

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the November 29, 2021 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

398 Statler Hall

- I. Call to Order
 - a. P. Hanley called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.
- II. Roll Call
 - a. *Present* [23]: S. Bright-Thonney, B. Carver, K. Carter-Cram, C. Duell, R. Epstein, B. Hayes, K. Karnuta, D. Kent, A. Khlyustova, G. Li, C. Liu, M. Matthews, P. Mehta, M. Minelli, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, N. Perez, D. Sharp, G. Smits, C. Steingard, J. Washington, M. Welch, A. Wunsch
 - b. *Absent* [10]: C. Anklin, C. Day, J. Dotzel, N. Gonzalez, A. Inayatali, D. Lanes, J. Levin, S. Lopez, A. Presher, W. Wang
 - c. *Guests/Non-Voting Members* [6]: Dean K. Boor, G. Giambattista, P. Hanley, Vice President for University Relations J. Malina, President M. Pollack, W. Treat
- III. Late Additions to the Agenda
 - a. There were no late additions to the Agenda.
- IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. November 15, 2021
 - i. G. Li moved to approve the meeting minutes; the motion was seconded.
 - ii. The meeting minutes were **approved** with B. Carver abstaining from the vote.
- V. Presentations
 - a. President Martha E. Pollack
 - i. President M. Pollack acknowledged the difficulty faculty, staff, and students had been facing over the last 18 months due to taking online classes, teaching classes online, travel and research interruptions, issues of limited childcare, unpredictable school closings, and illness or loss of family members and friends. President M. Pollack spoke to the assembly about recent achievements and awards earned by Graduate and Professional students, achievements and awards earned by University faculty, the University's goal of being a carbon-neutral campus by 2035, sustainability, institutional and civic engagement programs, University finances, and the University's recently launched five-year campaign.
 - ii. Q&A following President M. Pollack's presentation
 1. C. Duell, B. Harrison, R. Newgarten, L. Davis-Frost, E. Nizewskwa, M. O'Leary, and other members of the assembly posed questions regarding the future of University transportation,



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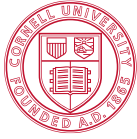
mental health access and resources, improving social connectedness among graduate students, improving mentoring and advising relationships, creating a system to allow advisees a method of providing anonymous feedback to their mentors, cultural dynamics that may lead to student stress, financial aid efforts for indigenous/Native American student, allocation process for gifts received from the five-year campaign, sustainability panel, and the extent to which graduate instructors are able to change institutional culture.

- VI. Breakout Session by Division
- VII. New Business
 - a. Elections
 - i. Vacancies – Arts & Humanities Division Voting Member (2 vacancies); Master of Industrial and Labor Relations Representative (1 vacancy)
 - b. Discussion on hybrid meetings
 - i. B. Carver moved to limit the discussion to 10 minutes; the motion was seconded.
 - ii. P. Hanley stated that the change in policy to limit Zoom participation was made to increase assembly efficiency and engagement.
 - iii. B. Harrison spoke on the problematic nature of limiting Zoom participation and expressed that the limitation was leading to position vacancies.
 - 1. P. Hanley highlighted that the Executive Committee had been giving exemptions to those that requested it and needed to participate through Zoom.
 - iv. D. Kent shared disappointment with the Executive Committee on its handling of the issue and delays in holding a discussion on the topic.
 - 1. D. Sharp stated that D. Kent was mischaracterizing the email sent by the Executive Committee on holding a discussion.
 - v. N. Danev rose to a Point of Order, stating that the microphone was muted so Zoom participants could not hear the discussion.
 - vi. L. Davis-Frost cited the extra emotional burden of having to take steps to receive accommodations for attending the meeting through Zoom.
 - vii. M. O’Leary echoed B. Harrison’s statements. M. O’Leary emphasized the inappropriate and troubling nature of the Executive Committee unilaterally making the decision to restrict Zoom participation and having to hold a debate on the merits of expanding access to disabled or immunocompromised Graduate students.



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- viii. D. Kent extended the debate by 5 minutes; the motion was seconded, and the debate was extended.
- ix. M. Welch noted that many on-campus activities geared towards Graduate students were hybrid and stated that the assembly had the technology to hold hybrid meetings. M. Welch also stated that the assembly should move forward by taking a vote on the issue at the first meeting of the following semester.
- x. L. Davis-Frost and K. Karnuta echoed M. Welch's comments. K. Karnuta also added that setting a future date to vote would give the assembly time to gather feedback, establish a process for hybrid meetings, and how hybrid meetings would be run. For example, the process would need to include an assembly member monitoring the chat.
- xi. C. Duell spoke on issues of accessibility and endorsed the idea of moving forward while being as inclusive as possible.
- c. Resolution 11 – Amend COVID-Related GPSAFC Budget Restrictions
 - i. A member of the assembly moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes; the motion was seconded by G. Li and the meeting was extended.
 - ii. D. Kent presented the resolution.
 - iii. K. Karnuta asked how the guidelines outlined in the resolution were different from the new Winter guidelines released by the University allowing food at events.
 - 1. C. Steingard stated that the GPSA could not fund the winter events because it was outside of the academic year. C. Steingard added that the University had also stated that the restriction on food would be re-implemented once the Spring semester started.
 - iv. L. Davis-Frost proposed tabling the resolution given the current uptick in COVID-19 cases.
 - v. B. Carver proposed amending the resolution to replace “effective as soon as possible” on line 29 with, “while the University is in the ‘Green’ Alert Level”.
 - vi. D. Kent proposed amending the resolution to replace “effective as soon as possible” on line 29 with “as long as it remains safe”.
 - 1. B. Carver seconded the amendment.
 - 2. P. Mehta asked for a definition of “safe”.
 - 3. Discussion ensued on the phrasing, the challenges of determining what was considered “safe”, and the changing rules for food at events.



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- vii. After discussion, the assembly deferred to replacing “effective as soon as possible” on line 29 with, “while the University is in the ‘Green’ Alert Level”.
- viii. C. Duell moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes; the motion was seconded, and the meeting was extended.
- ix. The resolution was amended unanimously.
- x. A member of the assembly moved to Call the Question on the resolution as amended; the motion was seconded.
- xi. The resolution was approved 22-00-01.

VIII. Business of the Day

- a. Resolution 8: Proposed Charter Amendment for the 2022-2024 Byline Funding Cycle
 - i. B. Carver briefly introduced the resolution.
 - ii. J. Washington asked when B. Carver expected to hold a meeting to vote on the recommendations.
 - 1. B. Carver noted that he expected to hold a special meeting by the final day of classes.
 - iii. A member of the assembly motioned to Call the Question; the motion was seconded.
 - iv. The resolution was approved 23-00-00.
- b. Resolution 9: Amending the Charter of the GPSA to Fill Vacant Voting Member Seats
 - i. K. Carter-Cram presented the resolution.
 - ii. C. Duell asked when the Charter amendment would go into effect for filling vacancies if the resolution were to be passed.
 - 1. P. Hanley stated that the amendment would go into effect immediately.
 - 2. C. Duell moved to Table the resolution until the first meeting of the next semester, to allow for more discussion on individuals participating in the meeting remotely; the motion was seconded.
 - 3. B. Harrison noted that Tabling would be a good idea.
 - 4. The resolution was Tabled unanimously.
- c. Resolution 10: Creation of the Vice President of Finance Position & Renaming of Finance Chair Position
 - i. D. Sharp presented the resolution.
 - ii. Discussion ensued on the confusion associated with switching positions, the extent and purpose of the name change, and the need for communicating with the different organizations about the change.

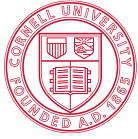


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- iii. C. Duell moved to extend the meeting by 5 minutes; the motion was seconded.
- iv. D. Kent noted the difficulty in informing every organization of the change along with removing “GPSAFC” from any websites.
- v. C. Steingard echoed D. Kent’s statement.
- vi. C. Duell moved to Table the resolution until the following GPSA meeting; the motion was seconded, and the resolution was **Tabled** unanimously.

IX. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee – D. Sharp
 - i. No Updates
 - ii. P. Hanley noted that a special meeting needed to be called to vote on the recommendations for the Activity Fee.
 - iii. B. Carver stated that Zoom voting and participation should be allowed.
 - iv. C. Duell asked if there were any issues with holding email votes.
 - v. N. Danev stated that there was past precedence for email votes.
 - vi. Discussion ensued on holding an email vote for recommendations and the rules noted in the Charter for voting on the recommendations.
 - vii. N. Danev motioned to suspend the rule requiring an in-person meeting for voting on the recommendations; the motion was seconded.
 - 1. G. Giambattista rose to a Point of Order, noting that the Charter superseded the Bylaws and added that the process for passing the recommendations was extremely specific.
 - 2. N. Danev stated that the membership superseded all documents, and that the assembly membership was within its rights to suspend any documents. N. Danev added that the power held by the Charter was derived from the assembly membership.
 - 3. The motion was approved 22-00-01, and the rules were **suspended**.
- b. Operations – K. Carter-Cram
 - i. No Updates
- c. Appropriations – B. Carver
 - i. No Updates
- d. Communications – G. Li
 - i. G. Li stated that the committee posted on LinkedIn and Instagram about the Cornell Daily Sun’s article about the GPSA; G. Li encouraged members to check out the article.
- e. Finance – C. Steingard
 - i. No Updates



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- f. Student Advocacy – D. Kent
 - i. No Updates
 - g. Diversity and International Students – P. Mehta
 - i. P. Mehta noted that he would be reaching out to committee members over email.
 - h. Programming – K. Karnuta
 - i. K. Karnuta encouraged members to join the committee or to inform any friends that might be interested in joining.
 - i. Faculty Awards – C. Duell
 - i. No Updates
 - j. General Committee & Graduate School – J. Allen and Dean Boor
 - i. No Updates
- X. Open Forum
- XI. Adjournment
- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou
Clerk of the Assembly