



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly
Minutes of the November 18, 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:* S. Barry, J. Cannella, M. Cherry, J. Creque, H. Depew, J. Duong, B. Fortenberry, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, R. Lochner, K. LoParco, K. Mahoney, J. Michael, A. Miller, E. Miller, M. Newhart, M. Podolec, N. Siadat, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, L. Taylor, J. Townley, J. Withers, L. Zacharias
- b. *Members Absent:* B. Fisher, D. Howell, E. Ivory, V. McAuley, K. Wilcox

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 21, 2020 – approved unanimously
- b. November 4, 2020 – approved unanimously

IV. Business of the Day

- a. Staff Forums
 - i. H. Depew informed the Assembly members that upon return from Thanksgiving break, there will be a Cornell Health staff forum on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM with special guests Dr. Anne Jones and Dr. John Clarke from Cornell Health, along with Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Opperman. She further stated that the forum would be focused on best practices in combatting COVID-19, surveillance testing and ways that staff can prepare as they head into the extended Winter Break.
 - ii. H. Depew asked K. LoParco if there was a need for volunteers to assist with questions during the forum.
 - iii. L. Zacharias stated that she would be able to assist with the question and answer portion of the forum.
 - iv. A. Haenlin-Mott asked if there was a description of the forum on the EA webpage so Assembly members could share the information with their constituents.
 - v. K. LoParco indicated that there is information about the forum on the EA LinkedIn page.
 - vi. E. Miller further stated that there is a listing for the forum on the Cornell Events calendar.
 - vii. K. Tannenbaum added that the information will be included in the EA Voice newsletter which is distributed to all staff.
 - viii. E. Miller mentioned that a standalone email will be sent out to staff as well.
 - ix. H. Depew stated that K. Mahoney of the Employee Welfare Committee has been working with members of the HR community to put together a wellness series focusing on mental and physical wellness during these difficult times. She added that, while it hasn't been publicized yet, the first of the series "Wind Down to Winter Break" will be held on Monday, December 14 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM with guests from Faculty and

Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) as well as individuals from Cornell Wellness. She stated that this will be more like a panel instead of a forum with a smaller portion focused on Q&A.

- x. H. Depew stated that there has been a suggestion to have members of the EA record short videos with senior leadership asking questions on wellness and how they have been managing their own mental health during the pandemic. This suggestion is purely in the preliminary stages and is under consideration. These short videos can be added at the beginning of a staff forum or a wellness panel for staff to get to know EA members and senior leadership.
 - xi. E. Miller stated that this is a great idea and what needs to be done to get that idea or suggestion started.
 - xii. B. Fortenberry acknowledged that not every constituency has a key individual or contact within senior leadership.
 - xiii. H. Depew agreed and provided the Women's Representative or the Less Than 5 Years Representative as examples.
 - xiv. E. Miller added that some constituencies have more than one individual in senior leadership and used her seat as an example in that she could go to either the Vice Provost for Research or the head of CIT.
 - xv. K. Mahoney added that while the staff have been hearing from President Pollack or VP Opperman or Lombardi, they may view or experience leaders in many different ways.
- b. Retreat
- i. H. Depew reminded the Assembly members that the retreat would be an opportunity to plan and to hold it sometime in the winter, possibly in January or February. She stated that a Doodle poll would be sent to get availability.
 - ii. H. Depew stated that the retreat would be a half day and held remotely for safety and social distancing protocols. The primary focus of the retreat would be using the information gathered from the Priorities Poll which was sent to staff via the EA Newsletter. She added that there are currently 470 responses and a new question was added to the poll about how well staff think the EA has represented them. She urged the EA members to promote and share the Priorities Poll with their constituencies.
 - iii. K. Tannenbaum asked if there might be December options for the retreat as well.
 - iv. E. Miller stated that she felt that some member may need a break and that early January might work better.
 - v. H. Depew concurred that early January is a possibility and that a Doodle Poll would assist in determining everyone's availability.
- c. University Assembly Codes and Judicial Committee Update
- i. B. Fortenberry, newly elected Chair of the University Codes and Judicial Committee, provided a brief update on the work and efforts of the University Codes and Judicial Committee. He commended J. Michael for her work on the committee and her support.
 - ii. He stated that there was a deadline of November 17 to provide feedback from the public to University Counsel on the current code revisions for Fall 2020. He added that there was a public forum held and there was a lot of feedback provided (approximately 90 comments submitted and 50 questions during the public forum).
 - iii. He mentioned that the suggestions included restorative justice, student involvement in the hiring process for the Judicial Administrator, and how the complainant and respondent codes counselors are reviewed and their roles in the codes and judicial process.

- iv. He further mentioned that the feedback was provided to the University Counsel's office by the deadline and they will be taking the feedback into consideration in revising the code and presenting it back to the University Assembly Codes and Judicial Committee for review. It is his understanding that the code will be moving from a clear cut one copy to a new version due to the changes that are currently proposed.
- v. J. Withers commended B. Fortenberry on his work facilitating the public forum on the code revisions.
- vi. L. Taylor also acknowledged the work and effort that has been put into the Codes and Judicial Committee and congratulated B. Fortenberry on a job well done.
- vii. E. Miller asked about the attendance during the forum. B. Fortenberry responded that he felt at the high point, he saw about 60 attendees. He went on to add that some individuals are very involved in the process, yet others have no clue about it or understanding about the process.

V. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee (K. LoParco) – met on November 13 and discussed the staff forum, the wellness series, and an education staff forum; additionally, there was discussion about the EA Priorities Poll and the request for a letter of support from the EA for naming a building in the North Campus Residential Expansion project. There was other conversation about restructuring of committees and review of the bylaws as there isn't much in the Charter or Bylaws that indicates that each Assembly member has to be on more than one committee. Lastly, it was brought up that some Assembly members haven't been receiving communication or missing meetings so that was the purpose for the roll call for attendance this afternoon.
- b. Communications and Awards Committee (E. Miller) – met last week with an upcoming meeting before Thanksgiving. The EA Voice newsletter was published on Monday, November 16 and the committee is preparing for the December newsletter. They are also assisting the executive committee with communications for the staff forum and other events moving forward. In their upcoming meeting, there will be a discussion about the George Peter award with a plan to move forward on that as there wasn't an award presented last year for either this award or the Opperman Award.
 - i. J. Creque asked about the letter of support for the naming of a building and whether she would be sending it or if the EA would like to review and provide edits before it gets sent.
 - ii. E. Miller indicated that she was under the impression that J. Creque would handle the letter.
 - iii. K. LoParco stated that if the letter is being sent on behalf of the EA, the entire EA should have an opportunity to review and approve it before it is submitted.
 - iv. J. Creque informed the Assembly that the Faculty Senate had a timeframe and inquired about what sort of timeline might be for review.
 - v. H. Depew informed the Assembly that she has been in contact with the Office of the Assemblies regarding the process or if there is a template that can be used. She further indicated that the review by Assembly members could be done online in order for them to provide feedback.
 - vi. J. Creque stated that she has been charged with getting it done and it would be helpful to have review and edits completed by Tuesday, November 24 so the letter can be submitted to the Faculty Senate.

- c. Education Committee (L. Taylor) – meeting on Friday, November 20 at 1:00 PM. There is still a need to find a replacement for the Education Committee Chair. Work has been done with the Communications Committee regarding an article about education in the December newsletter.
 - i. H. Depew mentioned that if anyone would like to step into the role of Chair of the Education to please let her or L. Taylor know.
- d. Welfare Committee (K. Mahoney) – met on Wednesday, November 18 just before the EA meeting. Discussed the planning for the Winter Wind Down panel discussion as well as opportunities to support international students as well as the student body in general in Fall 2 which is post Thanksgiving. They spoke with Reba McCutcheon, advisor for Cornell Minds Matter and EARS, and Brandon Lanners from the Office of Global Learning regarding their initiatives to offer some opportunities for connection between a few programs. The Welfare Committee will be working with the Communications Committee in the coming weeks with some interesting opportunities for staff and students. Mention of the Big Red Writes initiative as well as the Safe Zone initiative and conversation around reviewing the Belonging at Cornell survey data with the LGBTQ+ community in mind.
 - i. E. Miller inquired about the staff and employee relationship with international student support.
 - ii. K. Mahoney provided examples from Brandon Lanners such as a Thanksgiving dinner and a conversations group that takes international students focused by time zone and partners them in small groups facilitated by staff. She added that these opportunities include not just the international students, but the general student body and it allows for staff to become engaged. She also mentioned the Big Red Writes initiative and Cornell Minds Matter is launching an initiative around quarantine stories to participate in a dialogue with students in quarantine.
- e. Benefits and Policy Committee (B. Goodell) – meeting on November 24. Presentation with Linda Croll-Howell and continuation of the discussion on release time for committees.
 - i. H. Depew added that Linda Croll-Howell does a lot of work with data and heads up the Belonging at Cornell survey so she may be able to provide some interesting data.
 - ii. E. Miller inquired about the Belonging at Cornell newsletter that was mentioned by Mary Opperman at the last EA meeting and if there was more information as she hadn't received it.
 - iii. A. Miller provided input that the best person to contact regarding the Belonging at Cornell newsletter would be Anthony Sis as they would have more information.
- f. Elections Committee (N. Siadat) – met on November 10 with the next meeting to be sometime in mid December. Discussed a list of items that was provided by J. Withers, former Elections Committee Chair. There was discussion regarding the merit of signature requirements for future elections given the hybrid model of work – remote vs. on campus – that staff are currently working under. There are some other topics that need to be discussed with the Office of the Assemblies with respect to electronic voting signature and registration and the timeline for spring elections to start scheduling. There have been suggestions about including additional candidate forums and work with Angela Winfield about engaging the CMGs in getting the word out about the upcoming elections.

VI. New Business

- a. Open Discussion
 - i. R. Lochner stated that a constituent reached out regarding Cornell's quarantine policy in relation to New York State's quarantine policy. He stated that New York Stat has moved

to a four day quarantine policy as long as you get a test done; however, Cornell hasn't mentioned that they are going to follow that guidance and are sticking with the two week quarantine policy for out of state travel. He asked if there are similar concerns throughout the other constituencies.

- ii. L. Taylor stated that she was under the impression that Cornell was going to be following the New York State guidelines based on the recent message from the Provost. She added that Cornell's testing policy is a little more robust than what New York State is requiring.
- iii. B. Fortenberry informed the EA that the student move in process for next semester will involve the students being asked to test three days prior to coming to New York State, test when they arrive on campus or in Ithaca, then a test four days after arrival. He added that the policy has not been updated to implement New York State's most recent adjustments. He felt that it may be more of a challenge for staff to monitor that and it is more cut and dry for staff to follow the 14 days of quarantine after traveling out of state.
- iv. K. Supron provided the link to the new student policy from the Cornell COVID website and check-in.
- v. H. Depew informed the Assembly members of an email that he received from Chief David Honan of the Cornell University Police Department regarding the Student Assembly working on a resolution to disarm the Cornell University Police Department and dissolve ties with the Ithaca Police Department. She added that Chief Honan is willing to meet with the EA to answer any questions or how they deliver their services to staff.
- vi. K. LoParco stated this would be a great idea to have Chief Honan come talk with the Employee Assembly and she was stunned that the Student Assembly is asking this of the university.
- vii. B. Fortenberry mentioned that a Student Assembly representative brought this topic up during an University Assembly meeting and that it is an interesting topic. He stated that it would be important to be aware of and asked those that are able to attend the Student Assembly meeting to hear their perspective and the resolution they are putting forth. He felt it is a challenging topic and there are repercussions and concerns overall from both sides of the argument.
- viii. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that she is on the newly reinstated Public Safety Advisory Committee that Executive Vice President Joanne DeStefano is leading. She stated that CUPD are talking about initiative that they are undertaking and that Do Better Cornell is represented on the committee. She felt this would be timely as they are in the thick of things and it would be a good discussion.
- ix. B. Goodell agreed this would be a good idea to have CUPD come to talk with the Employee Assembly.
- x. K. Supron informed the Assembly that the combined Tompkins County and City of Ithaca Reimagining Public Safety Task Force has held three public information sessions with another two being held on Friday, November 20 and Friday, November 27. She felt this would be beneficial given that 76% of Cornell employees live in Tompkins County and they would appreciate student, faculty and staff feedback in the process.
- xi. H. Depew stated that she will invite Chief Honan to come to the next EA meeting to discuss new initiatives and community outreach.
- xii. K. LoParco asked if they can discuss the task force that K. Supron referenced.
- xiii. B. Goodell mentioned it would be helpful to see what the Assembly can offer in support.

- xiv. M. LoParco mentioned the two vacancies in membership, one of which is an ex-officio member of the Student Assembly Liaison to the EA.
- xv. H. Depew asked G. Giambattista from the Office of the Assemblies regarding the process of getting that appointment filled.
- xvi. G. Giambattista stated that they should work with the Student Assembly Executive Committee, specifically the Vice President for Internal Operations.
- xvii. E. Miller asked if that individual is a member of the Employee Assembly or the greater staff community.
- xviii. G. Giambattista replied that she would refer to the governing documents but that it seems like it would be someone from the assembly.
- xix. B. Fortenberry mentioned that TCAT is hosting a series of forum regarding use of TCAT and there is a forum the evening of Wednesday, November 18.
- xx. E. Miller mentioned the idea that was brought up last term by B. Fortenberry and K. Barth regarding Employee Assembly office hours and meeting in dining hours around campus with open hours for staff to chat with members of the Assembly. Given the pandemic, that isn't possible; however, she mentioned the possibility of virtual office hours with the suggestion of an hour a week that different Assembly members would be available to meet with staff. This would give the members of the Assembly an opportunity to have another connection with their constituents. She inquired about any feedback or suggestions for this idea and how to go about getting it initiated.
- xxi. B. Fortenberry agreed that this was a great idea to try to create an environment where employees could go and have a chat with an Assembly member or ask questions. He mentioned that it would allow for Assembly members to be more accessible and if even one person showed it, there would be great value.
- xxii. H. Depew asked Assembly member to forward any feedback or suggestions for this idea to E. Miller.

VII. Adjournment

- a. Chair Depew adjourned the meeting at 1:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Treat

Senior Coordinator, Office of the Assemblies