

# Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	03/02/2017
Type of Action:	Investigation
Status/Result:	Business of the Day

1 S.A. Resolution #31  
2 Audit of Cornell University Administration Finances

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4 ABSTRACT: This resolution is a formal request for information from the University for Financial  
5 Data regarding the University Administration, specifically its resource allocations and general data  
6 on wages and salaries of its higher level staff  
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9 **Sponsored by: Mitch McBride '17, Diana Li '17**

11 **Whereas**, Article III Section 6 of the Student Assembly Charter states, “The SA may request and obtain  
12 specific information from the President of the University regarding any subject which it deems  
13 of general student concern. If such a request is made, and said information is not furnished, the  
14 University President will report to the SA the reasons why said information cannot be furnished  
15 within two regularly scheduled SA meeting following the denial of the request. The SA will not  
16 request information falling into the following categories: salary or wage records of specific  
17 individuals, academic or financial records of specific individuals, medical or categorical (race, sex,  
18 age, etc) records of specific individuals and information otherwise defined as confidential or  
19 restricted by law;”  
20

21 **Whereas**, Paul Campos, a law professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder and a contributor to the  
22 New York Times, brought the attention of the public to the fact that “a major factor driving  
23 increasing costs [in tuition] is the constant expansion of university administration” (New York  
24 Times);  
25

26 **Whereas**, “According to the Department of Education data, administrative positions at colleges and  
27 universities grew by 60 percent between 1993 and 2009, which Bloomberg reported was 10 times  
28 the rate of growth of tenured faculty positions” (New York Times);  
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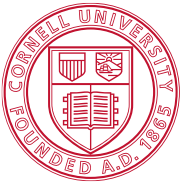
30 **Whereas**, there is reasonable suspicion that the increased cost of education across the US may well be  
31 due to increases in administration sizes and salaries (thus we need Cornell data);  
32

33 **Whereas**, the students of Cornell University deserve the right to know what they pay for as they are the  
34 consumers, customers, and contributors;  
35

36 **Whereas**, the Student Assembly expressly does not request any information of specific individuals  
37 within the University or information otherwise deemed confidential for privacy or legal  
38 concerns;  
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40 **Whereas**, there are concerns that the administration has grown too large, has given too high of salaries  
41 to its higher level staff, and is too unwilling to disperse with redundant or ineffective employees;  
42

43 **Whereas**, the University must save money from administration expenses in order to dedicate itself to  
44 more (not less) generous financial aid policies in order to fulfill its mission of “any person, any  
45 study;”



## Cornell University Student Assembly

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47 **Whereas**, giving student leaders access to such information might assist the university in finding areas to  
48 save as any groupthink that exists in the administration would be diminished;  
49  
50 **Whereas**, university may likely receive positive press for opening its finances such that the world realizes  
51 it is actually attempting to reduce costs for students and save so tuition does not increase, but  
52 rather decreases;  
53  
54 **Be it therefore resolved**, the Cornell Student Assembly exercises its prerogative to formally request  
55 information relating to the administration finances, including general salary breakdowns of  
56 administration members (assistant dean level or equivalent and above), general resource  
57 allocation information relating to the amount and type of resources dedicated to different  
58 university divisions, departments, and offices, and any other relevant information relating to the  
59 Administration's finances that the Student Assembly would find helpful in its review of the  
60 spending of the University on the administration;  
61  
62 **Be it further resolved**, the Student Assembly Appropriations Committee will be charged with reviewing  
63 the information about how the University distributes resources to the administration and issue a  
64 report to the Assembly regarding recommendations for eliminating waste and overspending  
65 within the administration's various offices or in its payments to personnel;  
66  
67 **Be it further resolved**; the administration will act in good faith to provide this information so it is  
68 readily understandable, complete, and detailed in order to conduct a review of how the  
69 administration operates financially;  
70  
71 **Be it finally resolved**, if the President's decision is to decline to give the requested information to the  
72 elected representatives of the students, the SA requests the President send a copy of this  
73 resolution and our objection to the denial (unless based on legal grounds) to the Chair of the  
74 Cornell Board of Trustees;  
75  
76 **Respectfully Submitted**,  
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78 Mitch McBride '19  
79 *Vice President of Internal Operations, Student Assembly*  
80  
81 Diana Li '17  
82 *Vice President for Finance, Student Assembly*  
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84 *Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 6-0-0, 02/27/2017*