

GPSA Resolution 5: Sense of the Body Concerning the Creation of the College of Business

<u>Sponsored by</u>: Alex Brown, Jackqueline Frost, Jesse Goldberg, James Ingoldsby, Christine Yao

WHEREAS, Cornell University's Board of Trustees voted on Saturday, January 30, 2016, to combine the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, the School of Hotel Administration and the Johnson Graduate School of Management into a single Cornell College of Business;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Board meeting took place in New York City, over 200 miles away from the Ithaca campus where the faculty, staff, and students of the three concerned colleges live, work, and study;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge President Elizabeth Garrett's message to the Cornell community which states, "Today's action by the Board of Trustees marks the beginning of an inclusive and crucial process that will more fully define the details of how the College of Business will be structured" and which promises further inclusion of community voices in the new college's implementation;

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the faculty of the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management immediately consulted the graduate student association for their input;

WHEREAS, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly Charter is the sole document granting the GPSA authority in the shared governance system at Cornell University;

WHEREAS, the GPSA Charter, Article II, Section 2.03 states:

 "The GPSA shall have the authority to examine the University policies that impact graduate and professional school students.
 The GPSA shall have the authority to make recommendations to the appropriate

 bodies and University administrators concerning these matters.

3. The GPSA shall be consulted with respect to the modification and development of non-academic policies, which directly affect graduate and professional school students.":

WHEREAS, the Board's decision to agglomerate separate academic units that grant graduate degrees (the Johnson Graduate School of Management, the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, and the School of Hotel Administration) into a single College of Business will "impact graduate and professional school students" including in the realm of "non-academic policies, which will directly affect graduate and professional school students";



WHEREAS, the Board, President Garrett, and Provost Michael Kotlikoff failed to consult the GPSA "to make recommendations to the appropriate bodies and University administrators concerning these matters" and "with respect to the modification and development" of such policies;

WHEREAS, the GPSA passed 2011-2012 Resolution 5 in Fall 2011 to express its dissatisfaction that "From 1971 until 1984, the Cornell Board of Trustees had five student-elected members" and "In 1984, the Board was contracted from 62 to 42 members, reducing the number of student-elected members from the Ithaca campus to two," and to call on the Board to work collaboratively with the GPSA on addressing these issues of graduate student representation;

WHEREAS, the GPSA passed 2014-2015 Resolution 7 in Spring 2015, stating, "the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly is opposed to decision making by the Cornell University administration that precludes substantive discussion with the larger body of graduate and professional students, as we believe it violates the principles of shared governance within the University" and "the GPSA recommends that the University consider a policy of public notice and an open public comment period whenever a policy is being considered that would change student support, benefits, tuition rates, or any other changes to academic policy that would constitute a substantive departure from current policy";

WHEREAS, the GPSA also passed 2014-2015 Resolution 8 in Spring 2015, stating, "the University should involve communities more broadly in decisions that affect them before making unilateral decisions";

WHEREAS, Article XIII, Section 2, of the Bylaws of Cornell University states: "The functions of the University Faculty shall be to consider questions of educational policy which concern more than one college, school or separate academic unit, or are general in nature; and to recommend to the Board of Trustees, with the approval of the appropriate college or school faculty, the establishment, modification or discontinuance of degrees";

WHEREAS, the agglomeration of three existing schools into a single new college constitutes a "question[-] of educational policy which concern[s] more than one college, school or separate academic unit";

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate Committee to Review Faculty Governance's "Final Report and Recommendations" of March 7, 2007, outlined multiple instances in which the Faculty Senate had not been consulted for important academic decisions made by the Board of Trustees and administration;

WHEREAS, the Board, President Garrett, and Provost Kotlikoff did not seek input from the University Faculty concerning the creation of the College of Business;



WHEREAS, the Board, advised by President Garrett and Provost Kotlikoff, voted for the creation of the Cornell College of Business and thereby ignored: 1., University Assembly Resolution 5, approved 9-0-2, to "table the motion to create a College of Business until their March 24th, 2016 meeting" (lines 43-44) and "to solicit further community feedback and engage shared governance with all University constituencies on the proposal" (lines 46-47); 2., the Student Assembly's recommendation, approved 20-0-3 after an open forum at their meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2016, to "table the proposal for the College of Business to allow more time for community feedback"; and 3., the unanimously passed resolution by The University Faculty that "the University Trustees table consideration of the creation of the College of Business until the Faculty Senate can deliberate on the proposal";

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BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the following statement expresses the Sense of the Body:

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We formally express our severe disapproval of the process by which the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the creation of the College of Business. In the failure to consult any of the university's shared governance bodies, and in the tacit rejection of three assemblies' requests for more time to examine the proposal, the Board's decision was unapologetically undemocratic. While the GPSA expresses neither support nor disagreement with the content of the decision, we condemn the anti-democratic process of making the decision as well as the ad hoc explanations for the decision, which frame it as inclusive and open after the fact. President Garrett's indication that the Board's decision was "the beginning of an inclusive and crucial process" demonstrates flagrant disregard for how "inclusive" decision-making works, or what counts as an appropriate "beginning," as provided by the university's own governing documents. This decision has both serious academic and non-academic implications for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and employees; therefore, the Board should have consulted all assemblies to seriously consider input from their constituents early in the planning process. To the extent that the power granted to the GPSA and SA is derived solely from the respective assemblies' charters, and that neither the University Bylaws nor the University Charter mentions the student assemblies, we are ultimately dissatisfied that the President and the Board of Trustees have few structural incentives to take seriously advisory policy resolutions passed in the shared governance system.

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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