



Cornell University
Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Final Report: AY2017 – 2018

Jung Won Kim
President, Student Assembly

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The Student Assembly is the student government that was chartered into existence by the Cornell Board of Trustees. The Student Assembly's role is to best represent the interests and concerns of the student body in the form of resolutions (formal recommendations to the President of the University), and through multiple committees. In addition, the Student Assembly has authority to tax the student body and allocate the Student Activities Fee (SAF) to different campus organizations that may need funding. This process is called "byline funding," and approval of funding for organizations happens every odd-numbered year and will last the organizations for two academic years before the byline process starts again.

The Student Assembly this past 2017-2018 Academic Year focused heavily on tangible and practical policies to improve the student experience as well as advocacy for campus climate. Key successful initiatives include providing free Wall Street Journal access to all undergraduate students and faculty, allocating \$10,000.00 of Student Assembly money to help support visiting students from the Universidad de Puerto Rico transition to Cornell, advocating for a reversal of ending Federal Work Study opportunities for International Students, and many more which will be discussed further in this report.

In addition, as this academic year started off as an odd-numbered year, the Student Assembly and its Appropriations Committee devoted significant time determining funding for 30 applicant organizations, among which 28 secured funding. Through this process, the Student Assembly cut the Student Activities Fee by \$7.00 compared to the previous byline cycle, thereby having the first decrease in the Activities Fee in the history of the Assembly.

I am tremendously proud and grateful to all the Student Assembly representatives, committee members and community members that volunteered countless hours into making our school a better place. On behalf of the Assembly, I would also like to specifically thank President Martha Pollack, Provost Michael Kotlikoff, Vice President Ryan Lombardi, Dean Vijay Pendakur, and the Office of Assemblies for their consistent partnership and strong support for shared governance.

Sincerely,
Jung Won Kim
Student Assembly President, AY 2017 – 2018

Student Assembly Representatives AY 2017 – 2018

Student Assembly Executive Committee

Jung Won Kim, President
Varun Devatha, Executive Vice President
Dale Barbaria, Vice President for Internal Operations
Gabriel Kaufman, Vice President for Finance,
Jaewon Sim, Vice President for External Operations
Mayra Valadez, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Zachary Schmetterer, Parliamentarian
Travis Cabbell, Director of Elections

Voting Members

Alex Chowdury, Transfer At-Large Representative
Christopher Schott, International Students Liaison At-Large Representative
Daniel Engelson, College of Arts & Sciences Representative
Debbie Nyakaru, First Generation Student At-Large Representative
Evan Shapiro, College of Arts & Sciences Representative
Grace Park, College of Arts, Architecture & Planning Representative
Haris Hassan, Minority Students Liaison At-Large Representative
Ian Wallace, LGBTQ+ Liaison At-Large Representative
John Dominguez, School of Industrial & Labor Relations Representative
Lee Lipschutz, School of Hotel Administration Representative
Marco Peralta-Ochoa, Freshman At-Large Representative
Matthew Indimine, Undesignated At-Large Representative
Natalia Hernandez, Minority Students Liaison At-Large Representative
Olivia Corn, College of Arts & Sciences Representative
Omar Din, College of Human Ecology Representative
Osai Egharevba, Freshman At-Large Representative
Rebecca Herz, College of Engineering Representative
Renee Cornell, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Representative
Sarah Park, Women's Issues Liaison At-Large Representative
Savanna Lim, Freshman At-Large Representative
Sushruta Iruvanti, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Representative
Thomas Ball, Undesignated At-Large Representative

Ex-Officio Members

Adam Klier, Cornell Undergraduate Veteran Association Liaison
Dara Brown, Student-Elected Trustee (Graduate/Professional)
Dustin Liu, Student-Elected Trustee (Undergraduate)
Elena Michel, Graduate & Professional Student Assembly Liaison
John Hannan, Clerk
Shivani Parikh, Residential Student Congress Liaison
Sonja Dimond – Greek Tri-Council Liaison
Vincenzo Guido, Undergraduate Representative to the University Assembly

List of Committees and Chairs

Academic Policy Committee, Alexis Pollitto
Appropriations Committee, Gabriel Kaufman
City and Local Affairs Committee, Sofia Ellam
Communications Committee, Jaewon Sim
Dining Services Committee, Emma Bankier
Diversity Committee, Mayra Valadez
Elections Committee, Travis Cabbell
Environmental Committee, Nathanael Cheng
Executive Committee, Varun Devatha
Financial Aid Review Committee, Mayra Valadez
Health and Wellness Committee, Erin Kim
Infrastructure Fund Commission, Ian Wallace
Staffing Committee, Dale Barbara
Task Force on Net-Print System Reform, Jaewon Sim

Key Resolutions

Resolution 15: International Student Financial Aid

In early 2016, Cornell decided to change financial aid policy for international student applicants from need-blind to need-aware. With this change, the Student Assembly believed that international students are effectively disincentivized from applying for financial aid when applying to Cornell. If an international student does not apply for financial aid when initially applying to Cornell, then no matter how much a student's financial situation changes during the course of the undergraduate experience, he/she cannot apply for financial aid at all. Therefore, the Student Assembly believes that Cornell should make an effort to accommodate financial aid for international students in emergency situations by creating an Emergency Aid Pool with any leftover resources from domestic financial aid and any other such methods.

Resolution 18: Wall Street Journal Access

Starting from Spring 2018, the Student Assembly bought all undergraduates as well as professors free access to the Wall Street Journal. The Collegiate Readership Program (CRP), which was operated and funded by the Student Assembly, initially had ties with the New York Times and USA Today. The CRP cut ties with USA Today and spend the \$100,000 surplus on the WSJ subscription for all students and professors. The Student Assembly will maintain funding for the WSJ by funding the CRP \$1.38 per student per year through byline funding (which will be explained further below). To supplement the Student Assembly's financial contributions, the Cornell University Library contributed as well and now all graduate and professional students also have access to free WSJ subscription.

Resolution 21: Queer-Inclusive Housing

The Student Assembly debated and passed a resolution calling for implementation of a queer-housing option for Cornellians within the Master Housing Plan that is being spearheaded by Vice President Lombardi. Such housing programs have been successful at peer institutions such as Dartmouth College and Tufts University. This program house would provide a residential area where students who identify as queer can find support to supplement the Cornell LGBT Resource Center.

Resolution 23: Funding for University of Puerto Rico Students

The Student Assembly voted to allocate \$10,000 of its own surplus to provide financial assistance to the students of University of Puerto Rico who are studying at Cornell this Spring 2018 due to the devastation from the hurricane. The Student Assembly believed that providing \$10,000 to the 58 students could further help their transition on to our campus.

Resolution 27: Investigating Net-Print Reform

The Student Assembly sent around a survey for undergraduate students regarding their opinions on Net-Print, the printing system that Cornell utilizes. Roughly 98% indicated that the printing costs were too expensive. In response, the Student Assembly commissioned an ad-hoc committee to investigate and recommend how there can be reforms to printing on campus. One major area of concern is the lack of pricing incentive for double-sided printing – each side of a printed paper costs 9 cents each. This does not promote environmentally-friendly printing habits nor is it financially-friendly for students in writing and reading-heavy classes.

Resolution 28: Transparency in Cornell's Endowment Investments

The Student Assembly heard and debated concerns from student activists regarding investment procedures and transparency of the Cornell endowment. The University Tax Office does not disclose investment partnerships relating to “investment income information provided by the endowment’s investment managers” on its Form 990 and Form 990-T. The Student Assembly recommends that Cornell disclose such information just as peer institutions like Harvard, Princeton and Yale do. In relation to this, community members also expressed concern with any Puerto Rico debt that Cornell may indirectly hold through its investment in the Baupost Group and recommended divesting from Puerto Rico debt holding investments.

Resolution 31: Ex-Officio Representative Seat for Veterans

The Cornell Undergraduate Veterans Association (CUVA) came before the Student Assembly to request an ex-officio representative seat citing unique difficulties that undergraduate veterans face and Cornell’s pledge to increase the number of veteran undergraduates on campus by a factor of four by 2020. The Student Assembly debated and voted in favor of granting an ex-officio seat to undergraduate veterans, to be internally elected within CUVA.

Resolution 39: Making Cornell's Economics program STEM-certified

The Student Assembly unanimously recommended that Cornell consider changing the certification of the Arts and Sciences Economics major to CIP code 45.0603 to allow for a 2-year extension for international students and to help Cornell Economics majors more competitive in the job market. Peer institutions with similar Economics curriculum as Cornell’s are also STEM-certified.

Resolution 50: Approval of the Fall 2018 Elections Rules

In response to the confusion related to the Student Assembly Presidential Election in Spring 2018, the Student Assembly debated and adopted unanimously these new rules for internal guidance on Student Assembly Elections policy.

Byline Funding Updates

Besides serving as liaison for the undergraduate student body to the Cornell Administration, the Student Assembly also has authority to set the Student Activities Fee (SAF) every two years on an odd-numbered year. As such, this process is called “byline funding.” In Fall 2017, the Appropriations Committee of the Student Assembly solicited applications from 30 student organizations. At the end of the process, 15 organizations received increases in funding, 7 organizations received decreases, and 8 organizations saw no change in their funding. In total the Student Assembly decided to fund 28 organizations. Big Red Bikes and the Cornell Cinema were the two applicants that were removed from the byline funding process. In sum, the SAF for the next two years came out to be \$234.00 per undergraduate student, which translates into a total of \$6,699,420 (assuming 14,315 undergraduates) over the next two years. This was the first decrease in the SAF in the history of the Student Assembly.

Here is the breakdown of the funding results:

Increased Funding:

ALANA
Alternative Breaks
Class Councils
Convocation Committee
Cornell Concert Commission
Cornell University Programming Board
EMS
Haven
International Students Union
Multicultural Greek Letter Council
Orientation Steering Committee
Outdoor Odyssey
Slope Day Programming Board
Student Activities Funding Commission
Welcome Weekend

No Change in Funding:

Club Insurance
Community Partnership Funding Board
EARS
ECO: Cornell Environmental Collaborative
Minds Matter
Senior Days
Women’s Resource Center

Decreased Funding:

Athletics and Physical Education
Collegiate Readership Program
CUTonight Funding Commission
Slope Media Group
Student Assembly
Student Union Board of Willard Straight Hall

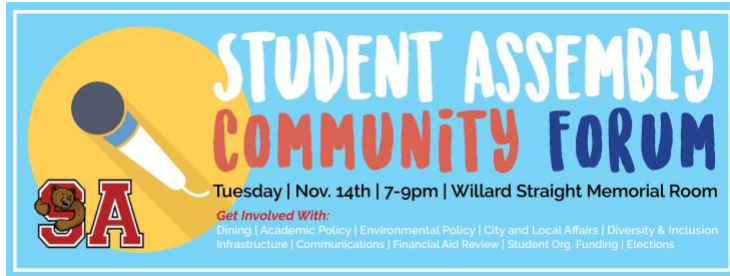
Removed from Byline:

Big Red Bikes
Cornell Cinema

Initiatives and Events Sponsored by the Student Assembly

In addition to resolutions and byline funding, the Student Assembly commissioned as well as funded several school-wide events. Key events are listed below:

Student Assembly Community Forum



The Student Assembly hosted its first Community Forum on November 14th, 2018 to discuss our progress in the first semester. The purpose of the forum was to increase voter turnout as well as having community members have face to face time with representatives.

Wall Street Journal Access

Through the Collegiate Readership Program, the Student Assembly in conjunction with the Cornell University Library, funded complimentary Wall Street Journal access for all undergraduates as well as faculty for \$1.35 per undergraduate student.



Culture Fest



Culture Fest Core Team members taking center stage

In response to racial bias related incidents in Collegetown as well as on campus in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, VP Ryan Lombardi of Student and Campus Life commissioned the Student Assembly to brainstorm ideas to uplift campus spirit. Alongside ALANA, the Student Assembly and many other student organizations gathered and organized the first Culture Fest on March 25th, 2018 with the generous financial and logistical support from VP Lombardi's office. The event drew over 800 students and was a great success.

Sexual Assault Awareness Week



The Student Assembly contributed \$1,000 towards the 4th annual Sexual Assault Awareness Week (SAAW). SAAW “brings together a wide range of communities to foster dialogue about the issue of sexual assault on Cornell’s campus, encouraging students to communicate and take action.” The event lasted a week and

consisted of multiple events aimed at community education and finding solutions to difficult issues related to sexual assault on campus.

Concluding Remarks

All in all, AY 2017 – 2018 was a successful year for the Student Assembly in terms of impact and advocacy. The academic year started with the implementation of the open syllabi policy which was an initiative that the Student Assembly worked on for at least two years and included the free WSJ access for students as well as the first decrease in the Student Activities Fee in the history of the Student Assembly. In regards to advocacy, near the beginning of Fall 2017, the Student Assembly and the International Students Union communicated that students wished for the return of Federal Work Study for international students. Special thanks goes to President Pollack and administrators for immediately reinstating the program upon hearing of the issue. I personally believe that that instance was an example of ideal execution of shared governance. In addition, the idea of inclusion of a Queer-Inclusive housing option was warmly received by Vice President Lombardi and the sponsors of the resolution and administrators have been working to integrate such a program house within the Master Housing Plan.

While there were many successes, there are still initiatives not yet finalized. One big issue has to do with making Cornell's Economics degree STEM certified. Not only is this task practical, it makes sense to do since Cornell's Economics program already satisfies the requirements to be STEM certified, and it will help students, domestic and internationals alike, be more competitive professionally. Lastly, an effort to create an international student emergency fund has yet to properly materialize. If an international student applies to Cornell without financial aid, no matter any change in family financial situation, the student cannot receive financial aid in future semesters. An emergency aid pool would be very helpful for international students who suddenly find themselves in dire financial situations.

On behalf of the Student Assembly, I would like to thank once again all Administrators who make Cornell what it is, especially to President Pollack, Provost Kotlikoff, VP Lombardi, Dean Pendakur, and the Office of Assemblies. Thank you all for a wonderful year and thank you for all that you do.

Best,

Jung Won Kim
President, Student Assembly
Cornell University Class of 2018