

U.A. Resolution #23

Resolution on Bursar Billing for Certain Student Organizations

[05/04/2021]

1 **Sponsored by:** Max Trauring; Erik Andreassen; Trevor Bacchi; James Baccile '22; Jack
2 Bennett '24; Daniel Berstein; Saul Chavarria-Barrera '23; Dennis Child '23; Myles
3 Choromanski '22; Tom Crocker '21; Blake DeSantis '22; Alec Diamond; Nick Fanelli;
4 Oliver Fisher; Nick Fenton '24; Fernando Ferrer '22; Jordan Fuentes; Aj Galassi '23;
5 Nicholas Grazioso '23; Nick Hahn '22; William Harvey '22; Marshall Henshaw '23; Thor
6 Illick '22; Mitchell Jones '22; Jacob Levy '22; Logan Kenney, GPSA; Xavier Lu '22; Wyatt
7 Marshall '22; Jack Megrue '23; Caleb Myers; Matisse Nelson '23; Harrison Nicholas '22;
8 Connor Novak '23; Connor Phelps '22; Robert C. Platt '73; Nick Pope '23; Dillon Potter
9 '22; Jaden Queen '24; Zach Russell '24; Charlie Russell '22; Jake Schneider '23; Grayson
10 Shaw '24; Liam Sullivan '21; Billy Turner '24; Jack Waldman; Simon Warfield '23;
11 Cameron Wright '22; John Yerger '82, President of the Alumni IFC.

12

13 **Whereas**, for 40 years, the Cornell Bursar's Office has provided services to collect specified
14 charges from students who live in Residential Colleges, Program Houses, West Campus
15 Houses, fraternities, sororities and other small living units; and

16

17 **Whereas**, these charges include "Program Fees" for students in Residential Colleges and
18 Program Houses. Charges for fraternities and sororities are categorized as "room,"
19 "board," "social," "dues," and "damage deposits." The Bursar has also processed charges
20 for certain other professional organizations; and

21

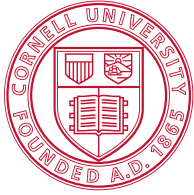
22 **Whereas**, other universities provide similar services through their Bursar Offices in order to
23 enhance campus life and a variety of living arrangements; and

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25 **Whereas**, under the current plan for fraternities and sororities, Cornell has entered into contracts
26 with Sciarabba-Walker (S-W) and Student Management Corporation (SMC) to
27 implement Bursar charges by preparing weekly spreadsheets with a roster of students and
28 the amounts to be charged or credited under each category. SMC and S-W are
29 responsible for the accuracy of all billings and compete with each other to provide the
30 service to each chapter; and

31

32 **Whereas**, the Bursar pays 80% of the amount billed in the following month and 20% in the



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33 second following month regardless of the payment patterns of the individual students.
34 These charges are placed in a checking account that is monitored by S-W or SMC to
35 assure proper spending and prevent funds being used for drugs or alcohol. To the extent
36 that a house is Cornell-owned, 100% of the room charges are paid to a Cornell account
37 controlled by the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life as soon as they are billed; and
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39 **Whereas**, the Bursar receives 0.75% of all billed charges as a fee to offset its costs and has
40 automated the processing of the data received from S-W and SMC with whom it has
41 established a long-standing trusted relationship; and
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43 **Whereas**, the Bursar has a very low loss rate from students who do not pay their charges while
44 nationwide, living units at other campuses experience a 5% - 10% loss rate, which must
45 be recovered by increasing the fees paid by other students; and
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47 **Whereas**, Cornell is proposing to terminate this arrangement at the end of this semester; and
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49 **Whereas**, under Cornell's proposal, Bursar billing would stop for dining, program fees, and
50 damage deposits for Cornell-owned small living units, even though those charges
51 continue for Cornell-owned large dormitories. Yet, those charges could continue to be
52 collected if Cornell would provide broader coverage in the standard contracts that
53 students sign when they rent a room; and
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55 **Whereas**, a group of concerned students and alumni have developed a plan as an alternative to
56 abandoning the Bursar's role in collecting such charges:
57

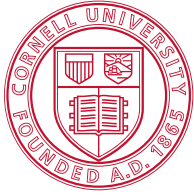
58 **Be it therefore resolved**, the University Assembly endorses this attached plan.
59

60 **Resolved**, the University Assembly urges the Cornell Bursar to give favorable consideration to
61 the attached plan; and
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63 **Resolved**, the University Assembly urges the Cornell Bursar to take advantage of its long-term
64 relationship of trust with S-W and SMC in developing an efficient and low-cost solution
65 to collecting funds for the organizations listed above; and
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67 **Resolved**, the University Assembly asks that for university-owned living units, when Cornell
68 writes contracts, it should provide the living units with flexibility to cover meal plans,
69 program fees and damage deposits, just as it does for traditional dormitories; and
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71 **Resolved**, the University Assembly acknowledges the hard work of student organization
72 officers, particularly their Treasurers, and thanks them for their service in making Cornell
73 a vibrant living/learning community; and
74



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75 **Resolved**, the University Assembly extends its appreciation to the Bursar's Office continuing to
76 support this work to the maximum possible extent; and

77
78 **Resolved**, the University Assembly asks the Administration to consider the above plan and
79 respond in a favorable way for the student groups affected; and

80
81 **Be it finally resolved**, the Administration reconsider the aforementioned Bursar change and
82 provide an opportunity to cover meal plans, program fees and damage deposits.

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84

85 **Approved by a vote of 13-1-0, 5/4/2021**