S.A. Resolution #42
Calling for Implementation of Open Syllabi

ABSTRACT: This resolution recommends that professors upload a copy or draft of their syllabi online before the pre-enroll period.

Sponsored by: Gabe Kaufman ’18, Jung Won Kim ’18

Whereas, according to Article II of the Student Assembly Charter, the Student Assembly has “the authority and the responsibility to examine any matters which involve the interests or concern the welfare of the student community;” and

Whereas, maintaining Cornell’s academic excellence is the primary interest and concern of Cornell students, professors, and the University Administration; and

Whereas, “SA Resolution 29 (AY 2014-2015) Calling for Implementation of Open Course Evaluations” was returned by President Skorton because of (a) the variance in practice by the different colleges and (b) the fact that student evaluations of professors/classes are only one element of successful teaching; and

Whereas, “UA Resolution 7 (AY 2014-2015) Calling for Implementation of Open Course Evaluations” was accepted by President Skorton with the following statement in his acknowledgment: “The deans seemed favorably impressed, especially with the notion of open syllabi, and somewhat sympathetic to creating an open course evaluation system on a common platform.

Whereas, after consultation with professors and deans in the individual colleges, the main concern with an open course evaluation system is that students would choose classes based off of misleading information unrepresentative of the quality of the course; and

Whereas, the core purpose of implementing an open course evaluation system is simply to give students more information about courses before they enroll; and

Whereas, the Student Assembly acknowledges the difficulties of creating an open course evaluation system but still affirms the goals of UA Resolution 7 and SA Resolution 29: to give students more information before they enroll in courses; and

Whereas, one of the most important pieces of information students can obtain before enrolling in courses is a copy of the syllabus; and

Whereas, syllabi contain information presented by the professors themselves, and usually contain information on expected exam dates, workload, and required books and textbooks; and

Whereas, all classes at Cornell have syllabi;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Student Assembly recommends that where practical and appropriate, professors upload a digital copy of the syllabus to the information section of the official Class Roster Website: (classes.cornell.edu) before pre-enroll period begins.
Be it therefore resolved, that to protect the privacy of the university and the faculty members, the syllabi should be uploaded in a location only accessible to Cornell students and faculty.

Be it finally resolved, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Provost, the Dean of Faculty, the deans of each of the colleges, and the chairs of each academic department.

Respectfully Submitted,

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(Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 2/23/2016)