

# Bylaws

## Cornell University Employee Assembly

*As amended on September 6, 2023*

1 **PREAMBLE**

2 The Employee Assembly (herein after referred to as the Assembly) establishes these Bylaws  
3 under the authority granted by Article IV Section 7 of the Charter of the Employee Assembly.

4 **ARTICLE I: PROCEDURES**

5 **Section 1.1: Protections**

6 A. The Assembly and its committees shall respect and protect the rights of individuals.  
7 When a subject under discussion or examination requires the use of confidential  
8 information, all reasonable efforts shall be made to safeguard the confidentiality of this  
9 information.

10 **Section 1.2: Regular Meetings**

11 A. Regular meetings of the Assembly are on the first and third Wednesdays of the month  
12 from 12:00 - 1:15 p.m., except University holidays and other dates cancelled at the  
13 discretion of the Executive Committee. The Assembly may adopt a different schedule of  
14 regular meetings by majority vote.

15 **Section 1.3: Organizational Meeting**

16 A. The Chair sets a date for the organizational meeting to occur as soon as possible after  
17 the conclusion of employee elections, but no later than April 15. In this meeting, the  
18 Assembly:  
19 i. Elects the officers of the Assembly for the next session in accordance with the  
20 procedures set forth in Article II, Section 2.2 of these Bylaws;  
21 ii. Receives nominations and appoints representatives to the University Assembly  
22 and any other committees or commissions with vacancies that occur in the next  
23 session; and,  
24 iii. Sets a schedule of regular meetings for the next session.

- 25 B. All members who will be seated as of the start of the next session of the Assembly are  
26 voting members for the purposes of the meeting and must make every reasonable  
27 effort to attend and participate. The meeting must be held in closed session. The first  
28 order of business for the meeting must be appointment of a temporary chair who will  
29 preside until the Chair is elected for the next session. The temporary chair may be any  
30 voting member who does not seek election as Chair. The second order of business must  
31 be election of the Chair for the next session. The temporary chair must yield to the  
32 newly elected Chair immediately after their election.
- 33 C. If any positions are uncontested, the Chair may decide to vote by hand instead of by  
34 secret ballot.

### 35 **Section 1.4: Special Meetings**

- 36 A. The Chair may call special meetings to consider matters demanding immediate  
37 attention, or such meetings shall be called when requested by one-fourth of the seated  
38 members of the Assembly.

### 39 **Section 1.5: Quorum**

- 40 A. A quorum of voting members is required for the Assembly to do business at a regularly  
41 scheduled meeting.
- 42 B. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.

### 43 **Section 1.6: Executive Session**

- 44 A. The Assembly may go into executive session to discuss confidential matters by majority  
45 vote of those seated members who are present.

### 46 **Section 1.7: Agendas, Resolutions, and Minutes**

- 47 A. Agenda items will be compiled by the Executive Vice Chair in consultation with the  
48 Executive Committee. The Executive Vice Chair must post and distribute the agenda at  
49 least twenty-four hours prior to a meeting of the Assembly.
- 50 B. All resolutions must be sponsored by at least one voting member of the Assembly. All  
51 resolutions shall be reviewed by an appropriate committee of the Assembly for no more  
52 than thirty days before introduction at a regular meeting of the Assembly. Approval by  
53 the reviewing committee shall be a majority vote of the committee members present.  
54 The chair of the committee that reviewed the resolution shall provide a brief summary  
55 of the committee's thoughts and/or concerns on the resolution when it is presented at a

56 regular meeting of the Assembly. Under extenuating circumstances or time pressures,  
57 the Chair can determine that a resolution should be brought to the floor without  
58 committee review.

59 C. The Office of the Assemblies prepares minutes of each meeting, and makes them  
60 available to the university community after approval by the Assembly.

## 61 **Section 1.8: Attendance**

62 A. Attendance is required at all scheduled meetings for all voting members. Voting  
63 members:

- 64 i. Must notify the Executive Vice Chair in advance of any absence.
- 65 ii. May be unseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee if they have  
66 more than two unexcused absences from regular meetings of the Assembly  
67 during a given term. Unseated members neither count toward the total vote, nor  
68 quorum.
- 69 iii. May be reseated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

## 70 **Section 1.9: Voting**

- 71 A. The Chair may count any proxy vote that is received before the question to which it  
72 pertains is called. Votes submitted by proxy do not count towards quorum.
- 73 B. Voting may be conducted by electronic means at the discretion of the Executive  
74 Committee.
- 75 C. EA members may abstain from voting at regularly scheduled or special meetings of the  
76 Assembly. However, if the total number of abstentions is greater than the total number  
77 of votes in favor of a resolution or motion, the resolution or motion fails.
- 78 D. Abstentions do not count toward quorum.

## 79 **Section 1.10: Parliamentary Procedure**

- 80 E. Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be the basis for determining procedures for  
81 debate and general conduct of business not covered in this document.
- 82 F. The Assembly is not constrained to use parliamentary procedure for all discussions.

# 83 **ARTICLE II: OFFICERS**

## 84 **Section 2.1: Officers Defined**

- 85 A. The officers of the Assembly are the Chair, the Executive Vice Chair, the Vice Chair for  
86 Operations, the Vice Chair for Communications, and the Parliamentarian.

87 **Section 2.2: Election of Officers**

- 88 A. The officer elections occur in the following order: Chair, Executive Vice Chair, Vice Chair  
89 for Operations, Vice Chair for Communications, and Parliamentarian. For each office,  
90 the chair presiding over the meeting:
- 91 i. Entertains nominations of members for the position to be filled;
  - 92 ii. Closes nominations;
  - 93 iii. Allows each candidate to make an opening statement of specified duration;
  - 94 iv. Allows all members present to ask questions of the candidates for a specified  
95 period of time;
  - 96 v. Closes question and answer period;
  - 97 vi. Moves to a vote by secret ballot; and,
  - 98 vii. Repeats voting as needed until one candidate receives a majority of votes cast  
99 and eliminates the candidate receiving the fewest votes in each round of voting.

100 **Section 2.3: Terms**

- 101 A. The term of office is concurrent with a session of the Assembly. Officers may not serve  
102 more than two consecutive terms.

103 **Section 2.4: Recalling Officers**

- 104 A. The Assembly may remove any officer by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of seated  
105 members. The Assembly then immediately elects a new officer to serve the remainder  
106 of the term.
- 107 B. The above procedure shall also apply to chairs and members of committees of the  
108 Assembly.

109 **Section 2.5: Executive Committee**

- 110 A. The Executive Committee consists of the officers of the Assembly. The Executive  
111 Committee:
- 112 i. Formulates and approves an agenda for each meeting of the Assembly;
  - 113 ii. Formulates, in consultation with the chairs of the Assembly's committees, a  
114 budget of expenses for the Assembly and presents this budget to the Assembly  
115 for approval at the first regular meeting of the Assembly;

- 116           iii.    Conducts an orientation meeting at the beginning of each term with the  
117                   members of the Assembly. The agenda of the orientation meeting includes:  
118                   a.   dissemination of written and verbal guidelines which articulate  
119                   expectations for membership and for efficient operation of the Assembly  
120                   and its committees;  
121                   b.   continual communication with the Executive Committee and the roles of  
122                   the officers;  
123                   c.   the role of committees and best practices for committee operations;  
124                   d.   the legislative process and the setting of priorities for committees and  
125                   the Assembly;

## 126   **Section 2.6: Officer Responsibilities**

### 127    A. Chair

- 128           a. Assures the smooth and effective operation and maintenance of the Assembly;  
129           b. Presides over meetings of the Assembly;  
130           c. Delegates responsibilities as needed to accomplish the duties of the office and  
131           the goals set forth in the Charter and these Bylaws;  
132           d. Transmits notice of the actions and recommendations of the Assembly;  
133           e. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the disposition or current status of its  
134           actions and recommendations; and,  
135           f. Serves as spokesperson of the Assembly, corresponds with the President of the  
136           University, enumerating actions taken by the Assembly, and submits an annual  
137           year-end report to the University President.

### 138    B. Executive Vice Chair

- 139           a. Assists the Chair as needed;  
140           b. Chairs the meetings of the Executive Committee and distributes the agenda and  
141           meeting materials for regular and special meetings of the Assembly;  
142           c. Reviews minutes prepared by the Office of the Assemblies and distributes drafts  
143           to Assembly members;  
144           d. Notifies individuals and units directly affected by pending business of the  
145           Assembly or its committees which includes:  
146                   i. the chief contact for the for the resolution or committee action being  
147                   undertaken; and,  
148                   ii. the charge to the committee conducting the business and the dates of  
149                   meetings when the business will be considered, if applicable.

- 150           e. Presides in the absence of the Chair.

### 151    C. Vice Chair for Operations

- 153 a. Monitors and supervises the operations of the Assembly’s committees and the  
154 Assembly’s appointees to other committees;  
155 b. Advises committee chairs on issues of process and directs inquiries as needed;  
156 c. Receives nominations and expressions of interest in membership in the Assembly  
157 and presents slates of candidates to fill incidental vacancies as needed;  
158 d. Oversees and tracks the finances of the Assembly with assistance of the Office of  
159 the Assemblies;  
160 e. Monitors financial statements and authorizes expenditures in consultation with  
161 the Executive Committee;  
162 f. Reports periodically to the Assembly on the status of the funds;  
163 g. Prepares a yearly expenditure report outlining the use of funds for the past fiscal  
164 year; and,  
165 h. Prepares the annual fund request and budget proposal.
- 166 D. Vice Chair for Communications
- 167 a. Chairs the Communications Committee;  
168 b. Develops and executes communications plans for significant Assembly actions,  
169 projects, and initiatives;  
170 c. Arranges for advertising, postering, email campaigns and outreach programs;  
171 d. Prepares and distributes the Employee Assembly newsletter in consultation with  
172 the Communications Committee; and,  
173 e. Reviews and approves internal and external communications of the Assembly in  
174 consultation with the Executive Committee and the Communications Committee.
- 175 E. Parliamentarian
- 176 a. Assures that meetings follow procedures found within the Charter and the Bylaws  
177 of the Assembly and rules on questions and disputes related to interpretation of  
178 those rules.  
179 b. Coordinates with the Office of the Assemblies to ensure that the governing  
180 documents of the Assembly are public and reflect any changes made by the  
181 Assembly.

## 182 **ARTICLE III: COMMITTEES**

### 183 **Section 3.1: Generally**

- 184 A. The Assembly may establish standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate by a  
185 majority vote of the seated voting members of the Assembly.  
186

- 187 B. Except where otherwise indicated, any employee is eligible to serve on any committee  
188 of the Assembly and the term of membership on committees is concurrent with a  
189 session of the Assembly.

### 190 **Section 3.2: Ad-Hoc Committees**

- 191 A. For each ad-hoc committee, the committee charge shall be written prior to the  
192 formation of the committee and the appointment of its members.  
193 B. Every ad-hoc committee charge shall include a "sunset" clause with a specific date by  
194 which the committee is expected to report back to the Assembly.

### 195 **Section 3.3: Standing Committees**

- 196 A. Unless otherwise specified in its charge, each committee will be chaired by a voting  
197 member of the Assembly and will consist of eleven voting members:  
198 a. Six members appointed by and from the voting membership of the Assembly,  
199 one of whom serves as chair;  
200 b. Five members appointed by the Assembly from the employee community who  
201 are not members of the Assembly.  
202 B. Each standing committee must:  
203 a. Hold and publicize at least two meetings per semester that are open to the staff  
204 community where it receives and discusses items of business relevant to its  
205 charge;  
206 b. Publish and submit, in a timely fashion, agendas and minutes of each meeting  
207 and make every reasonable attempt to ensure that members of the staff  
208 community affected by its recommendations are informed of the agenda of its  
209 meetings and of its recommendations.

### 210 **Section 3.4: Charges of Standing Committees**

- 211 A. Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee  
212 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:  
213 a. Publicize the activities of the Assembly and its committees, including the agendas  
214 of meetings, actions taken, and events organized by the Assembly through all  
215 available and appropriate media;  
216 b. Develop and execute communications plans for significant Assembly actions,  
217 projects, and initiatives;  
218 c. Review and approve internal and external communications of the Assembly;  
219

- 220 d. Support and facilitate activities which raise awareness in the employee  
221 community of the Assembly's role and function;
- 222 e. Coordinate and execute staff events and recognition activities sponsored by the  
223 Assembly, including the annual President's Address to Staff;
- 224 f. Identify and examine opportunities for staff recognition by the Assembly and the  
225 university;
- 226 g. Review the Assembly's staff recognition programs and recommend changes; and
- 227 h. Review nominations and approve staff recognition awards, including the George  
228 Peter Award for Dedicated Service, according to rules and selection criteria  
229 adopted by the Assembly.

230 The committee shall be chaired by the Vice Chair for Communications. The HR Events  
231 Manager, HR Communications Manager, and a representative from the Cornell  
232 Chronicle shall be invited to serve as a non-voting members of the committee. The  
233 committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The  
234 committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be  
235 advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.  
236

237 B. Employee Education and Development Committee

238 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 239 a. Review programs and proposals affecting employee education, including work-  
240 related and elective educational activities, and recommend changes;
- 241 b. Identify employee education needs and opportunities for employees to engage in  
242 the academic mission of the university through research and programmatic  
243 activities;
- 244 c. Review and recommend proposals for pipeline development and professional  
245 advancement opportunities for employees; and,
- 246 d. Recommend actions the university may undertake to address employee  
247 education needs.

248 A representative from Benefit Services, a representative from Organizational and  
249 Workforce Development, and a representative from the School of Continuing Education  
250 and Summer Sessions shall be invited to serve as non-voting members of the  
251 committee. The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems  
252 appropriate. The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration  
253 before they can be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

254 C. Employee Welfare Committee

255 By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 256 a. Review and recommend proposals and initiatives related to employee health and  
257 wellness, work/life, dependent care and family support, diversity and inclusion,  
258



- 259           b. sustainability, transportation, compensation, and any other topic deemed  
260           relevant to employee welfare.

261       The committee may propose, review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate.  
262       The committee must approve resolutions referred for its consideration before they can  
263       be advanced to the Assembly for debate and for a vote.

264   D. Elections Committee

265       By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 266           a. Review Assembly election rules and procedures and recommend changes as  
267           needed;  
268           b. Apply election rules and procedures approved by the Assembly; and,  
269           c. Plan and support, in collaboration with the Communications Committee, efforts to  
270           solicit candidates for vacant positions in the Assembly.

271       The Elections Committee consists of all members of the Assembly whose terms  
272       continue beyond the current session of the Assembly. The committee may propose,  
273       review, and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve  
274       resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly  
275       for debate and for a vote.

276   E. Benefits and Policy Committee

277       By delegation from the Assembly, the committee will:

- 278           a. In collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, review and recommend  
279           changes to endowed and statutory benefits and personnel policies of the  
280           university, and other policies affecting the work environment at Cornell;  
281           b. Solicit from employees and university departments opinions, information, and  
282           advice relevant to issues before the committee; and  
283           c. In collaboration with the Faculty Senate, evaluate and make recommendations  
284           for changes to the University Benefits Committee, which is chartered jointly by  
285           the Employee Assembly and the Faculty Senate.

286       The Associate Vice President for Human Resources or a delegate shall be invited to  
287       serve as a non-voting member of the committee. The committee may propose, review,  
288       and amend resolutions as it deems appropriate. The committee must approve  
289       resolutions referred for its consideration before they can be advanced to the Assembly  
290       for debate and for a vote. The committee will appoint members, as needed, to serve on  
291       the University Benefits Committee.  
292

293   **ARTICLE IV: PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE EMPLOYEE**  
294   **ASSEMBLY**

295 **Section 4.1: Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Emergencies**  
296 **Grant Fund**

- 297 A. The Assembly establishes the Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Emergencies  
298 (CARE) grant fund to support and assist employees and faculty experiencing financial  
299 hardship from non-medical catastrophic events beyond their control.

300 **ARTICLE V: SUSPENSION OF THE BYLAWS**

- 301 A. A seated voting member of the Assembly may make a motion to suspend an Article of  
302 these Bylaws for a specified duration of a meeting.  
303 B. The Article of these Bylaws is suspended with two-thirds of the seated voting members  
304 voting in favor.  
305 C. Article V, in its entirety, may not be suspended.

306 **ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT**

- 307 A. Except where otherwise indicated, these bylaws are subject to amendment by a  
308 majority of the seated voting members of the Assembly.