

Minutes – October 30, 2014
Cornell University Student Assembly
4:4pm – 6:30pm, Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

S. Balik called the meeting to order at 6:46pm.

Members present: B. Bacharach, S. Balik, J. Batista, Y. Bhandari, W. Blitsky, B. Brown, M. Chak, J. Fridman, L. Goldman, M. Henderson, E. Johnston, G. Kaufman, V. Kejariwal, D. Li, E. Liu, L. Liu, M. Masson, R. Raglin, M. Stefanko, D. Vakili, L. Wershaw, F. Yang, A. Zhou

Members excused: R. Gademsky, S. Tayal, P. Titcomb

Members unexcused: S. Ali Khan

II. Approval of the October 23, 2014

Minutes approved by unanimous consent

III. Open Microphone

None

IV. Cornell University's Response to Ebola – IMT group 5:00-5:30pm

Joel Malina: VP of University Relations

Frank Cantone: Associate Director of Emergency Management

Kent Bullis: Director of Medical Services

The Ebola issue is being closely followed. They are very well prepared to educate and protect against Ebola in Tompkins County and are in a coalition with dozens of years of experience in working with public health. IELT (Incident Executive Leadership Team) and IMT (Incident Management Team) formed in response to the potential emergency. The IELT forms policy and the IMT acts on that policy. Since the summer, the university has been planning for a potential Ebola outbreak. The IMT focuses on health services, communication, and health & safety. Risk Management has put travel restrictions into effect. An EOP (emergency option plan) is in place to facilitate the planning process.

Gannett has offered support to students with ties to West Africa and are maintaining contact with them. They have put into play policies and procedures to get information out to the community and to respond to an Ebola threat.

V. Kejariwal said that Ebola has been made a big deal by the media. The emergency plan is great, but attention should be directed toward awareness of more serious issues. Response: It has been a bit frustrating to devote so much attention to something that is unlikely to happen, but it is necessary to have an emergency plan.

M. Henderson asked what the student response has been to travel restrictions. Response: It mostly affects students that are conducting research in the affected areas.

J. Batista asked if there would be communication past the campus-wide email and posters. Response: Don't want to cause reason for concern – will gauge communication efforts as time goes on.

M. Stefanko mentioned that it was slightly concerning that so many resources are being put towards forming groups in response to media hysteria. There are more important things that the energy could be directed towards. Response: It's important to look at the positives. It's good that the university has the infrastructure to formulate a response, and it reinforces Cornell's knowledge and ability to do so. Currently there is not a whole lot of time directed toward this effort. Communication is important for families and loved ones that aren't aware of what is happening on campus.

L. Wershaw asked how Cornell has responded to similar concerns before and if the same procedures are being used for the current issue. Response: They are following the same procedure as they did a few years back for a similar concern, choosing to be proactive over reactive.

S. Tayal asked how travel restrictions are impacting study abroad students. Response: They are not the most knowledgeable, but currently they are not aware of any negative effects.

V. Announcements/Reports

Open Course Evaluations Announcement – J. Fridman

Looking at undergraduate colleges – aiming to have legislation in a month.

Community Life Committee Update – E. Johnston

Holding a mental health conference on 11/8 and it'd be great to have SA representation there.

Communications Committee Update – L. Wershaw

The monthly letter will be going out. Working on a video for SAIF

Internal Elections Announcement – M. Henderson

Looking for undergraduates to sit on search committees for the Provost and the VP for campus life

Cornell Cinema Appropriations Report – M. Stefanko

The Appropriations Committee was happy with Cinema's ability to reach out early on, though they were concerned with the lack of student involvement given the amount of funding they receive

Labor Roundtable Special Projects Request – M. Stefanko

Event planned by ILR students for the past 12 years. Adverse circumstances negatively affected their ability to get funding, and the Appropriations Committee approved \$750.

VI. New Business

R.24: Attendance Policy Charter Changes – M. Henderson and J. Berger

This resolution stems from a concern with the lack of enforcement of the attendance rules. Currently, a member is removed from the SA if he/she has missed 3 consecutive or 6 total meetings. No distinction is made between an excused and unexcused absence and tardiness is considered a ½ absence. The resolution allows for the E-board to unanimously vote via a secret ballot to avert a vacancy.

V. Kejariwal thought this was a really good idea, especially for people that have legitimate reasons to be absent (eg: interviews).

Motion to move to Business of the Day, seconded, dissent expressed: should not rush discussion for the sake of voting. Vote to vote: 23-0-0, **moved to Business of the Day**

K. Aniket asked what happens when a vacancy does occur. Response: They look for runner-ups during the elections. If there are none, they would open the position to the community. If more than one person is interested in the position, a special election would be held.

Motion to amend add "and loss of right to vote" between "vacancy" and "by a unanimous vote" in line 24 to clarify restoration of the right to vote.

Call to question on the amendment, seconded, dissent expressed. Vote to vote: 21-2-1, continue to voting. **Amendment failed by a vote of 8-11-1.**

Motion to amend: strike "will lose their right to vote and" in line 22.

Call to question on the amendment, seconded, approved by a vote of 24-0-0.

R.25: Calling for an investigation of the Quarter System – B. Brown and W. Bitsky

1st quarter: Freshman are not allowed to engage with members of the Greek system.
2nd quarter: Freshman allowed interaction
3rd quarter: Rush
4th quarter: Initiation

Looking to investigate the system to see if there are any unintended consequences or if it is indeed the right way to go.

Motion to move to Business of the Day, seconded, dissent expressed. Vote to vote: 15-10-0, moved to Business of the Day

M. Henderson asked what the goals of the resolution are. Response: Probably best to reach out to the student body and research what other universities do.

A. Zhou asked what avenues they were looking to pursue. Response: It will be dependent on the response.

Dean Hubbell stated that one hope of the Quarter System was that it would benefit community building for both the Greeks and the freshmen. He asked that this resolution not be just about alcohol, but also about the social experience.

Max Weisbrod said that it might be best for the SA to hesitate on this resolution as they might not be the best suited to investigate such issues without bias.

M. Stefanko disagreed with Max. He said it was a good idea to trust the resolution representatives and to allow them to conduct their research.

L. Goldman asked why there was a need for an official SA committee versus a group of SA representatives working together. Response: a committee will create a sense of urgency and purpose.

Y. Bhandari asked if they had reached out to Panhel, MGLC, IFC, and other interested bodies. Response: Wanted to bring it to the SA first, but definitely intend to reach out to those groups.

Ross Gitlin highly recommended close communication with the administration.

M. Battaglia recommends moving up the May 1st report deadline to allow time to react to said report.

Motion to amend May 1 to April 15.

Call to question on the amended, seconded, approved by a vote of 24-0-0.

J. Fridman mentioned that this resolution takes steps toward removing the Quarter System. He encourages looking at positive influences as well as unintended consequences.

Motion to table until next meeting, seconded, approved by 22-1-1.

S. Balik adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea Cheng