The assemblies are a part of shared governance at Cornell.

• The faculty have a senate, and the staff and students have assemblies.

• Like legislative bodies in our government, the assemblies are elected, representative, constituent bodies, with some amount of delegated authority to affect, direct or recommend policies to the highest levels of, in our case, the university.
The three basic functions for which shared campus governance was established and still continue to serve today are:

1. **Participation in University decision-making** by students, faculty and staff in areas of direct and joint concern to them;

2. **A forum for discussion** of campus issues;

3. **Supervision of the campus judicial system**.
1955

• The Board of Trustees transferred the responsibility for non-academic matters to the President of the University.

• Prior to this time, it had been the responsibility of the faculty to make decisions regarding academic as well as non-academic policies and procedures.
HISTORY OF THE ASSEMBLIES

- Roots in campus events of 1969
- Major overhauls in 1977 and 1981
- EA, SA created in 1981
- GPSA created in 1993
- More prominence for constituent assemblies
- More focused role for UA
The Assemblies in Action

University Assembly meeting
September 19, 2017
The Cornell Community

**Grad & Professional Student Assembly**
18 Graduate & Prof Student Members

**Student Assembly**
25 Undergraduate Student Members

**Employee Assembly**
30 Staff Members

**Faculty Senate**
108 Faculty Senators

**University Assembly**
5 staff, 5 grad/professional students, 5 undergraduates, 5 faculty

- **8,658 Constituents**
- **7,543 Constituents**
- **14,927 Constituents**
- **1,648 Constituents**
- **32,776 Constituents**
The Office of the Assemblies

32,766 Constituents
914 Roles in the Assemblies
775 Committee Members
56 Committees
4 Assemblies
Structure of Shared Governance

**Employee Assembly (EA):**
Non-faculty employees in Ithaca and Geneva

**Graduate & Professional Student Assembly (GPSA):**
Graduate and professional students of Geneva and Ithaca, with a liaison at Cornell Tech

**University Assembly (UA):**
All Constituencies (including Faculty)

**Faculty Senate (FS):**
Faculty, supported by Dean of Faculty office

**Student Assembly (SA):** Undergraduate students
Legislative Authority

- Originates by *delegation from the President and Board of Trustees*.
- Authority is *delegated, not transferred*.
- Assemblies have *advisory authority*, subject to approval by President.
- Assemblies make *recommendations* which are reviewed by the President in consultation with senior staff.
Fundamental Authorities

- All Assemblies have a mandate to represent constituent interests and bring issues of concern to university leadership.
- Legislative authority to recommend changes to university policies that affect constituents, subject to approval by the President.
Specifically:

**Employee Assembly (EA):**
- Human Resources
- Personnel Policy

**Student Assembly (SA):**
- Campus Life
- Student & Academic Services

**University Assembly (UA):**
- Campus Code of Conduct
- University Hearing & Review Boards
- Transportation
- Planning

**Graduate & Professional Student Assembly (GPSA):**
- Graduate School
- Non-academic Policies
Rules & Governing Documents

• Assembly **Charter**: permanent, basic rules

• Assembly **Bylaws**: permanent, detailed rules

• **Standing rules**: year-to-year procedures

• **Program rules** (EA Grant Funds, SA & GPSA Finance Commissions)
Assembly Charter: permanent, basic rules

- Basic rules of the assembly
- Establishes powers and responsibilities
- Specifies officers, qualifications for memberships
- Provides committee structure
- Stringent amendment requirements, must be approved by the president of the university
Assembly **Bylaws**: permanent, detailed rules

- Detailed procedures and rules for assembly and committee operations
- Usually amended by simple majority
- Persists year-to-year
Standing rules: year-to-year procedures

- Same force and effect as Bylaws
- Must be renewed each year by the newly seated Assembly
- Focus on procedures of the Assembly, how meetings are conducted
- Approved by the Assembly
Up Next:

Going Through the Motions
or
Who is Robert, Anyway?!
Robert’s Rules of Order


- We do not want to waste time with excessive formality, but some of our issues may be contentious and we need to ensure everyone gets their fair opportunity to speak.
Basic Concepts

• Quorum
• Motion
• On the floor
• Having the floor
• Executive session
Basic Principles

• Courtesy and Justice for all
• Consideration of only one subject at a time
• Rights of absent members must be protected
• The minority must be heard
• The will of the majority must prevail
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

• Defining a Motion
  ‣ A formal proposal for consideration and action
  ‣ Only one subject can be considered at a time
  ‣ No main motion can be made while another motion is before the assembly.

• To make a motion, say, “I move that…”

• Seconding motions

• Debating Motions

• Voting

Member > Chair > Assembly
7 Steps in Processing a Motion

1. Asked to be recognized by the Chair (raise hand or placard to be placed on the “speaker’s list”)

2. A voting member makes a motion

3. Another voting member “seconds” the motion

4. The chair puts the motion on the floor by restating it and allowing for debate

5. During debate, members have the right to be recognized and debate, refer or amend the motion.

6. The chair puts the motion to a vote when debate ends or after a (secondary) motion to call the “previous question”:
   • if informal, not controversial, vote by show of hands/placards, by rising, etc.
   • if exact count is needed, vote by “roll call” or ballot

7. The chair announces the result of the vote, noting ayes, nays, abstentions.
When Debating Your Motions

• Listen to the other side
• Focus on the issues, not personalities
• Avoid questioning motives
• Be polite!
Getting Your Point Across

• Point of Order
  • Brings attention to an infraction of the rules of order
  • Must be raised immediately after the error is made

• Point of Privilege
  • Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc.
  • May interrupt only if necessary
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Voting

• **Roll Call Vote** (most common)

  • Three responses in which a member may vote:
    • “**For**” (in favor of the motion or legislation)
    • “**Against**” (opposed to the motion or legislation)
    • “**Abstain**” (neither for nor against)

• **Abstention**

  • Members may abstain only if there is a distinct conflict of interest
Voting

• **Unanimous Consent**
  
  • For certain motions, the chair may simply ask the assembly if there is any objection
  
  • If no member objects, the chair declares the action has been agreed to
  
  • If even *one* member objects, the chair must then state the question and follow the complete voting guidelines.
What’s on Your Mind?
(things to do before writing a resolution!)

• Develop the initiative/topic that you want to address
  - Search for a legislative history surrounding the issue
  - Solicit feedback from assembly members and your constituents (Remember, you represent other people!)

• Engage Stakeholders for information
  - Administrators
  - Staff colleagues
  - Assembly Committees
  - Community
What’s on Your Mind?
(STILL MORE things to do before writing a resolution!)

• Determine if there is enough information to move ahead with initiative.

IF NOT:

• Re-engage Stakeholders for further information
  - Is there an office on campus which deals with the issue?
  - Is there a committee already addressing the issue?
  - Check with the Office of the Assemblies for resources and contacts
  - Check with other assemblies and review their resolutions.
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Use of legislation in the form of a Resolution

- Once you have all of the information, background and stakeholder input, begin the process of drafting a resolution
- **Draft** your initial resolution
- Work with and through an assembly committee
- **Once drafted, solicit feedback on written resolution**
  - Administrators
  - Stakeholders
  - Assembly members
  - Your constituents
  - Community
- **Draft** your final resolution
- Seek approval from a committee
- Once approved, submit to Executive Vice Chair for inclusion on an agenda
- Attach any supporting documents or information
- Begin securing support from assembly members
By this point, you should have a pretty good idea of how the debate and vote will go before your resolution comes to the floor.

**Quick Checklist**

- ✔ Checked for legislative history
- ✔ Checked with peer institutions
- ✔ Presented at all relevant EA committees
- ✔ Solicited feedback from relevant university offices
- ✔ Have support from as many EA members as possible
- ✔ Issue is still unresolved
Robert’s Rules - Scenario

**Going through the motions**

1. A voting member makes a motion
2. Another voting member "seconds" the motion
3. The chair puts the motion on the floor by restating it and allowing for debate
4. The chair puts the motion to a vote when debate ends or after a (secondary) motion to call the "previous question"
5. The chair announces the result of the vote
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?