



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #8

Affirming Learning Style Diversity in Introductory Science Course

ABSTRACT: This resolution calls for the removal of a penalty incentivizing students enrolled in particular courses to sign up for unofficial study groups.

Sponsored by: Gabriel Kaufman '18, Mitch McBride '17, Robert Dunbar '18, and Luke Bushner '18

Whereas, Cornell is committed to maintaining a high quality academic environment by promoting only the best principles of education,

Whereas, The College of Arts and Sciences has a particular interest in upholding the principles of a liberal arts education built on a diversity of academic disciplines studied from a variety of different viewpoints in an assortment of different ways,

Whereas, All students necessarily learn in different ways,

Whereas, thousands of students in specific courses, (BIOG 1440: Introduction to Biology: Comparative Physiology, BIOMG 1350: Introductory Biology: Cell and Comparative Biology, and CHEM 2070: General Chemistry I) are offered the “extra credit” equivalent to approximately a full letter grade worth of points if they attend weekly study groups,

Whereas, the students in those courses are effectively required to attend these study groups (in addition to lectures and discussions) because “extra credit” added to a raw score before being curved is the practical equivalent of penalizing students for not attending the study groups, as the grades are determined based on the raw score’s distance from the mean, and not on the raw score itself,

Whereas, because the final grades are reported on transcripts with median scores, students applying to graduate programs and jobs are often assessed based on their final grades relative to the median, thus effectively eliminating any real benefit to the students from “extra credit,”

Whereas, these study groups are in addition to the required lectures and discussions, off of which credit determinations are based, these students are required to be in class without receiving more credit, as the “extra credit incentive” is used to bypass course hour limits,

Whereas, The Student Assembly encourages different educational learning styles and not penalizing students for preferring to learn independently,

Whereas, The College of Arts and Science’s Educational Policy Committee (hereafter referred to as CAS-EPC) has historically fulfilled the role of aligning their broad pedagogic principles with the actual practice of teaching in the College of Arts and Sciences,

Be it therefore resolved, the Student Assembly encourages the College of Arts and Sciences and the CAS-EPC to make these study group sessions merely optional by removing the “*extra credit*” (which amounts to a de facto requirement) to attend the study group sessions in the aforementioned classes.

47 Respectfully Submitted,
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49 **Gabriel Kaufman '18**
50 *Chair, Academic Policy Committee*
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52 **Mitch McBride '17**
53 *Vice President for Internal Operations*
54 *Arts and Science Representative*
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56 **Luke Bushner '18**
57 *Arts and Science Representative*
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59 **Robert Dunbar '18**
60 *Arts and Science Representative*
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62 **Reed Geisler '17**
63 *Community Member*
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65 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 9/8/2015)*
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