



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly

Minutes of the February 2nd, 2022 Meeting 12:15-1:30 PM
Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair J. Withers called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.

II. Roll Call

Members Present [22]: D. Barrett, M. Benda, J. Chandler, M. Cherry, J. Creque, J. Duong, A. Durant, B. Fisher, B. Fortenberry, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Howell, K. LoParco, A. Mittman, E. Miller, S. Resue, A. Schafft, J. Stewart, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, J. Townley, J. Withers, L. Zacharias
Members Absent [7]: M. Brooks, J. Cannella, S. Coil, H. Depew, B. Goodell, K. Mahoney, J. Townley

III. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohono (Cayuga Nation)

- a. J. Withers stated the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. Approval of the January 19th, 2022 Minutes

- a. Motion to approve the January 19, 2022 minutes was **approved** unanimously.

V. Business of the Day

- a. Reginald White, Sr. Director, HR Research Division, Employee-Elected trustee and Chair, Men of Color Colleague Network Group, overview of Employee-Elected Trustee Position
 1. R. White first acknowledged other members of the EA who have also served as an Employee-Elected Trustee.
 2. R. White stated that the Board of Trustees has governance over staff and its affiliates to ensure that Cornell continues to operate and makes decisions in the best interest of Cornell. R. White stated that there are 5 constituencies represented on the Board of Trustees, but that however, once trustees are elected, they represent all, and not simply their original constituent bodies. R. White noted that the Board of Trustees has a broad viewpoint on how Cornell operates between all its different pieces through committees such as the Research Committee or Development Committee.
 3. R. White stated that on the Board, the insight into Cornell that he has received has allowed him to grow his appreciation for the work that many have put into the university and expressed his love for the university.
 4. A. Mittman stated that the Trustees are very forward in their work, but also expressed amazement over the amount of work senior administrators put into preparing for meetings with the Trustees and sharing information. A. Mittman

noted occurrences such as sudden presentations and more that widened his perspective and emphasized the feeling of equality on the Board of Trustees. A. Mittman encouraged any who may be interested to try for the role when they have the chance.

5. J. Kruser stated that experience on the EA is very helpful when considering a position on the Board of Trustees. J. Kruser clarified that when on the Board, a Trustee is advocating for the best interest of the university, and not simply that of the staff, noting that there aren't any committees centered around staff due to university leadership's previous experience in HR roles. J. Kruser acknowledged the insight that an Employee-Elected Trustee brings through the day-to-day contact that staff members make with the campus and community.
6. B. Fortenberry thanked J. Kruser for his perspective and noted his slight confusion over having a Trustee elected for a group of constituents but not representing them, finding this slightly counterintuitive. B. Fortenberry questioned if there were any situations where a desire to advocate for staff conflicted with the general mission and role for the Board of Trustees.
7. R. White stated that overall, the broad decisions that the Board makes have impact on the community, so it is rare that decisions focus around staff. R. White clarified that the conversations on the Board are not advocacy based, but rather about sharing information, and that there aren't any aims to make decisions that would harm the staff.
8. G. Giambattista noted, in reference to B. Fortenberry's question, that the Employee-Elected Trustee offers the staff perspective to the Board to enhance overall experience.
9. A. Mittman echoed his support on R. White and J. Kruser's experiences and noted the importance of the VP of HR role that is currently being filled by Mary Opperman, in response to B. Fortenberry's question. A. Mittman stated that the position helps speak out as the voice of the staff, noting how strong of a presence and voice Mary Opperman has had advocating for staff to the Board.
10. R. White agreed with A. Mittman's statement and emphasized the role that senior administrators have in helping to carry out decisions that the Trustees makes. R. White also noted the freedom that he, as a member of the Board, has to inquire and get involved in issues not singularly pertaining to staff.
11. K. Tannenbaum questioned if there was room for more elected Trustees from each constituent group on the Board, such as having 2 instead of 1.
12. R. White stated that the Board is very large, numbering around 64, so he'd question the presence of further members due to these high numbers.
13. J. Kruser emphasized a need for thoughtfulness when working as a Trustee and asking for information, to which R. White concurred.
14. A. Schafft acknowledged how much work the Trustees take on and questioned the time commitment of the role.
15. R. White stated that during the 2-3 days when Trustee meetings occur, these meetings take up all the time, and that besides this time is reading meeting

materials and preparing oneself for meetings. R. White emphasized the size of the role's responsibility and its seriousness. R. White also noted the public component of some of the meetings and the Trustee's role as a public figure which lends seriousness to one's words when answering questions or making statements.

16. A. Haenlin-Mott expressed her thanks for R. White's great work in the Board of Trustees and EA.
17. R. White thanked A. Haenlin-Mott and expressed his love and dedication to Cornell as he steps into a new role.
18. B. Fortenberry thanked R. White and questioned how R. White's Trustee role would be filled as he steps into a new position outside of Cornell.
19. G. Giambattista stated that a committee will meet in coming weeks to schedule an election to fill this role until the end of term in 2 years.
20. J. Withers thanked R. White for all of his work.

VI. Committee Reports and Updates

- a. Executive Committee - A. Haenlin-Mott
 1. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that the Executive Committee has been busy finishing the term with scheduling guest speakers, noting that Mary Opperman would be joining on March 2nd. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that the Committee has been working with Wendy Treat to create a new agenda format for meetings and that the EA will be holding another forum to occur sometime soon to address any staff concerns.
- b. Communications, Outreach, and Recognition Committee - E. Miller
 1. E. Miller stated the Committee is working on naming an awardee for the Staff Award for Integrity and Inclusion by narrowing nominees down to a top 4. E. Miller stated that the call for nominations for the George Peter award is also occurring, and that the EA Voice Newsletter will also get released.
- c. Employee Welfare Committee - K. Mahoney
 1. B. Fortenberry stated that a final draft for a resolution to improve the onboarding experience is almost ready to be released and noted parking and traffic concerns for North campus. B. Fortenberry noted the Committee's conversation centering on humanity and how we can promote humanity and culture for the community.

VII. Liaison Reports

- a. University Assembly - B. Fortenberry
 1. B. Fortenberry stated that the Earth Source Heating Group presented on shifting to new sources of energy.

VIII. New Business

- a. No new business.

IX. Adjournment

- a. B. Fortenberry motioned to adjourn. L. Zacharias seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:17.

Respectfully Submitted,
Office of the Assemblies