



# Cornell University Employee Assembly

**Cornell Employee Assembly**  
Minutes of the November 4, 2020 Meeting  
12:15-1:30 PM  
Zoom

## **I. Call to Order**

- a. Chair H. Depew called the meeting to order at 12:16pm.

## **II. Roll Call**

- a. *Members Present:* J. Cannella, M. Cherry, J. Creque, H. Depew, J. Duong, B. Fisher, B. Fortenberry, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Howell, R. Lochner, K. LoParco, K. Mahoney, J. Michael, A. Miller, E. Miller, M. Newhart, M. Podolec, N. Siadat, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, J. Townley, J. Withers, L. Zacharias
- b. *Members Absent:* S. Barry, E. Ivory, V. McAuley, L. Taylor
- c. *Special Guests:* President Martha Pollack, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Opperman, Vice President of University Relations Joel Malina

## **III. Business of the Day**

- a. Presentation by President Marth Pollack and Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Opperman
  - i. President Pollack provided updates on the following items:
    1. COVID transmission – She informed the Assembly that just under 70,000 tests conducted in a two week period with seventeen positive cases, five of which were students and the remaining twelve are faculty and staff cases. This results in a weekly positivity rate of 0.02%, even with faculty and staff living in areas outside of Ithaca and Tompkins County. She reiterated that the success is fragile and individuals still need to stay diligent, especially with the upcoming holiday season and colder months. There is also an opportunity for supplemental surveillance testing available for staff who are not on campus or approved to be on campus. She also referenced taking care of mental health and well being and referred members to utilize the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP).
    2. Budgetary Impact of the Pandemic – currently reviewing budgets with the Provost and the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer in the hope that the salary and retirement cuts may potentially be restored after the first of the year.
    3. Highlights of faculty and staff accomplishments during the pandemic – referenced a grant from the National Science Foundation in the amount of \$32.6 million going to Cornell’s High Energy Synchrotron Source (CHESS) to allow for the building of a high magnetic field (HMF) beam line for advanced studies that cannot be conducted elsewhere in the world; the Institute for African Development, part of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, was awarded a three year \$300,000 grant from the Department of Education to strengthen African Studies and languages for Cornell undergraduates, both in Ithaca and in Africa, and allow for experiential education for students in West Africa and southern Africa; new digital newsletter “Belonging at Cornell”, to be distributed four to six times a year, which addresses

social justice issues in our country and addresses the need for programming and resources for staff around diversity, equity and inclusion.

- b. EA R4 – In Recognition and Appreciation of Cornell University Students
  - i. Abstract: This resolution is a formal recognition of the response of Cornell University students to the COVID-19 pandemic and to thank them for their efforts to protect Cornell’s Ithaca campus community.
  - ii. Motion to call to question and end debate - **approved**
- c. Endorsement for the Faculty Senate Resolution
  - i. J. Creque informed the assembly that a resolution will be voted on at next Faculty Senate meeting (11/11/20) to name building in North Campus Residential Expansion in recognition of Barbara McClintock.
  - ii. Draft separate resolution from EA to provide strength for Faculty Senate resolution.
  - iii. There was strong support from the assembly members for a resolution from the EA.
  - iv. An assembly member asked which committee this would go through.
  - v. H. Depew stated that it would go through the Executive Committee.
  - vi. E. Miller stated that she would work on the resolution with J. Creque

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

- a. Executive Committee – met last on 10/30 with special guest Jennifer Fonseca regarding programming for staff; staff forums to resume in December or January so as to not compete with the upcoming Provost’s Town Hall.
- b. Communications and Awards Committee – 16 members on committee; meeting regularly every two weeks. EA Priorities Poll and other spotlights in next EA newsletter in November
- c. Education Committee – still need chair for committee. Review rules and bylaws on how to support opportunities for staff (CULearn and Employee Degree Program); potential for staff forum for educational opportunities; next meeting is 11/20
  - i. President Pollack mentioned that there is a possibility that online course materials that are currently available to students may be available to staff next year
- d. Welfare Committee – met on 11/4; indicated a strong relationship with M. Artibee, B. Brady and L. Croll-Howell to provide voice to initiatives before they go live to all staff; subcommittees – work from home and safe spaces (challenges and opportunities); CARE fund – revamp and update; Domestic Violence Awareness campaign; wellness featured forum; sponsored resolutions – essential employees, VRI participants, contributions of RBH, recognize Cornell students and their contribution to the success of this term
- e. Benefits and Policy Committee – met on 11/3 and discussed policy on release time for committee work/participation; M. Opperman stated that she can discuss this offline, yet she encouraged participation in shared governance; however, some jobs are different than others with regard to flexibility to take part in committees; Belonging at Cornell survey results to be shared with BPC to see if there is any direction they should pursue. M. Opperman suggest that L. Croll-Howell do a presentation
- f. Elections Committee – carrying work forward; fall elections were entirely remote and it was a relatively seamless election. Next phase involves spring elections and cleaning up some of the kinks for hybrid staff election (in person/on campus and remote staff); increasing participation – additional seats; they are exploring the petition signatures and their purpose and if they are necessary.

#### **V. New Business**

- a. Vote on EA R4
  - i. Grammatical errors to be correct
  - ii. Motion to vote – resolution approved 21-0-0
- b. Open Discussion
  - i. B. Fortenberry – as the newly appointed Codes and Judicial Committee chair, he informed members of the proposed revisions to the Campus Code of Conduct and stated that he is still missing a non-EA staff/employee representative on the committee.
  - ii. J. Cannella asked about the number of committees that each assembly member needs to be on and should it be revisited.
  - iii. R. Lochner stated that he will work on this off line.
  - iv. K. Mahoney mentioned that there is documentation related to remote work forthcoming.
  - v. An assembly member raised the point about the size of the committees.
  - vi. G. Giambattista provided information that the bylaws were in place when the Employee Assembly was much smaller and it makes perfect sense to revisit them now, given the growth of the assembly.

## **VI. Adjournment**

- a. Chair Depew adjourned the meeting at 1:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Wendy Treat*

Senior Coordinator, Office of the Assemblies