



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly
Minutes of the April 4, 2018 Meeting
12:15-1:30 PM
401 Physical Sciences Bldg.

I. Call to Order

- a. C. Wiggers called the meeting to order at 12:20pm.
- b. *Members Present:* I. Allen, H. Depew, T. Grove, A. Haenlin-Mott, A. Howell, K. Mahoney, M. Mosereiff, B. Nicholson, C. Sanzone, K. Sheils, P. Thompson, S. Vaccaro, C. Wiggers, S. Willcox
- c. *Members Absent:* B. Ayanfodun, M. Carcella, C. Dawson, K. Fitch, D. Harris, A. Hourigan, P. Andersen, H. Sheldon, L. Johnson-Kelly, J. Kruser, B. Roebal

II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

- a. P. Thompson noted that the Elections Committee would like to present and approve the candidates and positions for this year's EA spring election.

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes from the meeting of March 28, 2018 – **approved** with no dissent

IV. Business of the Day

- a. C. Wiggers made announcements.
 - i. C. Wiggers gave recognition to T. Grove and the Staff Recognition, Awards & Events Committee. He presented the George Peter Award for Dedicated Staff to Gary Willis, who has been at Cornell for over 25 years working with the dairy cows and labs. The event was very well attended. The notice for the last George Peter Award for this academic year will go out next week on April 10 at 10:00am.
 - ii. C. Wiggers thanked P. Thompson and the Elections Committee for their work in connection with the Office of Assemblies. 14 people came out to take positions.
 - iii. Yesterday afternoon, C. Wiggers met with C. Coates. They discussed the elections updates and the President's visit with the EA. He was told M. Opperman said they enjoyed the questions and felt the discussion was fruitful.
 - iv. C. Wiggers gave an update on the EA chair's report to the Board of Trustees, which has a deadline of May 1. His goal is to get it through the Executive Committee and the whole assembly. He plans for it to be succinct, and to have it sent out by the middle of next week. There will be a 4-5 slide PowerPoint presented at the meeting, and he will give the presentation to the EA on May 16.
 - v. C. Wiggers gave a thank you to K. Fitch, who has volunteered to sit on the Judicial Administrator Committee.
 - vi. C. Wiggers announced there are changes to Policy 6.4 regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment. Specifically, there will be clarification upon definitions, which will impact staff. They can expect to see wording in the near future.
 - vii. C. Wiggers announced there will be a meeting on May 16 with the co-chairs of the Provost's Review of the Social Sciences that had the discussion of potential courses of action for all the social sciences on campus. He clarified that the meeting will not focus on them presenting new information, but for an opportunity for the EA to share thoughts, concerns, and ideas to Vice Provost Judith Appleton and Senior Associate Ted O'Donoghue. The work going forward will include staff participation.

- viii.C. Wiggers thanked the EA for their continued work, pointing out achievements to be proud of, such as N. Dootlittle's Pawprint stories.
- b. Staff Personal Finances/Debt (Director of HR Analytics & Work/Life Linda Croll Howell & Associate Director of Work/Life Michelle Artibee from HR)
- i. L. Howell and M. Artibee gave a brief overview of services provided and concerns regarding work/life support, and staff financial stress.
 - ii. M. Artibee focused on eight services that come out of the Work/Life team. They serve over 25,000 people, providing tools and resources to employees.
 1. Workplace Flexibility Services
 - a. The team has been putting together training, tools, consultations, and departmental planning. They have been training new supervisors on workplace flexibility. The attitude supervisors bring to the table is growing and they are looking for more help in applying this to their workplace.
 2. Parenting & Childcare Services
 - a. Work/Life Consultant Diane Bradic meets with employees and retirees on eldercare, childcare, self-care, or caregiving issues and gets them connected to resources. Her services are great for those not ready for consulting.
 - b. There is an emergency back-up care benefit that many are not aware of. All employees qualify for ten days of emergency back-up care at a heavily university-subsidized rate of \$40 a day. There is no guarantee space will be available when needed, but they do provide over 400 days of emergency backup care to employees with this need. Employees can book for this up to 30 days in advance.
 3. Breastfeeding Support
 - a. The team is preparing for Baby Series, a parenting workshop that features an intensive curriculum about breast feeding and other topics.
 - b. The team discussed the issues about lactation support that were addressed in previous EA meetings. Someone was intruded upon in Day Hall and they have worked to install a locking mechanism. They have insurance coverage for the pump now and M. Artibee stated that she has yet to work with an hourly employee who has not been able to integrate pumping into her work schedule.
 4. Adult & Elder Care Services
 - a. There is a support group, consultations, workshops, and a newsletter.
 5. Domestic Violence Services
 - a. This past year, HR has undertaken a big initiative to increase awareness of domestic violence in the workplace and resources available. They are training currently training employees. One out of four women and one out of seven men experience domestic violence in their lifetime.
 6. Retiree Relations
 - a. This group joined the team about two years ago and have been working on events, activities, newsletter, perks. There is an HR Retiree Engagement Oversight Committee (HR REAC).
 7. Emergency CARE Fund
 - a. M. Artibee was disturbed by the lack of knowledge about this fund. She noted that domestic violence is a qualifying situation to use the fund.
 - b. M. Artibee clarified that employees make contributions to this fund, which can be accessed by employees themselves when experiencing an unforeseen or unexpected financial crisis. Many do not know that managers can also apply it on behalf of employees on their team. It is not a loan, so it does not have to be repaid. Years ago, it moved over to HR for financial reasons, but the spirit of it is employees helping employees. However, the fund does not cover ongoing financial crises.
 8. Cornell provides free round-trip NYC bus tickets for medical care and other emergencies.

- iii. L. Howell went over the 2016 Staff Survey Results, noting that personal finances and debt was reported as a source of stress for 63% of respondents. They are financially limited to what they can pay out to staff, but is open to ideas from the EA. The team spent the fall consolidating links on different resources, such as online classes around budgeting on one website for easier access. They are now discussing further actions that can be taken.
 - iv. L. Howell opened the presentation to a discussion, asking for feedback on the website, suggestions for getting the word out, proposals on other types of assistance, and opinions on the biggest financial pain points for staff.
 - 1. C. Wiggers said there is a variety of ways for communication, ranging from newsletters to EA members conveying the resources to their constituents.
 - 2. L. Howell highlighted the struggle of having a lot of information on their website that many do not know about, such as the Adoption Assistance. The information is available and she wondered if they should do more presentations. She also questioned if employees will go to the site when experiencing financial struggles.
 - 3. N. Doolittle said articles in Pawprint with headlines related to anything about finance tend to get a lot of hits. She suggested figuring out news angles or profiles of people who have been helped by these programs.
 - 4. G. Giambattista mentioned the continued conversation on parking and the minimal amount of affordable housing close to campus. It is a sensitive dynamic as people have to pay before arriving at work, such as taking a bus or paying to park. A Lot is currently the only free lot and it is over-committed. There is a great effort with to come up with some solutions, but the cost of living has increased more than the increase in staff salary. Resources to balance the budget are secondary to living at this time in this place.
 - 5. A. Haenlin-Mott suggested figuring out new ways to reach those in crisis. Trying to find things on a website can be a little complicated. She suggested having an article, as well as a static presence. This could be gauging different means to meet people where they are at.
 - 6. L. Howell said they discussed posting tips for saving money, but questioned if it is something people will be interested in. They also discussed having a cost-saving blog.
 - 7. M. Artibee brought up that those seriously in debt would not be going to a webinar on savings if they cannot afford the appliances breaking in their house. This would be a different dialogue, and is an area they want ideas on.
 - 8. A. Haenlin-Mott has spoken to people expressing confusion about how to navigate the tax structure.
 - a. EA member suggested putting out a video.
 - v. C. Wiggers thanked both L. Howell and M. Artibee.
 - c. Advocacy Center Resources (Naomi Barry, Facilitator of Community Programs and Community Educator from the Tompkins County Advocacy Center)
 - i. N. Barry started her career with the Advocacy Center as a Domestic Violence Shelter Manager. Violence has a ripple effect and the center provides support for all of these ripples. Its mission is to increase safety and reduce trauma. There is no way to guarantee safety for a variety of reasons, so she wanted to have a discussion on barriers to leaving.
 - 1. EA members brought up financial dependency, children, the mode of transportation to physically leave, and a lack of resources, such as having a location to go to.
 - 2. N. Barry said that safety in some cases may not be leaving. The most dangerous times for a person is when getting ready to leave or when having left the relationship. Statistically, that is when homicides are the highest for intimate partner violence. The center's staff meet people where they are at. They do not try to commit someone to leave. Oftentimes, people connect with them through their 24/7 hotline at (607)277-5000, which allows an option of anonymity. All services are free and applicable to all people. They also do not ask about immigration status, but if disclosed, they will not contact law enforcement.

- ii. N. Barry said all advocates have had specialized training in the medical, legal, and emotional needs and rights of survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual child abuse, and adult sexual assault. They have trained advocates who meet with people one-on-one. The advocate's role is to listen to needs and connect people to resources and others.
 - 1. All advocates are trained New York State Certified Rape Crisis Counselors. They are bound to confidentiality, unless a person is a danger to themselves and/or others, or in cases of suspected child abuse.
 - 2. Campus Educator Lara Hamburger works closely with the Cornell Campus Title 9 Office. It is up to students and staff if they want the advocacy center involved and vice versa. They also have a sexual assault advocate who goes to campuses.
- iii. The majority of N. Barry's caseload are students.
 - 1. EA member said they looked at the center in Dec 2016 and just in that time, there were 20 active cases involving Cornell employees.
 - 2. N. Barry said going to campus to talk to staff and faculty and classrooms is when their hotline members go up. There are not necessarily more cases, but more awareness that the center is a resource.
- iv. N. Barry displayed a list of services that that advocacy center provides. She highlighted legal services. There are also a lot of financial losses that come with long-lasting trauma and they also provide help to compensate.
- v. N. Barry gave an overview of the education department that provides professional and customized trainings to health care providers, counselors and therapists, youth workers, school staff, college staff, police and social service providers among others to increase understanding of the realities of domestic and sexual violence. There are classes people can sign up to go to. They also do consultations with professionals.
- vi. N. Barry gave an overview of what they are currently working on.
 - 1. Ithaca College's One Love event done with student athletes to spread awareness about relationship violence.
 - 2. Advocacy's Center Barstander Program about going to bars and talking to bartenders, managers, and other staffers on what sexual violence is and techniques they can employ.
 - 3. Bringing the Bystander, a student-focused program on how students can be active bystanders. L. Hamburger is going into classrooms and talking to EARS, RAs, and the Alternative Spring Break Programs.

V. Elections Committee Update

- a. C. Wiggers moved the Elections Committee Update prior to EA R11.
- b. P. Thompson announced that there are 14 candidates and 17 seats open for the spring elections. Realistically, they can seat the 14 candidates without running a technical election. There are 10 seats they can seat immediately. These candidates have their first choice, as well as all materials submitted by the deadline:
 - i. CALS
 - ii. Graduate, Law & Johnson Schools
 - iii. Human Ecology
 - iv. College of Veterinary Medicine
 - v. Research, Tech Transfer, and Information Technology
 - vi. University Relations
 - vii. Exempt
 - viii. Less than 5 Years of Service
 - ix. LGBTQ
 - x. Veterans
- c. Two of the remaining four candidates can go to their first choice of second interest to meet new affinity seats: Non-Exempt and Women's. For the other two seats, she would like to propose they

switch over remaining affinity seats to the simple “at-large voting member” so they do not have to turn anyone away. They are not getting enough candidates interested and running, and even when they do, not everyone is filling in packets completely and getting the materials turned in on time. This proposal has been discussed and is in agreement with the Elections Committee.

- d. P. Thompson made a motion to have these two positions go to “at-large representatives” – motion was seconded by an EA member.
 - i. P. Thompson clarified that when the EA increased their size to 28, they created affinity groups. Candidates did not have to prove they were part of the group, but rather that they had a strong connection. Without changing the positions to “at-large,” some of those that would be turned away are realistically within the same applicant candidate process than those that had been seated, but were uncontested.
 - ii. K. Mahoney supported this move for this year, but said it demonstrates a challenge they have to face. If they are not actively recruiting, they are not doing the job.
 - iii. P. Thompson added that seats for ILR and Statler have been empty for a while.
 - iv. P. Thompson clarified that switching these over to “at-large” will be temporary for this next two year term. There are two extra candidates who submitted their packets with everything completed, but their college allocation or strength allocation is not necessarily open.
- e. Motion to change the seats to “at-large” **passes** with a vote of 14-0-0.

VI. Business of the Day (Continued)

- a. EA R11 – Promoting Staff Participation in Cornell Campus Climate Change Literacy Goals
 - i. C. Wiggers said A. Howell presented this at the last meeting.
 - ii. Motion to bring this resolution to a vote – seconded by an EA member.
 - iii. C. Wiggers clarified that there have been no modifications to the resolution.
 - iv. Motion to vote on EA R11 – resolution **passes** with a vote of 14-0-0.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. C. Wiggers said they have been remiss in addressing some of the committee reports. He proposes to move committee reports to the first part of the next EA meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. T. Grove gave a thank you to C. Wiggers for guiding them through the remainder of the year and shared appreciation on how he is constantly trying to bring them together.
- b. C. Wiggers adjourned the meeting at 1:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Tran
Clerk of the Assembly