The Assemblies at Cornell, together with the Faculty Senate, are the expression of the university’s commitment to shared governance and constituent representation.

What does this even mean?!
The assemblies are a part of shared governance at Cornell.

1. Participation in University decision-making by students, faculty and staff in areas of direct and joint concern to them;

2. A forum for discussion of campus issues;

3. Supervision of the campus judicial system.
1955

- The Board of Trustees transferred the responsibility for non-academic matters to the President of the University.

- Prior to this time, it had been the responsibility of the faculty to make decisions regarding academic as well as non-academic policies and procedures.
History of the Assemblies

- Roots in campus events of 1969
- Major overhauls in 1977 and 1981
- EA, SA created in 1981
- GPSA created in 1993
- More prominence for constituent assemblies
- More focused role for the UA
THE CONSTITUENT-ELECTED TRUSTEES

Full voting members of the 64-member Board of Trustees

- Faculty and Staff are elected for four-year terms
- Students (alternating between undergraduate and a graduate or professional student) are elected to serve two-year terms
- Elections for a new Student-Elected Trustee will take place this fall.
THE CORNELL COMMUNITY

Employee Assembly
30 Staff Members

Grad & Professional Student Assembly
18 Graduate & Prof Student Members

Student Assembly
28 Undergraduate Student Members

Faculty Senate
108 Faculty Senators

University Assembly
5 staff, 5 grad/professional students, 5 undergraduates, 5 faculty

- 8,392 Constituents
- 7,932 Constituents
- 16,067 Constituents
- 1,679 Constituents
- 33,071 Constituents
32,766 Constituents

919 Roles in the Assemblies

775 Committee members

54 Committees

4 Assemblies
What We Do for the GPSA

The Office of the Assemblies:

- Provides staff for regular assembly meetings with a student clerk (Corel!) who:
  - Prepares documents and meeting packets for the assembly meetings
  - prepares minutes of meetings,
  - prepares audio recordings of meetings, and,
  - posts meeting materials on the assembly’s website;
- assists the assembly in reservation of spaces and other resources for regular meetings;
- maintains websites for the assembly and its standing committees, including documents produced by the assembly and its committees, rosters of membership, information about the composition of the committees and how to get involved, and applications for membership
Legislative Authority

- Originates by *delegation from the President and Board of Trustees.*
- Authority is *delegated, not transferred*
- Assemblies have *advisory authority*, subject to approval by President.
- Assemblies make *recommendations* which are reviewed by the President in consultation with senior staff.
Fundamental Authorities

- All Assemblies have a mandate to represent constituent interests and bring issues of concern to university leadership.
- Legislative authority to recommend changes to university policies that affect constituents, subject to approval by the President.
Legislative Authority of the Assemblies

Specifically:

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA):
- Graduate School
- Non-academic Policies

Student Assembly (SA):
- Campus Life
- Student & Academic Services

University Assembly (UA):
- Campus Code of Conduct
- University Hearing & Review Boards
- Transportation
- Planning

Employee Assembly (EA):
- Human Resources
- Personnel Policy
Rules & Governing Documents

- Assembly **Charter**: permanent, basic rules
- Assembly **Bylaws**: permanent, detailed rules
- **Standing rules**: year-to-year procedures
- **Program rules** (GPSA Finance Commission)
Going Through the Motions

or

Who is Robert, Anyway?!
Robert’s Rules of Order


We do not want to waste time with excessive formality, but some of our issues may be contentious and we need to ensure everyone gets their fair opportunity to speak.
Defining a Motion
- A formal proposal for consideration and action
- Only one subject can be considered at a time
- No main motion can be made while another motion is before the assembly.

To make a motion, say, “I move that...”

Seconding motions
Debating Motions
Voting
When Debating Your Motions

- Listen to the other side
- Focus on the issues, not personalities
- Avoid questioning motives
- Be polite!
Voting

- Roll Call Vote (most common)
  - Three responses in which a member may vote:
    - “For” (in favor of the motion or legislation)
    - “Against” (opposed to the motion or legislation)
    - “Abstain” (neither for nor against)

- Abstention
  - Members may abstain only if there is a distinct conflict of interest
Voting

- **Unanimous Consent**

  - For certain motions, the chair may simply ask the assembly if there is any objection

  - If no member objects, the chair declares the action has been agreed to

  - If even one member objects, the chair must then state the question and follow the complete voting guidelines.
What’s on Your Mind?
(things to do before writing a resolution!)

1. **Develop** the initiative/topic that you want to address
2. **Search** for a legislative history surrounding the issue
3. **Solicit** feedback from assembly members and your constituents
   (Remember, you represent other people!)

4. **Engage** Stakeholders for information
   - Administrators
   - Staff colleagues
   - Assembly Committees
   - Community
Quick Checklist

✓ Checked for legislative history
✓ Checked with peer institutions
✓ Presented at all relevant committees
✓ Solicited feedback from relevant university offices
✓ Have support from as many members as possible
✓ Issue is still unresolved

By this point, you should have a pretty good idea of how the debate and vote will go before your resolution comes to the floor.
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?