



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly

Minutes of the April 21, 2021 Meeting 12:15-1:30 PM
Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair H. Depew called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.

II. Roll Call

Members Present [17]: M. Cherry, J. Creque, H. Depew, B. Fortenberry, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, R. Lochner, J. Michael, A. Miller, E. Miller, M. Newhart, M. Podolec, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, L. Taylor, J. Withers, L. Zacharias
Members Absent [11]: S. Barry, J. Cannella, J. Duong, B. Fisher, E. Ivory, D. Howell, K. Loparco, K. Mahoney, V. McAuley, N. Siadat, J. Townley

III. Business of the Day

- a. Community Relations Presentation- K. Supron
 - i. K. Brill introduced herself as a member of the University Event Planning Team and also introduced Penny, another administrative assistant on the University Event Planning Team. S. Riley introduced herself as the deputy director in the Office of Community Relations. G. Stewart introduced himself as part of the Office of Community Relations.
 - ii. K. Supron stated that each year, a Local Economic Snapshot is created detailing the impact that Cornell has on the local economy.
 - iii. S. Barry highlighted the presentations that Community Relations has had with outside groups, especially this year with the different circumstances. In particular, local concern over students returning to campus resulted in even more informative meetings with community groups and members.
 - iv. G. Stewart highlighted the Town-Gown Awards (TOGOs), a yearly awards ceremony hosted by Community Relations.
 - v. G. Stewart stated that the staff communities handling of Cornell's re-activation plan during the summer was extremely admirable. With many in the community worried over the idea of students returning onto campus, lots of individual concerns needed to be addressed and were addressed very well.
 1. H. Depew agreed with G. Stewart, acknowledging lots of the fears that the community had. H. Depew questioned what other concerns there might be and questioned how the EA could help Community Relations address these concerns.
 2. G. Stewart stated that addressing economic revitalization after the pandemic, especially for the TCAT, would be especially important.
 3. K. Supron stated that another area of concern and interest in Ithaca is energy and sustainability. Another impact to look at is visitor spending and the impacts of tourism brought in by Cornell.

- vi. K. Tannenbaum noted the information on taxes paid by Cornell that was included in the Local Economic Snapshot and questioned what the rumor that Cornell didn't pay taxes was based on and how it began.
 - 1. K. Supron noted that while Cornell doesn't pay taxes on a bulk of its holdings, it does pay state and county taxes for its taxable properties.
 - 2. G. Stewart emphasized K. Supron's information, noting that properties such as the Cornell Store and the Statler are all taxed.
- vii. B. Goodell thanked Community Relations for creating the yearly Local Economic Snapshot, noting that he too has provided its information to those who questioned how beneficial Cornell is to the community. B. Goodell also thanked G. Stewart for all his work to garner greater transparency.
- viii. E. Miller stated that Human Resources created a page for Cornell employees with a list of businesses that offer perks and discounts but that there aren't many local businesses there. E. Miller wondered if, in the interest of economic revitalization, including more local businesses would be possible.
 - 1. G. Stewart agreed with E. Miller's idea and stated that he would mention it to M. Opperman
- ix. H. Depew thanked the presenters for coming and sharing information.

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee – M. LoParco
 - i. M. LoParco stated that in a meeting, the return to work and parking situation, the employee assembly visibility and the upcoming election, data results from the public safety survey created in regard to campus police and their role in safety,
 - ii. H. Depew noted that an email was sent out mandating all students return in the Fall and that this caused confusion among staff questioning their own requirements for reactivation. H. Depew stated that M. Opperman and other senior leadership were all working on a checklist to determine what jobs would be mandated to return and in what capacity. Once senior leadership makes a more concrete decision, guidance can then be shared.
 - iii. M. Podolec questioned if the Reactivation Committee has a care-giver consultant in it given that, with youth not eligible for the vaccine yet, many care-giving programs aren't yet back to schedule.
 - 1. H. Depew stated that she isn't sure who's involved with the reactivation decisions currently, as discussion is currently at the senior leadership level. However, M. Opperman will notify the EA before any decisions are made public so that feedback may be given.
 - 2. A. Miller noted that M. Podolec's area of concern would fall under the Wellness Groups.
- b. Communications and Awards Committee – E. Miller
 - i. E. Miller stated that a subcommittee solely for awards and recognition has been established. E. Miller stated that nominations for the George Peter award have been closed with a total of 23 nominees. E. Miller stated that in the next EA Meeting, a resolution would be introduced to introduce the updated criteria for the newly revamped Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion.
- c. Education Committee – J. Withers

- i. J. Withers stated that the Education Committee hasn't met separately since the past meeting and that there are no new updates.
- d. Welfare Committee – K. Mahoney
 - i. J. Withers stated that the Welfare Committee met with some partners, got updates, and discussed challenges of returning to work, particularly the need for child-care. Discussion over the strategic planned time off initiative also occurred due to increased employee burnout and the need to take vacations.
- e. Benefits and Policy Committee – B. Goodell
 - i. B. Goodell stated that work has been done to set up a meeting with the interim university policy director so that she could possibly present on university policy. Discussion over reactivation planning, the EA retreat, and the priorities poll also occurred. B. Goodell stated that conversation on a stipend for employees returning to work normally also occurred, as well as conversation on the cutoff for use of vacation days.
 - ii. H. Depew stated that the questions on the vacation day cutoff practice are because last year, due to the pandemic there was no cutoff date for vacations, so the question of if this practice should be applied to this year is also being considered. According to M. Opperman, the cutoff will be returning and are encouraging supervisors to promote utilization of vacation days.
- f. Elections Committee – N. Siadat
 - i. E. Miller stated that the Elections Committee has not met since the previous meeting and questioned if G. Giambattista could provide information on election results.
 - 1. G. Giambattista stated that the Office of the Assemblies does not have information on election results yet.

V. New Business

- a. J. Withers thanked N. Siadat for performing a piece at the COVID-19 memorial and thanked H. Depew for teaching about another culture.
- b. L. Zacharias inquired on behalf of a constituent on how to get policy passed through the employee assembly, as her constituent has an idea they wish to gather support for.
 - 1. H. Depew stated that the best approach would be to go to a committee.
 - 2. L. Zacharias questioned if she should get more information from her constituent and then bring their idea to the committee, to which H. Depew agreed.
- c. K. Tannenbaum questioned what the intention of the EA would be as far as possibly meeting over the summer, which happened the previous year.
 - 1. G. Giambattista stated that typically, EA meetings follow the academic calendar. However, there are no stipulations explicitly stating that the EA can't or shouldn't meet over the summer, so it would be up to the choice of the EA.
 - 2. E. Miller questioned if the new assembly would be seated June 1st, to which Gina confirmed.
- d. M. Cherry questioned if anyone in the EA had a method of contacting the COVID-19 testing infrastructure.
 - 1. B. Goodell noted that on the Daily Check there is a phone number to call.

2. A. Miller stated that she was on the COVID-19 testing team for some time and that she could give M. Cherry a direct contact
- e. G. Giambattista stated that any events or meetings that occur after the schedule for this year will be under the jurisdiction of the newly seated assembly.
- f. A motion to end the meeting early was **approved** unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 1:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Office of the Assemblies