



Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the February 1, 2021 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

- I. Call to Order
 - a. D. Dunham called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM
- II. Roll Call
 - i. *Present* [16]: R. Barankevich, K. Beras, H. Bidigare-Curtis, M. Cantar, H. Cole, M. Drescher, C. Duell, M. Keefe, K. Laurent, T. Luttermoser, R. Maloney, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, A. Presher, P. Vinhage, M. Welch
 - ii. *Absent* [8]: M. Balch, M. Chatterjee, A. Cirillo, J. Dotzel, S. López, M. Schoeffler, E. Schoenly, M. Sturgeon,
- III. Announcements
 - a. Inactive members
 - i. D. Dunham stated to the assembly that under the Charter and Bylaws, voting members were required to be present at all meeting with only two possible excused absences before being removed from their position. He added that the slate would be cleared for all voting members at the start of the semester but going forward, the stricter rules for attendance would be applied.
 - b. Committee assignments
 - i. D. Dunham noted that voting members, under the governing documents, were required to be a member of at least one committee and preferably serving as a committee chairperson and also encouraged field representatives to get involved with committees they were interested in. He added that a list of members interested in each committee, based on the e-mailed sign-up form, would be sent to each committee chair and the chairs would be responsible for sending out invitations to the committee's next meeting to all interested members. The goal would be for the chairs, to eventually send an updated list of members to M. Chatterjee, VP of Operations, after the first meeting of the semester.
 - c. Access Fund
 - i. D. Dunham stated that the GPSA had discussed with the administration about the \$2,200 allocated to the Access Fund by the GPSA for home technology needs and after consulting with the administration, learned that the fund had distributed approximately \$12,000 to Graduate students for their expenses. These expenses included laptop repairs, hygiene products, medical expenses, and emergency travel expenses with the maximum withdrawable amount being \$500 per individual. However, a resolution that



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would direct more money for the purpose of donating to the Access Fund was not able to be drafted for the meeting, so D. Dunham invited members to present a motion under New Business to contribute money that was allocated for that purpose or to move allocated money from the GPSA reserve funds for Access Fund purposes.

d. External Vacancies

- i. D. Dunham noted that liaisons were needed for the Faculty Assembly and Employee Assembly to serve as points-of-contact for the GPSA. Additionally, members were also needed for the UA's Campus Infrastructure Committee (CIC) and Campus Welfare Committee (CWC). The Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) was also looking for another GPSA Representative. D. Dunham directed members to contact the Executive Committee if they were interested in filling any of the vacancies. D. Dunham also noted that the elections for officers would be occurring at the end of the semester and told members that might be interested in running for an Executive Officer position to contact him because now would be a good time to start thinking about it.

IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

a. Monday, December 7th, 2021

- i. N. Danev moved to amend the minutes by replacing “a lot of organizations out of clause provided each person shall have only one vote” with “a lot of organizations add a clause provided each person shall have only one vote” in Section D, Subpoint c, line iii. The motion was seconded by K. Krishnan and **amended** by unanimous consent.
- ii. The minutes were **approved** unanimously.

V. Elections

a. Finance Chair

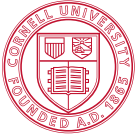
- i. D. Dunham noted that A. Pandey had been previously elected to serve as the Finance Chair but had to unfortunately submit a letter of resignation because she could not manage the chair responsibilities in addition to her work. A. Pandey's letter of resignation was accepted by the assembly unanimously.
- ii. A. Johnson stated that the purpose of the student activity fee was to fund Graduate and Professional student groups with the GPSA controlling the funding mechanism by voting and the Finance Commission ensures the rules are followed. She added that the role of the Finance Chair was to manage the committee, help review all submitted budgets, coordinate with administrators on campus, and propose many of the updates to the Finance rules. However, if the chair position were not filled, the means by which all of the Graduate and Professional student groups received funding would



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break down and that would not be ideal in a pandemic where social interactions were important, and clubs need to be funded. A. Johnson noted that the position was difficult times especially when it came to having to be available to answer student questions by email with some questions being difficult, being available to interface with administrators, and managing a committee of 10 members with a monthly budget cycle.

- iii. D. Dunham asked the assembly if there were any incentives or changes to the position that would make the position easier or more appealing. He also noted that he and A. Johnson would be meeting with the administration to discuss ways in which the position could be reformed to make it more manageable.
- iv. A. Johnson noted that the goal would be to have compensation for the position along with other GPSA leadership positions, time/money saving mechanisms, or other desirable benefits that would make the time commitment worthwhile. She added that she believed one of the main reasons why many individuals do not volunteer for the leadership roles is because of the time commitment that prevents them from completing work or they need to have a paying job and cannot take on a role with such extensive volunteer responsibilities.
- v. N. Danev noted that there were quite a few people interested in the Finance committee based on the e-mailed committee sign-up form and asked if there were members that were on the fence about serving in the chair position. He also echoed A. Johnson's comments stating that extending greater funding to the organization of the chair would be a good incentive for organizations to participate in the work of the Finance Commission. The extension of funding would also make it easier for the GPSA to find chairpersons more easily in the future.
- vi. K. Krishnan echoed her agreements with A. Johnson and N. Danev statements about incentivizing individuals to apply for the role by increasing organization funding but pointed out that it was rare for an individual to be in only one organization so if the assembly were to go that route, the details would need to be figured out. K. Krishnan also noted that she would be sending emails and sharing on social media, all the open positions up for election for next year.
- vii. D. Dunham asked members if they had any preferences or oppositions to the benefits or compensation options described by A. Johnson.
- viii. N. Danev and D. Dunham stressed the importance of filling the role of Finance Chair noting that without the position being filled, all funding for any organizations would be halted. D. Dunham asked A. Johnson to



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highlight the key responsibilities of the chair that could not be delegated to other committee members.

- ix. A. Johnson stated that the key responsibilities included organizing the meeting for the committee members and taking the time to review and approve the budgets.
 - x. D. Dunham asked if the chair position could be split into co-chair positions.
 - xi. A. Johnson stated that co-chair positions could be created instead with each chair alternating on arranging meetings and responding to emails.
 - xii. N. Rogers asked if A. Johnson was responsible for responding to all of the emails directed to the committee.
 - xiii. A. Johnson noted that committee members were still assigned to review certain budgets and work with those organizations but the main emails she was responsible for revolved around general student questions about budgeting and setting up a club. She would then have to either find an answer or refer to another administrator/individual that could provide the answer. A. Johnson stated that about 30% of her time in the role was spent responding to emails and added that other roles included maintaining the website and tier lists.
 - xiv. N. Danev pointed out that A. Pandey had also agreed to serve as Vice Chair in the committee to split the work. He also added that there would be a support system for the chair along with A. Johnson aiding in the transition and being available to answer questions in an advisory role.
- b. Student Advocacy Chair
 - i. D. Kent expressed interest in the role and noted that he would like to discuss the responsibilities with a past chair or member familiar with the role.
 - c. M. Eng. Voting Member
 - i. D. Dunham noted that the position was open to any Master's student regardless of whether or not they were in the Engineering program due to how long the position had been vacant.
 - ii. J. Levin self-nominated himself for the vacancy. J. Levin introduced himself and stated that he would like to serve in the role was to ensure that the Masters in Hospitality Management community was properly represented, noting that it was an extremely diverse group and would like to contribute to the graduate committee.
 - iii. N. Danev rose to a point of order stating that any member could vote and not just voting members. J. Levin was **elected/approved** 36-0.
 - d. Masters-At-Large Voting Member
 - i. No Nominations

VI. Breakout Session by Division



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- a. D. Dunham informed the Johnson School representatives that they had a voting member vacancy and could use the Division Breakouts to select a member to run.
- b. Johnson Voting Member (P&M division)
 - i. C. Liu self-nominated himself and was **approved** to serve as the voting member for the Johnson School. C. Liu introduced himself and stated that he was running because the Chinese community represented 40% of the international student class and 13% of the Johnson student body so being a voting member would afford students in the Chinese community the opportunity to make their voices heard.

VII. Unfinished Business

- a. Resolution 9: Extending Voting Membership to Standing Committee Chairpersons (Sponsored by: D. Dunham, GPSA President)
 - i. N. Danev noted that the resolution had been postponed at the last meeting in accordance with the Bylaws and would now be reopened for discussion.
 - ii. D. Dunham summarized the resolution stating that it would amend the Charter to grant ex officio voting membership to committee chairs and this would be a way to incentivize individuals to take on leadership positions as committee chairs. D. Dunham also added that the Charter could only be amended by a two-thirds absolute majority of the voting members.
 - iii. D. Dunham moved to **postpone** the resolution. The motion was seconded by C. Duell and approved by unanimous consent.

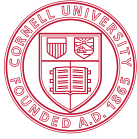
VIII. New Business

- a. Resolution 10: Establishing the Standing Rules for the Spring Semester 2021 (Sponsored by: D. Dunham, GPSA President)
 - i. D. Dunham summarized the resolution stating that it established the regular meeting dates for the rest of the semester and switched out one regular meeting on April 26, 2021 with a meeting on May 3, 2021 because April 26 was a Wellness Day with no classes.
 - ii. D. Dunham moved to suspend the rules that would require a postponement of voting on the resolution until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by C. O' Connor and **approved**.
 - iii. M. Cantar asked if the extra meeting was needed and emphasized the importance of all students taking care of their mental health.
 - iv. N. Danev and D. Dunham noted that the number of meetings was staying the same, so no extra meetings were added, rather, a meeting was set for a different date to replace a meeting set during a Wellness Day.
 - v. D. Dunham moved previous question; the motion was seconded by C. Duell.
 - vi. The resolution was **approved** 17-0-0.



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- b. Resolution 11: Revising and Formalizing the Procedures for Consideration of Resolutions (Sponsored by: D. Dunham, GPSA President)
 - i. D. Dunham summarized the resolution, noting that it would accomplish three different goals in the Bylaws but invited members to motion to divide the question if they wanted to. D. Dunham stated that the first part of the resolution would remove the requirement to postpone a resolution at least one meeting after it had been introduced without needing to always suspend the rules. The second part of the resolution would remove the absolute majority voting requirement for resolutions to prevent absences from serving as “negative” votes. The third part of the resolution would set certain recourses if the GPSA President failed to convey a resolution to President Pollack within the regular two-week period.
 - ii. D. Dunham moved previous question; the motion was seconded.
 - iii. The resolution was **approved** 16-0-1.
- IX. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates
 - a. Executive Committee – N. Danev
 - i. N. Danev noted that members that did not fill out the emailed committee sign-up form would be assigned a committee and directed members to contact M. Chatterjee if their preference had changed.
 - b. Communications – K. Krishnan
 - i. K. Krishnan noted that she would soon start sending email and social media updates on officer positions up for election.
 - c. Finance – *Vacant*
 - i. No Updates
 - d. Appropriations – A. Pandey
 - i. No Updates
 - e. DISC – Y. Shih
 - i. D. Dunham stated that Y. Shih had not communicated with the Executive team at all during the year and that as he understood it, there was no committee activity. He informed the assembly that Y. Shih could be unseated by a two-thirds majority vote so that another chair could start directing the committee.
 - ii. N. Danev moved to unseat the chair of DISC, Y. Shih, on the lack of attendance and communication. The motion was seconded by J. Levin.
 - iii. D. Dunham pointed out that the Executive Committee had taken every effort to reach out to Y. Shih but had not heard back.
 - iv. N. Danev echoed the sentiments of D. Dunham adding that both he and D. Dunham had reached out multiple times without any replies since being elected and there had been no communication from Y. Shih prior to being elected either. N. Danev expressed the significance of the DISC, particularly



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as an international student. He also added that he did not believe that the GPSA could go on without a functioning Diversity and International Student Committee (DISC), so unseating the chair would allow for a new chair to take on the serious responsibilities of the role.

- f. Faculty Teaching – C. Duell
 - i. C. Duell encouraged members to reach out to him if they were interested in joining the committee.
- g. Programming – K. Laurent
 - i. K. Laurent encouraged members to reach out if they were interested in joining the committee. K. Laurent noted that the committee was currently working on a “Build Your Own Chimes” event in collaboration with the Big ed Barn and Cornell Chimes.
- h. Student Advocacy – *Vacant*
 - i. No Updates

X. Open Forum

- a. ITAP Progress – N. Danev
 - i. N. Danev noted that he had not started drafting the resolution for ITAP reform but conveyed to the assembly that he would be appreciative of any support members could offer on the resolution writing process. He also stated that he hoped to get a meeting setup soon and expressed that it would be important for the GPSA to get involved in reforming the ITAP process.
 - ii. J. Levin asked N. Danev to elaborate on the topic.
 - 1. N. Danev described the details of the ITAP, emphasizing the bias against specific demographics and stress associated with the process.

XI. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou
Clerk of the Assembly