



Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the December 9, 2019 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

I. Call to Order

- a. 5:30 A. Barrientos-Gómez calls meeting to order

II. Roll Call

- a. Present: P. Vinhage, A. Barrientos-Gómez, R. Harrison, A. Johnson, M. Keefe, L. Louis, K. Laurent, D. Yucalan, N. London, W. Andersson, A. Woods, K. Esannason, M. Daly, M. Gelsinger, J. Faulk, K. Masters
- b. Absent: C. Duell, A. Cirillo, A. Sontag, D. Wang, M. Sawey, V. Kasonde, A. P. D. G. Everett, E. Call

III. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Minutes of the November 4, 2019 Meeting
- i. **Approved** with no dissent
- b. Minutes of the November 18, 2019 Meeting
- i. **Approved** with no dissent

IV. Presentations

- a. Graduate and Professional Student-Elected Trustee Election – Dr. Bruce Lewenstein, Manisha Munasinghe, Jaewon Sim
- i. B. Lewenstein introduced himself as one of the two faculty-elected members of the Board of Trustees. He is looking to begin the process of building interest and sharing information about the opportunity for graduate and professional school students to serve as a Student-Elected Trustee. The election will be in the spring and undergraduates will vote as well. This new committee was created to restructure the process of the election and they are seeking candidates from across the student body who are engaged across campus activities. Candidates can be from the graduate schools, professional schools, Cornell Tech, or the Geneva campus. The trustee will become a full member of the Board of Trustees. His or her legal and fiduciary obligation would be to the university as a whole, and not the constituency that elected them. It is a two-year term and the trustee would bring the student voice.

- ii. M. Munasinghe added that the board has 64 voting members. Most of the members are alumni and work in other places. The important role about the Student-Elected Trustee is that they would be part of a small number on the Board who can speak to how the whole community is feeling. In addition to those responsibilities, the Student-Elected Trustee is expected to write a trustee viewpoint for the Cornell Daily Sun once a month and present on student and campus community issues. Previous topics she has covered include students with disabilities, the Intergroup Dialogue Project, and first-generation and low-income students. The Board of Trustees has four meetings a year, one of which is hosted in NYC. In addition, the Student-Elected Trustee may be asked to sit on university committees. For example, she sits on the Mental Health Coalition. The obligations during board meetings are significant. Meetings will start at 7:30am and continue until 9:30-10pm for four days in a row. There is also a fair amount of reading before the meeting. However outside of that, the commitment is a couple hours a week, which may include attending events. As the Student-Elected Trustee, she is an ex-officio member of the GPSA and while she is clued into the resolutions, her job is not to intervene and get involved.
- iii. B. Lewenstein added that there is a variety of actions that can happen at the Board level that is confidential. There may not be as much reporting back as students would want.
 1. M. Munasinghe added that the Student-Elected Trustee does have to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
- iv. B. Lewenstein gave an overview of the committee's goals in informing the community about the role, generating interest in running and the election, and managing the election process. In future years, they hope to have these presentations earlier in the fall semester to build interest throughout the year. While the committee has oversight, the day-to-day operations of the election is managed by the Office of Assemblies. They are looking to set the election schedule and hold information sessions in the fall. In the spring, they hope to have public information sessions and detailed meetings with information for candidates. The election will occur just before Spring Break.
- v. V. Kasonde asked about the duties of the committee.
 1. B. Lewenstein responded that the committee consists of the two Faculty-Elected Trustees, two Student-Elected Trustees, and one Employee-Elected Trustee. The SA, EA, and GPSA also each appoint a member. Those who are interested in running or endorsing a candidate cannot be on the committee.
- vi. M. Munasinghe spoke about the campaign process. Starting in January, petitions will become available. Interested candidates have a month to collect 300 student signatures and must submit a

statement of candidacy. Campaigning lasts about three weeks and can be a very rigorous process. Candidates are also expected to participate in a debate usually hosted by the Cornell Daily Sun.

vii. J. Sim noted that the Student-Elected Trustees have staggered terms. Every year there is one trustee who has been in the role for a year and can help the incoming member. The new Student-Elected Trustee will typically spend the first two meetings learning and getting acquainted.

V. Division Breakout

a. A. Barrientos-Gómez announced that they will not be having division breakout.

VI. Elections

a. Finance Commission Chair

i. E. Ottot-Kovacs, the GPSA Finance Commission Chair, highlighted the position as an opportunity for those interested in being more involved in GPSA activities. The Finance Commission is one of the more demanding committees with almost monthly meetings to review the budget. The Chair is tasked with leading those meetings, organizing the meetings, answering emails, and ensuring everything is in order.

ii. A. Barrientos-Gómez asked for nominations for the Finance Commission Chair position.

1. E. Ottot-Kovacs nominated A. Johnson.

a. A. Johnson accepted the nomination.

2. A. Barrientos-Gómez closed nominations and called for a ballot vote.

iii. A. Johnson introduced herself as the current VP of the Finance Commission. She noticed not many people on campus understood the purpose of the committee to allow graduate and professional students to have input on how the Student Activity Fee is spent. Her main goals as Chair would be to improve awareness of the Commission's purpose, integrate its goals with the new Student Organization Business Office (SOBO) in Willard Straight Hall, and ensure that the Commission institutionalizes knowledge. In addition, she is seeking a volunteer for Vice Chair.

iv. A. Johnson was **confirmed** as the new Finance Commission Chair.

VII. Old Business

a. Discussion of Resolution 3: *Demanding Mandatory Arbitration and Class Action Bans Be Removed from CASHNet and Other Community Agreements*

i. J. Kent-Dobias stated that resorting to switching services is unnecessary, citing that Cornell has enough sway with service providers to accomplish the removals with an email. Companies that depend on large institutions like Cornell tend to be incredibly responsive and he does not anticipate it will be much of an issue.

ii. A. Johnson made a call to question to vote on the resolution

iii. Motion is seconded

iv. Resolution 3 **passed** with a vote of 13-0-11

VIII. New Business

- a. Introduction to Resolution 4: *Recommendation for the Graduate and Professional Student Activity Fee for 2020-2022*
 - i. A. Barrientos-Gómez noted that the deadline to submit the resolution to the President was tomorrow.
 - ii. J. Bogdanowicz added that if the resolution is not passed, the old fee structure will stay. He explained that the Student Activity Fee is a small part of their tuition bills that fund large organizations across campus, including the clubs listed on the resolution. The Appropriations Committee has looked to include Cornell Tech on the byline in the last few cycles. However, they do not always respond in a timely manner and try to get in on the last second. The committee came up with an equitable solution where Cornell Tech is going to get some funding out of the GPSAFC for this cycle with pressure that they will be on time in the next cycle. He projected an outline report of the committee's decisions showing funding comparisons from the last cycle (2018-2020), the organization's request, and the 2020-2022 recommendation. They do not have much contention with the organizations, and the organizations have provided adequate financial budgets. He also noted that the graduate and professional student population has been increasing significantly in the last few years. He gave an overview of a few clubs.
 - iii. M. Gelsinger questioned the Athletic and Physical Education allocation.
 1. J. Bogdanowicz replied that Cornell Athletics offers graduate students access to a wide array of sporting events and did not request more funding. Within the student population increasing each year, they are still getting some more funding. The committee's recommendation to every organization is to always increase participation as that is the easiest way to justify asking for larger allocations.
 - iv. J. Kent-Dobias asked what club insurance was.
 1. J. Bogdanowicz responded that every club in the university has insurance. It includes protecting club officers from lawsuits, enabling clubs to use off-campus facilities, allowing clubs a more liberal use of the Cornell name, among others.
 - v. GPSA member asked for clarification on the International Student Union (ISU) allocation.
 1. J. Bogdanowicz responded that this was one of the more contentious organizations. Last cycle, they provided them money and ISU agreed to reach out to graduate students more. Within two years, membership increased from one graduate student to 11. While the undergraduate population is roughly 10-15% international, it is almost 40% for graduate and professional students.
 2. E. Law explained that ISU is a board that distributes funding to a wide array of organizations. A quarter of their members are now graduate students.

- vi. A. Johnson highlighted that the Graduate Orientation is not asking for funding anymore. She asked whether the orientation program was changing.
 - 1. A. Barrientos-Gómez replied that it was a GPSA choice. They decided at the last byline cycle to take it off as none of their counterparts were funding the graduate orientation.
 - 2. Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at Graduate School J. Allen added that the Graduate School agreed with the decision on the basis of optics.
- b. A. Cohn made a motion to suspend the bylaws and open the floor to discussion.
 - i. E. Law voiced concern over allocations being one of the larger responsibilities of the GPSA. Waiting a meeting between the introduction and voting of a resolution is put into place so people are made aware of upcoming changes. Here, students can know how much they are going to be charged for the Student Activity Fee in the next two years and can come speak at the next meeting if they have concerns. While he is not a voting member, he noted it as something for voting members to take into account.
 - ii. M. Gelsing asked if it was possible to vote tomorrow.
 - 1. A. Barrientos-Gómez reiterated that the deadline to submit the resolution was tomorrow. It would require everyone to vote before the deadline and it is not a risk he is willing to take.
 - iii. A. Cohn's motion to suspend the bylaws **passed** with a vote of 13-0-11.
 - iv. A. Johnson asked how often Cornell graduate students use the Emergency Medical Service.
 - 1. J. Bogdanowicz responded that the organization is at ever large event hosted.
 - v. J. Faulk asked for the rationale behind Big Red Barn's allocation being lower than what it requested. It is frequented by many graduate students.
 - 1. J. Bogdanowicz stated the committee decided that around a 15% raised seemed fair. When organizations submit documents, they base it on a certain number of student enrollment that may or may not be accurate. Currently, enrollment is at 8,900 and has been significantly increasing. They discussed the funding with Big Red Barn, who stated it would be satisfied with an amount around \$13.
 - vi. A. Cohn made a call to question to vote on the resolution as it stands with the activity fee being a total of \$86 for the next byline funding year.
 - vii. Motion was seconded.
 - viii. Resolution 4 **passed** with a vote of 13-0-11. A. Barrientos-Gómez announced he was not abstaining from the vote and voted in favor of the resolution.
 - ix. A. Johnson made a point of order, asking if a vote would not pass if there were more abstentions than votes in favor.
 - 1. A. Barrientos-Gómez replied that the vote would still pass.

IX. Open Forum

- a. A. Cohn relayed a message from C. Silver, the Field Member from Applied Economics and Management, regarding an issue within the Ithaca Commons Council. Long-term residents are making it more difficult to change the number of dwelling units on properties, which would make it more difficult to increase housing in the community and thus decrease the price of housing. A constituent of C. Silver brought it to her attention. Interested individuals can contact crs376@cornell.edu for more information.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:51pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Tran

Clerk of the Assembly