

# Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	(2/13/2020)
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

1 S.A. Resolution #30  
2 Urging Cornell University to Contribute Financial Support for the Summer 2020  
3 Student Contribution Pilot Program  
4

5 ABSTRACT: This resolution urges Cornell University’s administration and The Board of Trustees  
6 to contribute financial support towards the student contribution pilot program such that they waive  
7 the student contribution fee for low-income students pursuing non-paid summer opportunities over  
8 the summer.  
9

10 **Sponsored by: Kataryna Restrepo ‘21, Cat Huang ‘21, Yana Kalmyka ‘21**  
11

12 **Whereas**, the Student Contribution fee is the total amount that students are expected to pay from  
13 the Summer Savings Expectation and Student Contribution from Assets. The Summer Savings  
14 Expectation is the amount Cornell expects students to contribute towards academic expenses from  
15 earnings from the Summer while the Student Contribution from Assets takes into consideration  
16 assets owned by the student that adds on in addition to the Summer Savings Expectation. The  
17 Summer Savings expectation is the only component of your tuition that is not covered by financial  
18 aid;  
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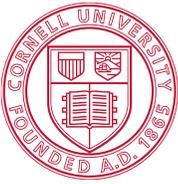
20 **Whereas**, the Student Contribution increases every academic year under the assumption that a  
21 student earns more each year. The fee ranges from 2,700 dollars freshman year to as much as 3,700  
22 dollars senior years. This is particularly burdensome for low-income students, whom do not earn the  
23 thousands of dollars that said fee requires over the summer; especially when considering how low-  
24 income students are expected to help support their families over the summer financially;  
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26 **Whereas**, Cornell University claims to be dedicated to “Any Person, Any Study” and must uphold  
27 the tenets of its motto;  
28

29 **Whereas**, Cornell University must create affordability strategies for low-income students and  
30 increase income diversity across its student body as well as equalizing opportunities for students to  
31 pursue;  
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33 **Whereas**, the People’s Organizing Collective started the Abolish the Student Contribution  
34 Campaign in Fall 2018 where they dropped a petition addressed to President Pollack and the Interim  
35 Chief Financial Aid Officer, Colleen Wright, and Interim VP of Enrollment, Jason Locke with over  
36 240 signatures. The People’s Organizing has since then engaged in a photo campaign “ I already  
37 contribute by...” in which students were encouraged to write down what they are already involved  
38 in on campus to demonstrate the ways in which low income students already contribute i.e., leading  
39 some of Cornell’s 1,000 plus student organizations on campus, conducting research, working on  
40 campus, planning events for the whole community, and upholding Cornell’s academic excellence;  
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42 **Whereas**, the People’s Organizing Collective held a teach-in with The First Generation Students  
43 Union, in order to educate the Cornell student body about the Student Contribution’s negative  
44 effects;



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45 **Whereas**, the People’s Organizing Collective has collected numerous student testimonies, which  
46 show the burdensome effects of the Student Contribution on students across Cornell University’s  
47 undergraduate colleges;

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49 **Whereas**, the People’s Organizing Collective has held multiple meetings with Financial Aid Officers  
50 during the Fall 2019 semester, urging them to create a pilot program to assist students in unpaid  
51 summer work experiences to equalize opportunities to further their own career trajectory just as  
52 their higher income peers can;

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54 **Whereas**, the current VP Provost for Enrollment Jonathan Burdick, Director of Financial Aid  
55 Diane Corbett, and Associate Director Colleen Wright have been in the process of instituting a pilot  
56 program, aimed at waiving the Student Contribution Fee for low-income students in unpaid summer  
57 opportunities, for Summer 2020;

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59 **Whereas**, the proposal for the Summer 2020 pilot program can be seen in Appendix A.;

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61 **Whereas**, Vice Provost of Enrollment Jonathan Burdick and Financial Aid Officers Colleen Wright  
62 and Diane Corbett have verbalized their support for The People’s Organizing Collective’s efforts in  
63 lowering the financial burdens of the Cornell student body and plan on passing it along a whole  
64 body of reforms;

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66 **Whereas**, higher-income students come from higher-income families, who can afford to pay the  
67 Student Contribution on behalf of their children;

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69 **Whereas**, low-income students cannot take unpaid/low-paid summer job positions in their  
70 preferred career paths, i.e. non-profit work, government, and or union work due to a need to make  
71 money for expenses during the academic year;

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73 **Whereas**, the effects of the contribution are not felt equally, and students taking jobs in different  
74 states cannot save money to pay the Student Contribution fee due to varying cost of living across  
75 the United States;

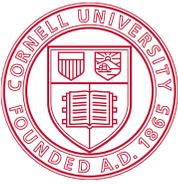
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77 **Whereas**, low-income students find themselves working jobs that do not further their career path,  
78 causing them to face difficulty in building their careers post-their undergraduate years;

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80 **Whereas**, financial aid is typically viewed as only equalizing opportunities for students during the fall  
81 and spring and this program would advance Cornell’s commitment to equalizing summer  
82 experience;

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84 **Whereas**, summer internships are not student independent activities, they are instead greatly  
85 informed by the socio-economic status of the student.

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87 **Whereas**, Vice Provost Burdick has expressed concerns about finding the funding for said Summer  
88 pilot program for the upcoming Summer 2020;

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90 **Whereas,** The Summer 2020 Pilot Program requires funding from the Board of Trustees in order  
91 for the Student Contribution to be waived for low-income students in unpaid summer work  
92 opportunities;

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94 **Whereas,** Vice Provost Burdick has expressed that the proposal for the pilot program will likely be  
95 included in the agenda of financial aid related items to be discussed with the Board of Trustees;

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97 **Whereas;** the Summer 2020 Pilot Program must be expanded to include waiving the Student  
98 Contribution Fee for all low-income students in subsequent summers post-2020;

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100 **Whereas,** Cornell University's sister institutions like University of Pennsylvania have as recently as  
101 2019 greatly reduced student contributions for highly-aid undergraduate students. Harvard and Rice  
102 University even went as far as eliminating their Student Contribution altogether making Cornell lag  
103 behind its peers in supporting students regardless of income;

104  
105 **Be it therefore resolved,** that the Office of the President investigate potential sources of funding  
106 for the pilot program and encourage the Board of Trustees and other potential funding sources to  
107 consider financially supporting the pilot program for this summer;

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109 **Be it further resolved,** Cornell University commit to providing financial support for the Summer  
110 2020 pilot program as well as implement said program for this upcoming summer and subsequent  
111 summers;

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113 **Be it finally resolved,** Cornell University abolish the Student Contribution for all students and  
114 uphold Cornell's commitment to being a bastion of inclusivity for students of all socio-economic  
115 backgrounds;

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118 **Respectfully Submitted,**

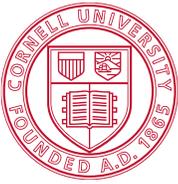
119  
120 Cat Huang '21  
121 *Executive Vice President, Student Assembly*

122  
123 Kataryna Restrepo '21  
124 *Director of Finance, Office of the Student Advocate*  
125 *The People's Organizing Collective*

126  
127 Yana Kalmyka '21  
128 *The People's Organizing Collective*

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130 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-0, 2/11/2020)*

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# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Appendix A

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### Student Contribution Summer 2020 Pilot Program Proposal

Proposal: provide financial relief and wider opportunities for Cornell student summer career experiences.

Financial eligibility: Cornell undergraduates participating in an approved summer internship, research, volunteer, and non-Cornell-affiliated academic enrichment programs, whose total expected family contribution is equal to or less than two times the standard expected student summer work contribution.

Total financial eligibility per student: an amount equal to the difference between the expected summer work contribution and the non-student (parent or family expected contribution).

- Example 1: a rising senior's total expected family contribution is \$4,700, including \$1,000 parent contribution and \$3,700 from expected summer earnings. The student's eligibility for relief through this program would be [expected summer earnings] minus [expected parent contribution] = \$3,700 - \$1,000 \$2,700.
- Example 2: a rising junior's total expected family contribution is \$3,200, equal to the student's standard expected summer earnings contribution. The expected parent contribution is \$0. The Student's eligibility for relief through this program would be \$3,000-\$0 \$3,000.

Note that participation in this program does not reduce a student's existing opportunity to borrow up to the extent that they are eligible.

- Academic eligibility: the student must be in good academic standing and meeting satisfactory academic progress (SAP) guidelines. Rising juniors and seniors must have declared majors.
- Experience eligibility: each year on September 1, a pre-approved list of approved organizations for the following summer term will be available. The university and college career service offices will maintain the list.

Students can seek to add new opportunities to the list at any time. The deadline for submitting a new opportunity proposal will be January 1 for the following summer. A standing review committee composed of professional representatives from career services, financial aid, and Engaged Cornell will review new requests. Approval will require up to two months for review. Newly-approved programs will require a follow-up review in the first year before being added to the permanent list, and all organizations and activities will be subject to re-review minimally every three years.

The program will commit to gradual expansion through College and donor participation. Students who are not financially eligible to participate can seek funding support from colleges and other Cornell offices and operations. Financial aid contributions will rise to match total of new dollars invested by colleges and new donors, with the intent to expand the number of eligible students with higher expected family contributions.