

## EA Resolution 1: Protect Staff Jobs and Compensation

**Abstract:** This resolution is in support of continued employment for Cornell staff with no salary cuts or retirement cuts as proposed, and is a formal request to the administration to incorporate reasonable alternatives to such actions.

**Sponsored by:** Brian Goodell on behalf of the Benefits Policy Committee, Jamie Duong, Robert Mieg

**Reviewed by:** Employee Assembly, 06/24/2020

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**Whereas,** during the COVID-19 pandemic, university staff have demonstrated resilience, ingenuity, and dedication;

**Whereas,** Cornell administration's recently announced financial plans addressing COVID-19-related budget shortfalls include the possibilities of layoffs or furloughs of university staff, staff salary reductions, and staff retirement benefit cuts;

**Whereas,** loss of employment, loss in net salary, and loss of retirement benefits at Cornell would impose severe financial hardships on staff and their dependents;

**Whereas,** the elimination of the 2020 Salary Improvement Program (SIP) due to COVID-19, which is an existing financial burden on employees affecting salaries and retirement contributions in perpetuity, results in an estimated \$25 million per year saved by the University based on Mary Opperman and Paul Streeter's presentation to the Employee Assembly on 6/9/2020;

**Whereas,** retirement contribution cuts will cause compounded reductions to staff retirement accounts for years to come;

**Whereas,** comparable employment elsewhere will not be available for staff, particularly in the conditions of high unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic;

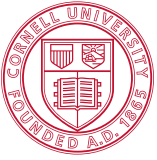
**Whereas,** layoffs or furloughs of staff will have a severely negative impact on the broader community, given Cornell's role as the primary employer in Tompkins County;

**Whereas,** significant staff layoffs during the financial downturn of 2008-09 damaged morale throughout the university, negatively affecting the character of the institution;

**Whereas,** preservation of employment, salary, and benefits of Cornell staff is essential to maintain the cooperative spirit that has sustained us thus far and is essential to our recovery;

**Whereas,** Cornell has many alternatives available to address the current financial crisis such as no/low interest loans, assets being liquidated, and the endowment;

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## Cornell University Employee Assembly

**Be it therefore resolved,** that the Employee Assembly recognizes the vital role and contributions of university staff;

**Be it therefore resolved,** that the Employee Assembly urges the Cornell administration to commit to maintaining the employment, salary, and benefits of all current staff during the COVID-19 crisis;

**Be it therefore resolved,** that the Employee Assembly calls on the Cornell administration to respond to the current crisis with alternatives to layoffs or furloughs, salary reductions, and retirement benefit cuts including reassigning staff to positions that will meet the university's critical needs and/or pursuing alternatives such as those above;

**Be it therefore resolved,** that the Employee Assembly encourages the Cornell administration to charge deans, faculty and staff to work collaboratively to maintain employment of all current staff, including devising adaptable, appropriate, and sustainable staff reassignments to carry the university through this crisis and continue its flourishing when it is over;

**Be it therefore resolved,** that Cornell maintain access to resources such as CU Learn, eCornell, and LinkedIn Learning for staff already separated due to budget constraints;

**Be it finally resolved,** that this resolution be submitted to the President of the University.

**Adopted by Vote of the Assembly (21-3-1), {6/24/20},**  
{If adopted, the vote counts and Adopted Date will be filled in by the EA Chair prior to submitting to the President's Office}

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Brian Goodell  
Chair, Employee Assembly Benefits & Policy Committee  
Jamie Duong  
School of Hotel Administration Representative  
Robert Mieg  
Division of Alumni Affairs and Development Representative

**Addendum**