

# University Assembly

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## Resolution 6: Recommending Changes to the Student Code of Conduct to Address Excessive Littering

**Abstract:** This resolution calls on the Code and Procedures Review Committee to implement changes to the Student Code of Conduct to address repeated issues of excessive littering in Cascadilla Gorge, occurring since at least 2008. By amending the Student Code of Conduct to recognize excessive littering as resulting in property damage and/or disorderly conduct, enforcement of chronic issues of excess littering will be made easier and make public spaces such as the Cascadilla Gorge cleaner, safer, and enjoyable for all Cornellians.

**Sponsored by:** Jason Chobirko

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**Reviewed by:** Campus Welfare Committee, 30/03/2026; Campus Codes Committee, 08/04/2026

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**Whereas,** Cornell University owns and is located within many acres of publicly accessible areas of natural beauty, including multiple gorges, forests, and waterways. For example, Cascadilla Gorge is a publicly accessible and Cornell-owned property that drops 400 feet from Cornell's campus to downtown Ithaca and was originally preserved and donated to Cornell University by Robert H. Treman in 1909 to support public use, education and enjoyment,

**Whereas,** the University Assembly (UA) was made aware of ongoing issues, since at least 2008, where objects, trash and debris are being intentionally thrown into Cascadilla Gorge, adjacent to multiple fraternities whose property borders the gorge ([Appendix 1](#)),

**Whereas,** individuals are not frequently identified throwing trash and debris into the gorge but the proximity of the trash and debris in the gorge immediately adjacent to the fraternities, as well as its content – primarily alcohol cans and cups – make it evident as to the source,

**Whereas,** removing trash and debris from Cascadilla Gorge is extremely difficult due to the steep topography, requiring staff professionally trained in climbing and rappelling equipment to traverse slopes that in some places exceed 100 feet to retrieve large objects like chairs, grills and traffic signs,



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33 **Whereas**, littering is listed as being “prohibited in all of the natural areas of the City of Ithaca,  
34 unless expressly permitted or carried out pursuant to a duly issued permit” in [Ithaca’s Code](#)  
35 under Chapter 114, Section 114-7,

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37 **Whereas**, As stated in Chapter 331, Article II, Section 331-4 of [Ithaca’s Code](#):

38 “No person shall throw, cast, drop, put or place or having accidentally dropped fail to pick up  
39 any bag, bottle, bottle cap, box, container, garbage, paper, piece of paper, wrapper or any other  
40 trash or litter in or upon any public or private park or outdoor place, except in receptacles  
41 provided for such purposes.”

42

43 **Whereas**, Cornell University adopted [six core values](#) in Fall 2019 that “serve as the foundation  
44 for a more equitable and inclusive atmosphere for all of Cornell’s campuses”, which include  
45 Purposeful Discovery, Free and Open Inquiry and Expression, A Community of Belonging,  
46 Exploration across Boundaries, Changing Lives through Public Engagement, and Respect for the  
47 Natural Environment,

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49 **Whereas**, littering, or the throwing of trash and debris into publicly enjoyed spaces such as  
50 Cascadilla Gorge, directly contradicts Cornell’s core value of “Respect for the Natural  
51 Environment”,

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53 **Whereas**, the Cornell University Student Code of Conduct (“Code”) establishes Cornell’s  
54 expectations applicable to all students and recognized and registered student organizations  
55 (including fraternities and sororities) at Cornell’s Ithaca and Geneva campuses, and Cornell  
56 Tech<sup>1</sup>

57

58 **Whereas**, the Code and Procedures Review Committee (CPRC) has proposed revisions to the  
59 Code and Student Code of Conduct Procedures as part of their annual review process and opened  
60 the public comment period from March 9<sup>th</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026,

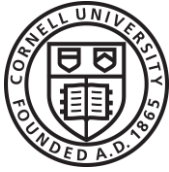
61

62 **Whereas**, the Code currently does not explicitly include reference to or mention of littering  
63 among the prohibited conduct listed in Article IV,

64

65 **Whereas**, the Campus Welfare Committee is charged by the UA with addressing issues relating  
66 to diversity and inclusion, family support, health services, and any other topic deemed relevant to  
67 campus welfare as per Article V Section 4.1 of the [UA Bylaws](#),

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69 **Be it therefore resolved**, the UA submits the below and attached [line-by-line recommendations](#)  
70 for revisions to the Code, reflecting the concerns outlined in this resolution, and respectfully  
71 urges the CPRC to incorporate these changes into their ongoing review.

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73 **Be it further resolved**, the Cornell Student Code of Conduct be edited in Section IV(G)  
74 Disorderly Conduct list to add “4. Intentional and excessive littering”.

75

76 **Be it further resolved**, the Cornell Student Code of Conduct be edited in Section IV(N)  
77 Misconduct Related to Student Organizations or Groups, Paragraph 3 to be edited “...alcohol-  
78 related behavior, *disorderly conduct*, and failure to comply....”.

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80 **Be it further resolved**, the Cornell Student Code of Conduct be edited in Section IV(Q)  
81 Property Damage, paragraph 1, be edited “...whether they are affiliated with the University, *such*  
82 *as public spaces, trails, and both on-campus and off-campus Natural Areas. The repeated*  
83 *excessive throwing or leaving of objects, trash, or debris onto these properties will be*  
84 *collectively considered as a singular act of damage to property.”.*

85

86 **Be it further resolved**, that individuals or entities with particular proximity to areas of concern  
87 or ongoing challenges with littering be encouraged to enter into a written Management Plan with  
88 responsible university parties that will formally resolve these issues, providing clarity of  
89 responsibility, restitution, and monitoring activities while maintaining agency for all parties.

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91 **Be it finally resolved**, that the CPRC take up these reforms to the Code to make clear that  
92 excessive littering in public natural areas, parks, and trails used by Cornellians, such as the  
93 Cascadilla Gorge, is not in-line with conduct befitting a Cornellian and directly goes against the  
94 “Respect for the Natural Environment” core value adopted by the University.

95

96 Respectfully Submitted,

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98 Jason Chobirko

99 *Campus Welfare Committee Chairperson*

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101 <sup>1</sup><https://policy.cornell.edu/policy-library/student-code-conduct>