



**Cornell University**  
**Graduate and Professional**  
**Student Assembly**

**Cornell Graduate and Professional Student Assembly**

Agenda of the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7 PM

[Zoom Meeting](#)

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call (1 min)
- III. Approval of the Meeting Minutes (2 mins)
  - a. Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- IV. Presentations (55 minutes)
  - a. Zebadiah Hall, Cornell Health (25 minutes)
  - b. Center for Teaching Innovation (15 minutes)
  - c. Drea Darby, Diversity Preview Weekend (15 minutes)
- V. Elections (5 mins)
  - a. Masters-At-Large Voting Member
- VI. New Business (10 mins)
  - a. Resolution 16: Conducting Open Elections for Voting Members for 2021-22 Term
    - i. Sponsored by: Kavya Krishnan, VP Communications
  - b. Resolution 17: Creating Campus-Aware Criteria for Byline Funded Organizations
    - i. Sponsored by: Antony Poon, PACT
- VII. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates (5 mins)
  - a. Executive Committee – Nikola Danev
  - b. Communications – Kavya Krishnan
  - c. Operations – Martik Chatterjee
  - d. Finance – Caroline Steingard
  - e. Appropriations – Aakarsha Pandey
  - f. DISC – Alexandra Presher
  - g. Faculty Teaching – Cody Duell
  - h. Programming – Kasey Laurent
  - i. Student Advocacy – David Kent
- VIII. Open Forum (7 mins)
- IX. Adjournment

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If you are in need of special accommodations, contact Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or Student Disability Services at (607) 254-4545 prior to the meeting.



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**Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly**

Minutes of the March 29, 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. Announcements
  - a. D. Dunham reminded members that there were two regular meetings left (4/12/21 and 5/3/21). The elections for voting members for all of the Graduate School divisions would take place on April 12<sup>th</sup> during Division Breakout. The elections for officers along with the GPSA representative to the General Committee of the Graduate School and standing committee chairs (except the Appropriations Chair and the Finance Chair) would take place on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- III. Roll Call
  - i. *Present* [18]: M. Balch, H. Bidigare-Curtis, M. Chatterjee, H. Cole, N. Danev, M. Drescher, B. Hayes, M. Keefe, K. Krishnan, K. Laurent, T. Luttermoser, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, A. Pandey, A. Presher, C. Steingard, P. Vinhage, M. Welch
  - ii. *Absent* [13]: C. Anklin, R. Barankevich, M. Cantar, A. Cirillo, C. Day, J. Dotzel, C. Duell, N. Gonzalez, D. Kent, J. Levin, C. Liu, S. López, R. Maloney
- IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
  - a. Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021
    - i. The meeting minutes were **approved** unanimously.
- V. Presentations
  - a. Big Red Barn (Jennifer Forbes, Operations Manager for the Big Red Barn) – Refer to Presentation Slides on the Office of the Assemblies website
    - i. N. Danev asked if the launching of Governor Cuomo's NY State Excelsior Pass, which would allow indoor gatherings for people that have tested negative for Covid-19 within the past three days or have both of their vaccines, allow for larger gatherings at the bar and TGIF?
      1. J. Forbes noted that she would wait on more information from the University to decide when the Big Red Barn would be ready to reopen and that the plan would be to allow programs like TGIF when it was possible.
    - ii. C. O'Connor asked if J. Forbes could elaborate on some of the Big Red Barn upgrades.
      1. J. Forbes stated that one of the larger upgrades once the Big Red Barn was reopened was that it would accept Credit Cards and would



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no longer be a cash-only facility. J. Forbes also added that there would be some other cosmetic changes to the barn.

b. University Leadership

i. Marth Pollack, President

1. President Pollack provided brief updates on ongoing Dean searches, the pandemic along with the new significant increase in cases, instances of academic excellence, Commencement, the plans for de-densification during the upcoming school year. President Pollack also noted that a question she often received was whether or not there would be a blanket extension given to all graduate students in terms of financial support from degree completion. She stated that the pandemic had not affected all students equally to necessitate such a response and added that the number of students graduating in the three Commencement events since the University moved operations online had been normal. President Pollack highlighted the impact the pandemic may have had though on students that were in the middle of their research when operations moved online and noted that the Graduate School was asking these students to work closely with their advisors and that the administration was working with the Graduate School to provide as much funding and flexibility as possible. President Pollack also expressed gratitude for the work that went into the GPCI.
2. L. Davis-Frost asked if President Pollack could elaborate on what the threshold was for shutting down or Code Orange, noting that it had been 100 last semester, but now there appeared to be some shifts in that.
  - a. President Pollack stated that there had been a NY state requirement that if a school had 100 cases within a week, it had to go fully online. President Pollack noted that the University never had a hard cut-off and said a range of criteria were looked at including, notably, whether the University administration felt that the cases were contained. President Pollack also stated that the availability of hospital and quarantine space played a role in the decisions to go online.
3. B. Harrison stated that although she agreed with the importance of pointing out the ways that the Cornell Community was thriving, it was harmful to not point the ways that the community had not been thriving. B. Harrison gave an example of that, noting that on the NY State Covid Report Card, a Cornell employee death had been



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mentioned but Graduate students and other employees were not made aware of this and asked President Pollack why the University had not been more transparent on the matter.

- a. President Pollack stated that out of respect for the individuals privacy, the University did not release any additional information since doing so would reveal personal health information that was not only illegal but disrespectful to the individual and their family.
4. B. Harrison asked if there were any reasons why the death statistics could not be reported on the University Covid dashboard.
  - a. President Pollack stated that in a small community like Cornell, if the University reported deaths, community members would know who that individual was.
5. D. Dunham asked President Pollack her thoughts on ways that mentor-mentee relationships between advisors and their students could be improved, especially given the remote nature of the year.
  - a. President Pollack stated that she believed that the core of a good mentor-mentee relationship came down to mutual respect. She added that if the respect were to break in either direction, students had to be guaranteed the opportunity to have another mentor.
  - b. Dean Boor noted that there were four areas that the Graduate School had prioritized and had been in communication with the GPSA in moving towards improving the overall environment for Graduate Studies. The first was ensuring that every Graduate field was portraying clear and consistent standards for PhD degree completion. Dean Boor stated that the Graduate School was working to develop an expectations template for advisors and their students to prevent misunderstandings from developing in the first place. The Graduate School was also committed to ensuring that new faculty were trained in the best practices for developing mentor-mentee relations, for managing people, and for addressing conflict. Dean Boor also stated that the fourth priority was developing a mechanism for Graduate students to provide feedback on advisors, developing a process for acting on that feedback when tensions might arise, and having a mechanism for resolving those conflicts.



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- c. President Pollack and VP Lombardi expressed joy that the mentor-mentee relations was being taken seriously. VP Lombardi also acknowledged the enormity of the difficult circumstances that everyone had been living with for the last year. VP Lombardi also expressed his support of academic leadership stepping to the table in the mental health review process and allowing a look at a number of academic initiatives and policies that would strengthen and improve the culture for mental health on campus.
6. M. Welch asked if President Pollack had an idea on what the plans would be for Graduate Students living in Ithaca for the travel policy and testing.
  - a. President Pollack encouraged meeting attendees to sign-up for vaccinations and to not get discouraged if they could not get an appointment right way. President Pollack also noted that she was not sure what the exact policies would be for the summer because of how rapidly the pandemic and vaccine landscape was changing. She noted that if many people were to get vaccinated and case rates were to drop, that would increase the possibility of having a greater return to normalcy this summer.
7. B. Harrison asked President Pollack if she had a ballpark estimate of the average amount of money Graduate Students were spending above normal to do their work.
  - a. President Pollack noted that she did not have a ballpark estimate, but noted that there was a distribution in the amounts.
8. C. Lambert asked if there was a timeline for the NY State Point of Distribution (POD) decision.
  - a. President Pollack noted that there was not a timeline but expressed her hopes of it being soon.
9. T. Luttermoser asked Dean Boor about the SPR (Student Progress Report) and any adjustments that had been made.
  - a. Dean Boor noted that various students had asked if the questions on the SPR could be customized to specifically address some of the issues that had emerged as a consequence of Covid. She noted that the SPR that had been sent out was the same as the previous year because the information from it was used to set baselines and to understand where things were going with regard to the



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University. Dean Boor stated that the expectations were that the answers would be quite different than they had been in previous years because of the consequences of Covid.

10. E. Maloney asked if vaccination considerations would be applied to visitors in the new changes for possible summer rules.

a. President Pollack stated that the administration would look at everything in making those decisions, including travel, visitors, de-densification of the classrooms, etc.

ii. Kathryn Boor, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education

iii. Ryan Lombardi, Vice President for Student and Campus Life

VI. Vacancies and Elections

a. DISC Chairperson

i. D. Dunham noted that approximately \$1,800 was appropriated to DISC in the Internal Budget from the previous year and could be spent at the discretion of the committee until May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

ii. T. Luttermoser asked if the \$1,800 wasn't used, would it rollover into the following year for events planned during the Fall or Spring semesters or would it have to be used by the end of the current school year.

1. D. Dunham stated that he believed that the funds do rollover into a general account and that secondly, if the money were to be spent during the remainder of the term, it would be appropriate even for events that would not fully take place until later.

2. K. Krishnan noted that student organizations had until the summer of this year to spend their funds but wasn't sure what the procedure was for GPSA committees.

3. G. Giambattista noted that the term for the current assembly would end on May 30<sup>th</sup> and stated that an event could not be funded for a future time period on behalf of another assembly term. However, the funds would stay with the GPSA and could be reallocated again to DISC.

iii. A. Presher introduced herself expressing the importance of diversity and inclusion including among international students and self-nominated to become DISC Chairperson.

1. The self-nomination was seconded by N. Danev and the self-nomination was approved by unanimous consent.

b. Masters-At-Large Representative – *No Nominations*

i. N. Danev added that the commitment would be no more than two meetings.

VII. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates



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- a. Executive Committee – N. Danev
    - i. N. Danev, on behalf of D. Kent, noted that the next SAC meeting would be Wednesday (3/31/2021) at 5pm. N. Danev stated that after meeting with the Provost and Dean Boor regarding the ITAP, a preliminary agreement had been reached with a planned joint statement being released that would affirm the items decided on. N. Danev summarized the memorandum noting that feedback would be given to international students if they failed the exam and proper notice would be given to everyone about the existence of the program. N. Danev added that as a sponsor of the ITAP resolution, he would either retract the resolution or amend it. N. Danev, closed off stating that he hoped to share the formal agreement with the assembly at the following GPSA meeting.
  - b. Communications – K. Krishnan
    - i. K. Krishnan stated that the committee would be working to spread the word about elections for GPSA officers.
  - c. Operations – M. Chatterjee
    - i. No Updates
  - d. Finance – C. Steingard
    - i. No Updates
  - e. Appropriations – A. Pandey
    - i. A. Pandey stated that the deadline she had in mind for the Byline-funded organizations would be April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
  - f. DISC – A. Presher
    - i. No Updates
  - g. Faculty Teaching – C. Duell
    - i. No Updates
  - h. Programming – K. Laurent
    - i. K. Laurent noted that the Build Your Own Windchime event went well, and that the committee was currently working with the Big Red Barn to organize a Bingo event.
  - i. Student Advocacy – D. Kent
    - i. T. Luttermoser noted that there had been follow-up on GPSA R15.
- VIII. Breakout Session by Division
- IX. Open Forum
- a. K. Krishnan asked if the Graduate School had received comments about advisors placing students in unsafe positions during the beginning of the pandemic and how the complaints were handled.
    - i. Dean Boor stated that comments and cases were managed on a person-by-person basis at the College level.
- X. Adjournment



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- a. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou  
Clerk of the Assembly

DRAFT



# 1 Resolution 16: Conducting Open Elections for Voting 2 Members for 2021-22 Term

3 **Abstract:** While the GPSA Charter §4.05.A requires that voting members are elected in the second-  
4 to-last meeting of the semester, the pandemic has severely restricted the ability of the graduate and  
5 professional community to participate in elections. Therefore, the GPSA agrees to hold elections of  
6 voting members according to an alternative procedure than that which is outlined in the charter, as it  
7 is unable to fulfill these instructions as provided.

8 **Sponsored by:** Kavya Krishnan, Vice President of Communications

9 **Reviewed by:** Communications Committee, 4/9/2021

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10 **Whereas,** the GPSA Charter §4.05.A.i states that “The 14 Voting members who represent the  
11 divisions of the Graduate School will be elected at the second to last GPSA meeting of the current  
12 GPSA term.”; and

13 **Whereas,** the GPSA Charter §4.05.A.ii states that “At this meeting, field representatives and Voting  
14 members shall form caucuses by Division to elect new Voting members from constituent fields.”;  
15 and

16 **Whereas,** the restrictions of the pandemic have made it unfeasible for candidates to effectively  
17 caucus in the manner prescribed in the GPSA Charter; and

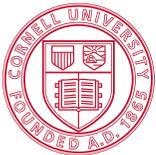
18 **Whereas,** the GPSA is committed to the adherence of prior convention, such that the entire  
19 graduate and professional student community may have the opportunity to elect their voting  
20 members.

21 **Be it therefore resolved** that the GPSA declares that it is unable to fulfill the entire election  
22 procedure as outlined in the Charter §4.05.A and is therefore inapplicable during this academic term;  
23 and

24 **Be it further resolved** that the GPSA agrees to pursue an alternative election procedure outlined  
25 below:

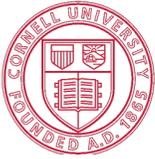
- 26 1. An email to all graduate and professional students describing open positions and calling for  
27 nominations will be sent on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Nomination period remains opens through 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 28 2. An email to all graduate and professional students inviting them to vote for their division  
29 voting members will follow. Voting period will be open 4/27-4/29.
- 30 3. New voting members will begin their term by the final GPSA meeting (5/3).

31



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- 32 Respectfully Submitted,
- 33 Kavya Krishnan
- 34 Vice President of Communications



## Resolution 17: Creating Campus-Aware Criteria for Byline Funded Organizations

**Abstract:** Currently, Appendix B of the GPSA charter defines eligibility rules and obligations for byline funded organizations. The rules assume that organizations should effectively serve a major portion of Cornell students. With the establishment of Cornell Tech, and its geographical distance from the Cornell campus in Ithaca, these assumptions no longer hold. Adherence to existing eligibility rules and obligations places an unfair burden on Cornell Tech-based organizations, due to the campus being fundamentally different in nature and size, and impairs the ability of these organizations to serve students that are based on Cornell Tech.

This resolution amends Appendix B to require byline organizations to identify the campuses they serve and have per-student funds calculated based on served campuses. As application requirements prior to this resolution were based on the total population of graduate students, these changes allow organizations, which serve only the smaller campus, to realistically meet byline application requirements.

Furthermore, Tech-based master's students currently receive the funds generated from their Student Activity Fee (GPSAF) returned to an organization based at Tech to distribute to groups at that campus. However, no provision is made for non-master's students or byline organizations operating at Tech. This resolution amends Appendix B to change this funding arrangement in order to (1) include all graduate and professional students based at Tech, (2) explicitly specify the student organizations responsible for managing the returned funds, and (3) remove byline-funded organizations which serve the Tech campus from the amount returned.

**Sponsored by:** Anthony Poon, Cornell Tech PACT Student Representative

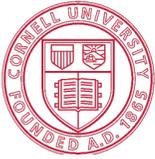
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**Whereas,** Cornell has established geographically separated campuses, notably Cornell Tech, which include graduate and professional students who live and study there full time; and

**Whereas,** graduate and professional students based in non-Ithaca campuses are required to pay the Graduate and Professional Student Activity Fee (GPSAF) as described in GPSA Charter §2.02; and

**Whereas,** the GPSA Charter Appendix B defines eligibility criteria and obligations for byline funded organizations; and

**Whereas,** these criteria do not currently distinguish between which campuses a byline organization serves, thus allowing for organizations to obtain GPSAF funds from students who cannot realistically access their services; and



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**Whereas**, the GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.03 (lines 323-341) already provides, specifically for Cornell Tech Master’s students, GPSAF to be returned to and managed by a recognized “Cornell Tech organization” at the Cornell Tech campus; and

**Whereas**, the GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.03 (lines 323-341) does not make similar provision for Cornell Tech PhD students and other non-master’s students; and

**Whereas**, the “Cornell Tech organization” described in GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.03 (lines 323-341) is currently not explicitly held to obligations of byline funded organizations described in GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.02 (line 196-243), which makes the obligations of this organization unclear; and

**Whereas**, the current version of the GPSA Charter Appendix B is described in Item VI “Ratification and Expiry” (lines 513-514) has expired on May 31, 2020;

**Be it therefore resolved**, the GPSA Charter Appendix B shall be renewed with the amendments offered below; and

**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §2.01.a (lines 18-19), in describing the eligibility criteria for byline funded organizations, be amended to be “Directly and primarily serve and benefit the entire graduate and professional student community in at least one Cornell campus.”; and

**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §2.01.b (line 20), be amended to be “Allow all students at served campuses equal access to services and/or participation.”; and

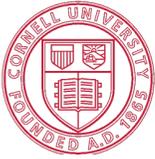
**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §2.02 (lines 25-26), in describing the requirements of newly applying organizations, be amended to be “Organizations that have not received byline funding in the past, have had their eligibility revoked by the GPSA, or will be changing which campus(es) in which they operate, must in addition:”

**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §2.02.e.i (line 33) and §2.02.f.i (line 37) be amended to be “Have petitions with signatures from 10% of the graduate and professional students at all campuses the organization serves.”; and

**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §2.02.e.ii (lines 33-34) be amended to be “Have received funding from GPSAFC for the 4 semesters preceding their application or an exception from the Appropriations Committee after demonstrating satisfactory accounting practices.”; and

**Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA Charter Appendix B §4.01.b.v be amended to insert the following subsection §4.01.b.v.6 after §4.01.b.v.5 (line 96):

6. Campus(es) in which the group operates and serves students.



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**Be it further resolved,** that GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.03 “Cornell Tech Campus – Master’s Students” (lines 323-341) be deleted in its entirety; and

**Be it further resolved,** that GPSA Charter Appendix B §5.03 “Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA)” be amended to insert the following subsection 6 after 5 (on line 444):

6. The activity fee (GPSAF), appropriately deducted for the contributions to the GPSA, Risk Management, and any byline funded organization that is identified as operative at Cornell Tech based upon information provided in compliance with Article II §4.01, will be returned to registered and officially recognized organizations at the Tech campus in New York City. These organizations are the Cornell Tech Student Government (CTSG), representing master’s and professional students, and PhD Students at Cornell Tech (PACT), representing PhD students. CTSG and PACT must satisfy these conditions:
  - a. Have a set of bylaws and funding guidelines that will outline how the funds will be distributed equitably among the different groups on the Cornell Tech campus.
  - b. Register every year with the SLECA office via the Campus Groups platform (or equivalent registration system needed for every student organization at Cornell University).
  - c. Submit a detailed report to the appropriations committee every two years in the activity fee setting year. This report must be submitted by the final byline application deadline and outline all their requests and expenses.
  - d. Subject to all Cornell regulations as enforced by the GPSA.
  - e. Review and update their bylaws & funding guidelines every two years. It is recommended that this be performed in the Spring semester of the activity fee setting year.
  - f. Abide by all obligations of GPSAF-funded organizations as described in Article II §5.02.
  - g. Have a formal appeals process, reviewed and approved by the GPSA Appropriations Committee, that gives any student group funded by CTSG or PACT the right to appeal if they feel their allocation was unfair. This appeals process should determine how these disputes will be resolved.

**Be it finally resolved,** that GPSA Charter Item VI “Ratification and Expiry” (lines 513-514) be amended to be “Upon adoption by the GPSA, this document shall be in effect as of June 1, 2021. It shall expire on May 31, 2023 subject to the following exception:”.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anthony Poon

PhD Students at Cornell Tech (PACT) Student Representative