



Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the April 12, 2021 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

- I. Call to Order
 - a. D. Dunham called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.
- II. Announcements
 - a. The assembly held a moment of silence for the passing of Shawn West.
 - b. D. Dunham noted that the internal elections for the officer of the Executive Committee would be held at the last meeting along with the Representative to the General Committee of the Graduate School, the GPSA UA representative, and the new Chairs for all of the Standing Committees except for Appropriations and Finance.
- III. Roll Call
 - i. *Present* [26]: C. Anklin, M. Balch, H. Bidigare-Curtis, M. Cantar, M. Chatterjee, H. Cole, N. Danev, C. Day, C. Duell, N. Gonzalez, B. Hayes, M. Keefe, D. Kent, K. Krishnan, K. Laurent, J. Levin, C. Liu, S. López, T. Luttermoser, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, A. Pandey, A. Presher, C. Steingard, P. Vinhage, M. Welch
 - ii. *Absent* [5]: R. Barankevich, A. Cirillo, J. Dotzel, M. Drescher, R. Maloney
- IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. Monday, March 29th, 2021
 - i. The meeting minutes were **approved** unanimously.
- V. Presentations
 - a. Zebadiah Hall, Director of Student Disability Services (Cornell Health)
 - i. Z. Hall noted that Student Disability Services handled accommodations for all students regardless of association, but added that the office did not service enough Graduate Students. The disparity could either be because of the culture in the professional settings or graduate students not being aware that the office could handle accommodations for them as well.
 - ii. M. Chatterjee asked what Z. Hall meant by accommodations and what was considered under the umbrella.
 1. Z. Hall noted that accommodations was viewed from the standpoint of major life functions being compromised (hearing, thinking, learning, sight, etc.) and that the accommodations available would depend on the student, the health condition, and the program. Some of the types of accommodations the offered included getting research materials in alternative formats and working with students to figure out logistics for participating in exams. Z. Hall also added



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- that the accommodations could also be for short-term conditions. Z. Hall also noted that there were also instances where specific accommodations did not manifest, and the office would set means of communication between a student and the Chair or advisors of their Committee to help figure out accommodations and better ways for the student to engage with the content.
- iii. K. Krishnan asked what issues the Student Disability Services office was anticipating as students moved back to campus for research and how SDS would handle those issues.
 1. Z. Hall stated that the decisions of the SDS office would be dependent on what decisions the University would make for the following semester and it would also depend on the student's program along with the professor's.
 - iv. T. Luttermoser asked if Graduate students in their capacity as Teaching Assistant's or Instructors of Record had the ability to go to SDS to figure out ways to better develop and convey material to students who may need those accommodations.
 1. Z. Hall stated that graduate students did have the capability to ask for SDS accommodations for their students. However, he noted two caveats with the first being that with everything occurring on campus, it might take the SDS office to get back to instructors. Additionally, the accommodations could be department specific with some departments having SDS conduct trainings for their instructors to ensure that students in the disabled community were engaged. Another caveat Z. Hall mentioned was that there may be subsets of students that did not have access to medical documentation, and in those cases instructors would need to use real-time information based on the student and their work in the class to determine accommodations that could be available for that student.
 - v. B. Harrison asked if there were any ways the SDS office was working with the Covid-19 Compliance team or the OJA to help students that might have not known accommodations were an option to help them fulfill the Covid-19 related requirements.
 1. Z. Hall stated that if the OJA referred students to the SDS office or students reached out to the office with legitimate health reasons prohibiting them from meeting the requirements of surveillance testing or any other Covid-19 requirement, the SDS office would work with the student to get them access to those sites at a rate that would be feasible for them.



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2. B. Harrison asked if there were ways that either the SDS office or communication from the University could make it clear that accommodations for not being able to meet the Covid-19 requirements due to a physical barrier or invisible disability were valid.
 3. Z. Hall noted that if there were pockets or platforms that would be avenues for communicating the information, he would be more than willing to do so.
 4. B. Harrison suggested that the Cornell Compact Compliance Team could have the availability of accommodations mentioned as either part of their general communication or part of their communication to students who have failed to comply with requirements a certain number of times.
- vi. M. Chatterjee noted that he had seen situations where oftentimes accommodations were made, but they were at the expense of graduate students and asked if SDS could help with issues that required students to pay out of their own pocket for better working conditions.
1. Z. Hall stated that the ability for SDS to help with issues of funding depended on whether or not the accommodation was necessary for the student to access lab, do research/their work.
 2. K. Krishnan asked if the Access Fund could pay for some of the accommodations.
 - a. Z. Hall stated that to his knowledge, there are times when the Access Fund could pay for the accommodations but could not guarantee that the accommodation would be approved from the SDS office.
- b. Center for Teaching Innovation (Derina Samuel, Sara Reynolds Davis, Jeff Pea, & Kavya Krishnan)
- i. D. Samuel noted that CTI had programming available to Graduate and Postdoc students to support them in their teaching at Cornell. D. Samuel highlighted several resources offered by CTI including the TA online orientation, teaching guides, and several teaching related workshops.
 - ii. D. Dunham asked if CTI was noticing a wide representation of fields using the resources presented, especially the workshops.
 1. D. Samuel noted that the data showed that there was a fairly good representation of fields using the workshops/resources and added that CTI worked to advertise as much as possible through avenues such as the Graduate School announcements. Additionally, the online format of the workshops this past year had allowed Graduate and Postdoc students from Weill Cornell and Cornell Tech to



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participate. S. Davis added that a lot of the awareness of the resources seemed to be from word-of-mouth so certain fields and departments were sometimes more represented than others throughout the semester.

- iii. A. Pandey asked if students planning on leaving in a shorter span of time (less than 2 years), had resources offered by CTI that could allow them to build their teaching resume.
 1. D. Samuel stated that the CTI Teaching Fellowship was a one-year program with fellows being able to apply for a second year if they chose to. D. Samuel added that CTI worked closely with the Graduate School and collaborated with the Future Faculty Program. She noted that the focus of CTI was mainly on supporting on-campus teaching rather than future careers but added that the CTI did also offer the Teaching Portfolio Program.
- iv. D. Dunham asked if CTI had any insights in-terms of how students were learning about the program.
 1. D. Samuel stated that CTI normally creates a flyer at the beginning of the semester and would send it to all the departments and fields in hopes of getting the word across. D. Samuel also asked if the flyer could be something that the GPSA would be willing to distribute.
 2. D. Dunham noted that in his experience, the GPSA would be extremely useful in informing a broader range of fields and students about the resources offered by CTI through GPSA communication channels.
- c. Drea Darby, Diversity Preview Weekend (Refer to PowerPoint found on the Office of the Assemblies website)
 - i. A. Poon asked how DPW could engage with the Cornell Tech campus and how students from the campus could be involved in the initiative in an effort to improve the environment for students of color or from marginalized backgrounds.
 1. D. Darby noted that DPW was currently working on setting up a toolkit of resources for other programs so that they would not need to start from the ground-up.

VI. Elections

- a. Masters-At-Large Voting Member
 - i. I. Harnick self-nominated for the role.
 - ii. N. Danev called a point of order on the end of the term for the Masters-At-Large Voting member position.
 - iii. I. Harnick was **elected** unanimously.

VII. New Business



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- a. Resolution 16: Conducting Open Elections for Voting Members for 2021-22 Term
(Sponsored by K. Krishnan, VP of Communications)
 - i. K. Krishnan introduced the resolution, noting that normally, elections for the 14 voting members from each division would happen at the penultimate meeting, but with everything moved online, the resolution would push for an online vote. K. Krishnan stated that if the resolution were to pass, an email would be sent to all Graduate and Professional students describing open positions and calling for nominations. The votes for division voting members would then be held for the following 48 hour time period with terms for elected voting members beginning by the final GPSA meeting.
 - ii. The resolution was seconded by T. Luttermoser.
 - iii. N. Danev asked if the resolution applied to Masters voting positions.
 - iv. There was discussion about the term for the Masters-At-Large voting member position.
 - v. D. Dunham called previous question on the resolution.
 - vi. The resolution was adopted 18-0-8.
- b. Resolution 17: Creating Campus-Aware Criteria for Byline Funded Organizations
(Sponsored by A. Poon, Cornell Tech PACT)
 - i. A. Poon introduced the resolution noting that it would amend Appendix B which defined eligibility rules for Byline Funded organizations to establish criteria that identified and distinguished which campus a Byline organization served.
 - ii. The resolution was seconded by A. Pandey.
 - iii. D. Dunham relinquished the Chair position to N. Danev for the period of discussion in the resolution.
 - iv. T. Luttermoser asked if the “Be it further resolved” clause regarding the need for signatures from 10% of the students at the campus the organization serves meant 10% of the total body across all campuses served or 10% at each of the campuses served.
 1. A. Poon stated that the intent was to have 10% of signatures from each campus the organization claims to serve.
 - v. T. Luttermoser moved to amend the resolution by striking out the phrase “at all campuses” and replacing it with “at each campus” on line 70.
 1. The amendment was seconded by A. Poon.
 2. The resolution was amended by general consent.
 - vi. D. Dunham gave a brief overview of the resolution to the assembly, noting that under the resolution, the student activity fee (minus deductions for Byline Funded organizations already serving Cornell Tech) for Cornell Tech PhD students would be returned to them as was currently for Cornell Tech Masters students.



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- vii. N. Danev asked how the resolution would differentiate Cornell Tech from any other field at Ithaca or Geneva that might want to have their fees returned too after deductions.
 - 1. A. Poon stated that the justification for Cornell Tech was that it was physically distinct whereas fields at Ithaca had the realistic ability to attend activities.
- viii. D. Dunham moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes to 7:15 PM. The motion was seconded and approved by general consent.
- ix. C. Steingard noted that in addition to the physical distance, a lot of groups were moving towards virtual events even for the future and asked what language in the resolution would define involvement in online events.
 - 1. A. Poon stated that whether an event was virtual, or in-person would not warrant a change in the language of the resolution and as long as the virtual events were accessible to the broader population, they were not excluded from the arrangement.
 - 2. D. Dunham noted that the proposed provision would not necessarily be permanent. Additionally, he noted that under the current engagement, the Byline organization would have to declare which campus they were operative at and could potentially say that since the events offered were virtual, they were operative at all campuses. It would then fall on the Appropriations Committee to determine whether or not that was sufficient for them to say that they were a University-wide organization or only operating at one campus.
- x. D. Dunham moved previous question.
 - 1. N. Danev stated that in his interpretation of the resolution constituting a Charter amendment, he would like to postpone it to the next meeting per Article 10, Section 2, lines 454 to 456. However, he added that if the assembly members wanted to vote on the resolution at the current meeting, it would require a simple majority to overcome the Chair's decision to not vote on the resolution at the current meeting.
 - 2. N. Danev stated that since he was temporarily chairing the meeting, he would go with D. Dunham's interpretation of the resolution not amending the Charter but rather an Appendix and would therefore just require a simple majority vote.
 - 3. The motion for previous question by D. Dunham was seconded by M. Welch.
 - 4. The resolution was approved 14-0-12.
 - 5. N. Danev returned the Chair position to D. Dunham.



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VIII. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee – N. Danev
 - i. N. Danev noted that the assembly would have a response from the Provost at the next meeting and that he would reintroduce GPSA R13 pertaining to the ITAP at the next meeting as well. N. Danev also noted that the Executive Committee was strongly urging individuals to run for positions in the upcoming elections.
- b. Communications – K. Krishnan
 - i. K. Krishnan noted that she would be sending more information about elections in emails along with social media and encouraged members to inform their constituents of the upcoming elections.
- c. Operations – M. Chatterjee
 - i. *No Updates*
- d. Finance – C. Steingard
 - i. C. Steingard noted that the assembly was accepting applications for tier increases and that the last committee meeting would be on May 4th.
- e. Appropriations – A. Pandey
 - i. *No Updates*
- f. DISC – A. Presher
 - i. *No Updates*
- g. Faculty Teaching – C. Duell
 - i. C. Duell stated that the call for nominations would be going out soon and at that point, the committee would need help with going through the nomination letters.
- h. Programming – K. Laurent
 - i. *No Updates*
- i. Student Advocacy – D. Kent
 - i. D. Kent stated that the next committee meeting would be on the upcoming Wednesday at 5pm and the agenda along with the Zoom link would be sent out tomorrow.

IX. Open Forum

- a. N. Danev encouraged members to reach out to constituents to inform them of the upcoming elections and encourage them to run for positions. N. Danev emphasized the importance of staffing all of the positions and expressed his hope of finding members interested to take over the positions down the line.
- b. D. Dunham echoed N. Danev's sentiments, adding that it would be helpful to find members to fill the vacancies so that they can have the entire summer to think about what they would like to accomplish and how they could go about implementing the change they would want to see.

X. Adjournment



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- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou
Clerk of the Assembly