



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly
Minutes of the November 20, 2019 Meeting
12:15-1:30 PM
Physical Science Building 401

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Chair Howell called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.
Members Present: A. Howell, A. McCabe, H. Depew, D. Hiner, K. Mahoney, B. Fortenberry, K. LoParco, E. Miller, A. Sieverding, M. Benda, J. Michael, L. Taylor, J. Withers, H. Sheldon, C. Sanzone, J. Creque, E. Ivory, K. Barth, L. Taylor, R. Lochner, A. Haenlin-Mott, K. Supron, B. Goodell, G. Giambattista, W. Treat
- b. *Members Absent:* T. Chams, J. Cooley, A. Miller, M. Newhart, S. Barry, C. Wiggers, A. Brooks

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting – **approved** with no dissent

III. Business of the Day

- a. A. Howell noted a procedural clarification moving forward. When the EA receives speaker presentations and there are questions afterwards, the EA will take a speakers list to ensure members have the opportunity to ask questions. If there is extra time, they will open it up to non-members.
- b. Elections Committee: Incidental Vacancies (Hotel Administration and Alumni Affairs & Development)
 - i. A. Howell announced an election of two potential members to the EA running uncontested: Rob Miegl from Alumni Affairs & Development (AA&D) and Jamie Duong from the School of Hotel Administration. He relayed that Jessica Townley from the Geneva Campus is still interested in running for the EA, but stated she needed to work some things out.
 - ii. R. Miegl introduced himself as the Assistant Director of University Corporate & Foundational Relations from AA&D. He has worked at AA&D for almost four and a half years and went to school in Binghamton. He saw that the position was open for quite some time and attended a few EA committee meetings.
 - iii. J. Duong introduced himself as a Network & Systems Administrator in Information Technologies from the SC Johnson College of Business. He is from Montreal and has been in the Cornell area for a long time. He first began working for Cornell as a student in 2001. After graduating in 2006, he worked for the ILR School's Tech Services office. In 2007, he moved to the School of Hotel Administration and has been working there since. While attempting to reach out to his EA representative, he went on the website and discovered there was none. Both the Hotel School and SC Johnson College of Business deserve representation, especially with the current environment needing changes.
 - iv. Vote on R. Miegl to be the Division of AA&D Representative – **passed** unanimously
 - v. Vote on J. Duong to be the School of Hotel Administration Representative – **passed** unanimously

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Communications & Awards Committee
 - i. C. Sanzone reported that the committee met last week and discussed revising the George Peter Award. She also has one outstanding question to G. Giambattista about potential funding for a prize. In the spring, the committee did some debriefs following the award presented to Agnes Morris in November 2018. They touched upon some issues around communications and consistency, and revised the description and assessment criteria of the award. The committee is excited to roll those changes out. Regarding the EA Priorities Poll Survey results, she is still

working on the report and the newsletter. For EA promotional items, they have sent two emails out to vendors for proposals. They would like to have some new items before the next tabling event.

1. E. Miller added that the Cornell Winter Employee Celebration will be on January 25, 2020. There will be more information coming.

b. Welfare Committee

- i. K. Mahoney stated the last meeting was held on November 1, and the committee discussed the CARE Fund. At the next meeting scheduled for December 3, Director of HR Analytics Dr. Linda Croll Howell will be in attendance. They plan on discussing the survey and furthering conversations on the CARE Fund and increased engagement. She also plans to discuss possible employee support opportunities if the tobacco/nicotine-free campus initiative proceeds.

c. Benefits & Policy Committee

- i. A. Sieverding stated that the committee met last week and continued discussion of the paid time off policy. They sent an invite to Associate VP of HR Allan Bishop to give an update on his office's investigation into changes to the policy. She has not heard back from him yet. The committee also discussed a question raised by a staff member concerning the current bereavement policy. The staff member expressed concerns that the policy is too restrictive in today's expansive family relationships. They will continue to discuss this and report back.

d. Executive Committee

- i. H. Depew reported that her and C. Sanzone are working through the results of the EA Priorities Poll. They hope to present the results as soon as they have a finalized version. The university-wide HR 202 training was due on November 15, and she is hoping to meet again with Title IX Coordinator Chantelle Cleary to discuss the results and what the next steps would be. She will provide an update as soon as they have a conversation.

e. Elections Committee

- i. J. Withers stated that the EA just elected two new members.

V. New Business

a. Open Discussion

- i. L. Taylor gave an update on the UA Codes and Judicial Committee. It is working on the student component of the Campus Code of Conduct. She hopes there will be something to send to the EA by the next meeting. They did not have quorum this week and could not vote. While they made a lot of progress, they will have more work than anticipated at the next meeting. If they do not get it done, they will likely have another meeting sooner than the regular biweekly schedule.
- ii. K. Barth gave an update on the UA Campus Infrastructure Committee. It is looking into writing a letter to the President and Board of Trustees regarding divestment. The SA is currently writing a resolution on divestment from fossil fuels. This issue was addressed in 2016 with the assemblies, including the Faculty Senate, unanimously passing a resolution in support of divestment. However, the Board of Trustees responded that while it was the right idea, it was not the right time. It proceeded to give a new standard and process for divestment consideration. Since 2016, the Board of Trustees has seen a 50% turnover with new members and the assemblies have learned a lot of information on climate change and human impact. They are also more interested in investment, such as creating a green-based retirement fund employees can opt into. They are also considering how they can support the SA resolution and initiative. From 2016, they learned that they needed to highlight actions from specific companies that are morally reprehensible. Instead of pursuing a resolution, they are working on a report of lessons learned. In addition, last year, K. Barth was on the UA Campus Planning Committee on which he learned about the "Cornell Campus Circulator," which is a proposed system of shuttle buses that would work better than the bus system. He drafted a resolution to ask for the Cornell Campus Circulator. The resolution did not explain funding and logistics of the buses, but rather offered all the information that had been talked about and requested someone to be assigned to its implementation. He sent an email to all executive committees asking for support and the

opportunity to present to the assemblies. He asked whether an initiative would still have merit if all assemblies passed similar resolutions but are not exactly the same.

1. R. Miegler asked if an economic component would be presented to the Board of Trustees regarding divestment.
 - a. K. Barth replied that there was an economic component done in 2016 by the Faculty Senate, and it offered potential alternatives in more sustainable roles. The committee now is not focusing on providing an economic component, but rather on the idea that investments and returns are going down. They have not seen the SA resolution for divestment.
 2. L. Taylor reiterated K. Barth's question and asked whether committees need to pass identical resolutions.
 - a. G. Giambattista responded that resolutions can be slightly similar with the same idea. It is important that the "resolved" clause in particular support the same idea.
 3. K. LoParco asked about the connection between the energy independence initiative and the carbon neutral goal with divestment.
 - a. K. Barth stated that he is not the right person to answer. He noted that while there are a lot of sustainability initiatives at Cornell, not many people are willing to change their behaviors. Investments in fossil fuels mean Cornell is not being as green as it can be. In the next meeting, he will ask questions about the impacts.
 4. A. Howell added he is in early discussion with the SA about carrying its resolution to the EA.
- iii. D. Hiner stated he is the Chair of the UA Campus Welfare Committee. A campus-wide nicotine use survey went out and closed on Friday. There were 4,562 respondents. Staff were the top responders at 64% and undergraduates came in second with about 31%. Union responders were low at 1.5-2%. 67% of respondents stated they would support a nicotine ban. 83% of respondents reported having never smoked in the last 30 days or ever, and 88% of respondents have never used a smokeless tobacco. The next steps will be for the committee to review the results and organize the data by different constituency groups so they can analyze where people agree and disagree. This can then inform them on areas where they may need to do some more outreach about the health benefits of a ban. The committee is also looking to engage Cornell Health in the discussion and resolution writing process. It may not be a resolution that recommends the ban, but rather encourage the campus to conduct a study on what it would take to work towards a ban. Nicotine is an addictive drug, and telling people what to do with their bodies is controversial. If Cornell implements a nicotine ban, it will have to offer resources and put in effort.
1. J. Duong asked what it would look like if Cornell banned nicotine use on campus. He questioned which disciplinary measures would be used and what other campuses have done.
 - a. D. Hiner stated that Cornell should look to other campuses, such as some SUNY campuses and CUNY campuses in New York City. However, he noted that those campuses are much smaller than Cornell's and it may be unreasonable to request people to find a space that is not Cornell-owned to smoke or vape. The logistics of the ban is not under the purview of the committee.
 - b. J. Michael noted she had a constituent who voiced concerns over the maternity leave policy.
 - i. A. Sieverding replied that she can connect with her.

VI. Adjournment

- a. A. McCabe adjourned the meeting at 1:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Tran

Clerk of the Assembly