



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly

Minutes of the February 16th, 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 [24]: D. Barrett, M. Benda, M. Brooks, J. Cannella, M. Cherry, S. Coil, J. Creque, J. Duong, A. Durant, B. Fisher, B. Fortenberry, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Howell, K. LoParco, K. Mahoney, A. Mittman, E. Miller, S. Resue, A. Schafft, J. Stewart, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, J. Townley, J. Withers
Members Absent [4]: J. Chandler, H. Depew, B. Goodell, L. Zacharias

III. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogho:nq (Cayuga Nation)

- a. J. Withers stated the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. Approval of the February 2nd, 2022 Minutes

- a. Motion to approve the February 2, 2022 minutes was approved unanimously.

V. Business of the Day

- a. Resolution 3: Enhancements to the Cornell University Onboarding Process
 1. B. Fortenberry stated that the policy was created with the intent of enacting positive change for the onboarding process at Cornell, noting challenges with staffing levels and staff retention across the country. B. Fortenberry stated his desire to question processes that currently impact staff and seek positive change and thanked all those who helped work on the Resolution.
 2. B. Fortenberry introduced Resolution 3 and noted how short of a window the pre-existing onboarding process is for employees, as well as the challenges of both localized and centralized onboarding processes and resources to ultimately foster belonging as an employee. B. Fortenberry stated that retention of current employees is difficult and that with constantly shifting benefits and information, employees need to be informed and have a welcoming support system. B. Fortenberry stated that Resolution 3 calls for a centralized technology system to support onboarding, the implementation of a belonging ambassador, a longer orientation period with more events and resources included, and the prioritization of onboarding initiatives for new and current employees.
 3. M. LoParco questioned if there was some feedback or incident that prompted the Resolution, if there was data from Cornell to support statements in the Resolution, and the possible cost such a program could garner.

4. B. Fortenberry stated that the Resolution was prompted by the challenges he personally faced as he tried to onboard staff after the previous hiring freeze and that there are statistics to support the sentiments behind this resolution in terms of how a sense of belonging can affect retention, acknowledging the difficulties and costs that implementing such a program would take.
5. E. Miller noted the wording of the Resolution and that it seemed a bit harsh and demanding, recommending changing wording from “should” to “recommend”. E. Miller questioned if the Resolution could be put on the website for open comment from constituents before further voting.
6. B. Fortenberry stated that if others found a change in verbiage to be beneficial, he would not at all be opposed to enacting these changes.
7. A. Schafft questioned if the program would be completely decentralized and managed at the unit level, wondering on support or oversight from central administration.
8. B. Fortenberry stated that on a centralized level, there would be a database of belonging ambassador, while on the unit level, units could partner belonging ambassadors with staff who are onboarding.
9. K. Tannenbaum shared her personal experience currently onboarding after a lateral move in units and that, while there never seems to be a perfect time to implement such a program, the departure of the HR VP Mary Opperman might make the time opportune to establish these initiatives.
10. A. Mittman echoed the difference between recruitment and retainment for employees and highlighted the importance of staff retainment.
11. J. Cannella stated his desire for the wording of the Resolution to be amended with “recommend” as E. Miller stated, also noting how helpful a common onboarding experience would be.
12. M. Benda stated her support for an amendment in language towards “recommend” and her support for a universal onboarding experience for all employees.
13. D. Barrett stated that the original idea for a buddy system during staff onboarding was due to personal experiences those crafting the Resolution had, noting how transferring internally at Cornell really highlighted the differences in onboarding between departments.
14. M. LoParco noted that she onboarded 20 years ago when procedure was very different than from what it is today and explained her initial confusion with the Resolution before expressing her support.
15. B. Fortenberry noted that this Resolution does not acknowledge what also needs to happen on the unit level for a good onboarding experience and engage staff to make them feel welcome.
16. L. Howell stated that after tracking data related to new hires, it was found that previous onboarding events were held but attendance numbers were dwindling, causing these types of events to be put on pause. L. Howell noted that the local unit experience was the one that helped predict retention.

17. C. Joseph stated that there is currently programming specifically for employees available such as Big Red Welcome, which is a monthly message and workshop program with perks and information on the local community. C. Joseph noted an upcoming partnership with the Cornell Store to give new hires a collection of free item packages to make them feel welcome.
 18. A constituent stated that, as an employee who has worked at Cornell for 6 years, she has never felt very connected to Cornell until she began attending Employee Assembly meetings and acknowledged her hope for improvement and those feelings of belonging.
 19. D. Stevens noted that Cornell already has lots of pre-existing onboarding programs that many just don't know about due to lots of information overload and different locations of information that made standardized information and organization more important.
 20. G. Giambattista stated that, as a tour guide for the new employee bus tours, she found merit in both a local and Cornell experience with overlap as well to feel a sense of belonging.
 21. E. Miller motioned to table the Resolution and open for public comment. E. Miller rescinded her motion.
 22. M. LoParco motioned to send the Resolution back to Committee for refinement. J. Cannella seconded the motion.
 23. J. Creque questioned if, after changes were made in Committee, the Resolution would have to return to the general body before being posted for public comment. G. Giambattista stated that the Resolution would have to come out of Committee and back to the general body before opening for public comment.
 24. B. Fortenberry stated his concern with the timeline of this sort of editing, especially noting that feedback from public comment could also spark a need for more changes.
 25. K. Tannenbaum questioned if it would be possible to make edits to the Resolution in interim instead of postponing until the next Welfare Committee meeting.
 26. B. Fortenberry stated that a Resolution could be made at an Employee Assembly meeting to open public comment.
 27. M. LoParco stated that clarifying the distinction between local and central onboarding is necessary to understanding the Resolution as a whole, which is why she believes that sending the Resolution back to Committee for editing is needed.
 28. J. Creque stated that review could be done by email for the changes made to the Resolution to make feedback more time-effective.
 29. J. Cannella agreed with M. LoParco's statement.
 30. M. LoParco's motion to return the Resolution to Committee to reflect new edits was returned to the floor. The motion was approved with a vote of 12-6-4.
- b. Free Period Product Initiative - Liz Davis-Frost and Shura Gat
1. S. Gat introduced herself as the Assistant Director of the Women's Resource Center. L. Davis-Frost introduced herself as a Student-Elected Trustee.

2. L. Davis-Frost began presenting on the importance of free period products and the initiative to provide free period products at Cornell.
3. S. Gat stated that socioeconomic status and how it affects access to period products should not be a barrier to education, that the structural inequality of not including a necessity when other bathroom essentials are provided is unfair, and that there is stigma towards menstruation. S. Gat noted benefits to Cornell through this initiative such as reduced economic barriers and the opportunity to support other institutions and organizations who also have similar initiatives.
4. L. Davis-Frost stated the history behind the initiative, starting from a 2017 Spring Pilot that stalled before an eventual return following issues such as COVID-19. L. Davis-Frost stated that in the future, funding will move to a sustainable funding source and away from its original funding from the undergraduate student activity fee.
5. K. Tannenbaum motioned to extend the meeting to 1:40pm. The motion was approved unanimously.
6. L. Davis-Frost stated that the initiative was recently rebranded from “Free Menstrual Products” to “Free Period Products” to reflect more inclusivity.
7. A. Schafft thanked the presenters and questioned if there were discussions on the environmental impact of disposable products and raising awareness for reusable products. L. Davis-Frost stated that currently utilized products are sustainable, but that in the future a more-community wide effort leaning towards more reusable products could be focused on.

VI. Committee Reports and Updates

- a. Executive Committee - A. Haenlin-Mott
 1. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that there will be an upcoming Forum on COVID-19, and that any additional questions should be submitted. A. Haenlin-Mott also noted that the next EA meeting scheduled for March 2nd will have Mary Opperman in attendance.

VII. New Business

- a. J. Withers thanked W. Treat and J. Cannella for their service in support of the Employee Assembly.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. B. Fortenberry motioned to adjourn. A. Mittman seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Office of the Assemblies