Calendar.
   g. A. Lyons motioned to add Resolutions 3, 4, and 5 to the Second Reading Calendar, passed by a vote of 17-0-7.

V. Communications to the Student Assembly
   a. None.

VI. Reports of Officers, Committees, and Liaisons

a. A. Walters shared that if anyone wanted committee flyers up, then they should reach out to him and requested for those on the Communications Committee to fill out the when2meet.
b. J. Anand shared that the Environmental Policy Committee will meet tomorrow at 6:30PM at the Temple of Zeus to go over logistics for the year and have members from Campus Sustainability Office and Sustainable Cornell Council this year. He added that he will be tabling at EcoFest, which is 1-3PM on Sunday and invited members to join.

VII. Public Comment
a. A speaker shared about the SUNY Student Assembly conference in November.
b. M. Causey shared some project updates, including the laundry resolution, medical products being put in RPCC, and ubereats dropping things off randomly.
c. A. Walters motioned to suspend the rules and move Resolution 3 as first on the Second Reading Calendar, with Resolutions 2, 4 and 5 following it, passed by a vote of 24-0-0.

VIII. Second Reading Calendar
a. Resolution 3: Introducing a Mechanism for Ensured Engagement & Outreach by Members of the Student Assembly
  i. A. Walters shared that this resolution would create a point system tracked by the executives, mostly the Chief of Staff and VP of Comms, to make sure voting members are creating outreach and engagement events and are doing their jobs.
  ii. E. Chaudhuri moved the assembly into a period of discussion, where the assembly discussed specific requirements.
  iii. K. Young motioned to amend the resolution to add a line below line 36 to say "being present at community town halls and community meetups by our constituents".
    1. A. Walters motioned to close debate, passed by a majority vote.
    2. The amendment passed by a vote of 25-0-2.
  iv. A. Walters motioned to close debate, dissent.
    1. The debate closed by a vote of 11-5-6.
  v. The resolution has been moved to the Third Reading Calendar.

vi. E. Porter motioned to suspend the rules and move Resolution 4 to right now, passed by a vote of 27-0-0.

b. Resolution 4: Approving the 2026–2027 Student Assembly Operating Budget
   i. C. Tarala shared that the largest tweak from the resolution last year is that the assembly will not fund Special Projects because the assembly is not a funding board. Instead, they decided to work with SAFC to increase public events funds and/or create a new fund that will do similar things in place of Special Projects.
   ii. E. Chaudhuri moved the assembly into a discussion period where they discussed how the new funding method would be different, whether the assembly would still review special project applications, and the reserves.
   iii. A. Walters motioned to close debate, failed to pass.
   iv. The assembly discussed changes to the funding, Office of Student Advocate, clarification of budgets, and the Summer Experience Grant.
   v. L. Blum motioned to end debate, failed to pass by a majority vote.
   vi. The assembly reentered discussion.
   vii. K. Young motioned to table the resolution for a week, failed to pass by a vote of 10-10-4.
   viii. The assembly reentered discussion.
   ix. H. Watkins motioned to end debate, failed to pass by a majority vote.
   x. S. Dunn motioned to change the Initiatives Fund to $9,686.36 and increase the Special Projects Fund to $1,000.
      1. K. Young motioned to amend the amendment to change the Initiatives Fund to $0 and Special Projects Fund to $10,686.36.
         a. The assembly further discussed alternatives, Student Assembly stance, and SAFC funds.
         b. The Chair smiled favorably upon a motion to extend the meeting time to 7PM.
         c. A. Walters motioned to extend the meeting time to 7PM, passed.
         d. E. Chaudhuri ceded the chair to A. Walters.
         e. E. Chaudhuri motioned to close debate, passed by a vote of 18-0-1.
         f. The amendment to the amendment failed to pass by a vote of 9-11-3.

2. A. Walters ceded the chair to E. Chaudhuri.
3. S. Dunn withdrew the motion.

xi. A. Vink motioned to amend the resolution to add an additional whereas clause after line 12 that says "Whereas Special Projects Funding continues to be a priority and responsibility of the Student Assembly, as defined in the Student Assemblies Charter, and Special Projects disbursements will continue to be allocated from the Student Assemblies reserves fund," no dissent. The clause has been added to the resolution.

xii. H. Watkins motioned to close debate, dissent. The motion to close debate passed by a vote of 16-3-5.

xiii. The resolution has been moved to the Third Reading Calendar.

c. Resolution 5: Removing Fixed SAFC Student Activity Fee Allocation Requirement
   i. C. Tarala shared that SAFC is currently required to get 35% of the Student Activity Fee, no matter how big, and the goal is to get back some money. This amendment would remove the 35% minimum on SAFC's funding.
   ii. The assembly entered a discussion period, where they talked about byline communication and educating organizations.
   iii. K. Young motioned to close debate, no dissent.
   iv. The resolution has been moved to the Third Reading Calendar.

d. Resolution 2: Clarifying Practical Training Options for International Students
   i. J. Orief shared that career practical training (CPT) is a program through the U.S. government where, if it's required in the degree, international students can do co-ops, internships, and other professional experiences. However, these are getting mass denied to the point where UC Berkeley told students they won't do it anymore because universities risk not being allowed to admit international students anymore if they're too generous with the program. The resolution is to offer optional practical training (OPT) as an alternative, which does not have the hard requirement of being for your degree, although this will take longer because it's through immigration services.
   ii. C. Flournoy motioned to end debate, no dissent.
   iii. The resolution has been moved to the Third Reading Calendar.

IX. Appointments and Filling of Vacancies

a. Student Assembly Advisor on Community Relations

   i. E. Chaudhuri shared that last year, Zora appointed Franklin as her strategic advisor on campus engagement and that Franklin believes this title would help him further increase Assembly outreach on campus and communicate with admin.
   ii. Franklin Berry has been appointed as the Student Assembly Advisor on Community Relations.

b. Deputy Vice President of the Finance Committee
   i. C. Tarala nominated M. Friedman, no dissent.
   ii. M. Friedman has been appointed as the Deputy Vice President of the Finance Committee.

c. L. Blum briefly shared for members to read her email regarding assembly and resolution office hours and is open to location suggestions.

d. A. Vink provided feedback on appointment processes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM by unanimous consent.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sophia Lin
Clerk of the Assembly