

Minutes – September 18, 2014
Cornell University Student Assembly
4:45pm – 6:30pm, Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

S. Balik called the meeting to order at 4:47pm.

Members present: S. Ali Khan, S. Balik, J. Batista, Y. Bhandari, W. Bitsky, B. Brown, R. Gademsky, L. Goldman, M. Henderson, E. Johnston, V. Kejariwal, M. masson, R. Raglin, M. Stefanko, S. Tayal, L. Wershaw, F. Yang

Members excused: L. Liu

Members unexcused: A. Zhou

II. Approval of the September 11, 2014 Minutes

Minutes approved by unanimous consent

III. Open Microphone

None

IV. Announcements/Reports

Elections Announcement – M. Henderson

All candidates are in: 19 freshman, 2 Arts & Sciences, 2 LGBTQ

Staffing Announcement – M. Henderson

Staffing was concluded a few days ago – there are some large committees these year, hopeful for what they will accomplish.

V. Business of the Day

Motion to move R.9 to the top of the agenda as it needs to be voted on today, **seconded, approved by a vote of 17-0-0.**

R. 9: Regarding the Proposed Final Exam Schedule: Fall 2014 – J. Batista

3 scenarios proposed: front-loading big classes, prioritizing senior exams, or a balanced approach. Last semester, the SA voted for front-loading big classes, but that messed up some freshmen and didn't work with some algorithms.

Motion to amend 'benefits' to 'benefit' in line 21, **seconded, approved by unanimous consent**

D. Kezerashvili asked what this resolution is proposing and if there was a change that members should be aware of. Response: Approving this resolution will act as a strong recommendation to the registrar to follow one of the 3 approaches.

J. Fridman asked if there was any input regarding the shortened study period. Response: No, but would be willing to add another line into the resolution before it is approved

Motion to move to Business of the Day, **seconded, approved by a vote of 17-0-0.**

M. Stefanko agrees with J. Fridman's sentiment that the shortened study period should be addressed, but doesn't think it belongs with this resolution. Prefers the balanced approach to the exam scheduling.

S. Ali Khan, L. Wershaw, and J. Fridman stated their support for the balanced approach.

J. Fridman mentioned that adding a line addressing the shortened study period would be a good idea as personally, he would find exam conflicts more 'tolerable' if he had more time to prepare for them.

M. Stefanko restated that the study period shouldn't be addressed. It might be considered as a 'one-off' that might be glanced over by the registrar, and the issue can be brought up in a more direct manner with a separate resolution.

Motion to fill in the blank on line 22 of the resolution with "balanced", **seconded, approved by a vote of 17-0-0.**

Call to question, seconded, approved by a vote of 19-0-0. (15-0-0 vote from the assembly contributes 2 yes votes to the 17-0-0 SA vote)

R.6 University Assembly Undergraduate Representatives as Ex-Officio Members of the Student Assembly – S. Ali Khan

Changes to the Charter, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are being presented at the same meeting, and the resolution is the same as it was in the past two weeks.

M. Stefanko said that after more consideration, he's more comfortable with the idea, but is concerned that only one UA undergraduate representative has been coming to the SA meetings instead of both. Response: The other one has been studying for a standardized test, but if the resolution is passed, then the other representative will be presented.

F. Yang asked why there are 2 SA representatives sitting on the UA and 2 undergraduate representatives – why not have all 4 representatives come from the SA? Response: It's important to have a breadth of influence.

S. Tayal asked if the words 'ex-officio' should be explicitly stated in the resolution since it is defined in the official SA documents. J. Berger said that the charter mentions 'ex-officio membership' but does not explicitly define it. Response: Also, when trustees were given ex-officio status, the wording was phrased similarly to the resolution.

R. Gitlin asked what would happen if the undergraduate representatives didn't meet the requirements of being on the SA, as the SA doesn't have the power to remove them from the UA. Response: Ex-officio members wouldn't be responsible for those requirements.

Call to question, seconded, approved by a vote of 14-1-1.

R. 8: Resources in Syllabi for Mental Health – M. Stefanko and Y. Bhandari

The resolution asks professors to put mental health resources on the syllabi that they hand out in class. If the SA passes the resolution, it will be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval.

R. Gitlin asked if Gannett was referenced during the creation of the content. He also asked if the language presented in the resolution would be the exact wording of what would be in syllabi, or if it only served as a framework. Response: They've talked to SADAC, EARS, and other big organizations, but they have not talked to Gannett yet. The idea is that the exact language will be adopted, but any added iterations would likely be fine.

L. Goldman recommends adding in a link to an online list of mental health resources.

S. Tayal recommends mentioning bias-reporting in the suggested content. Response: There is a concern that the content will get too bulky, as bias-reporting would open the door for many other more specific concerns. Those would best be brought up separately, and the suggested content is meant as more of a first line of contact for mental health concerns related to academics.

L. Wershaw questions how impactful the content would be in the syllabus, as personally she wouldn't reference it if she was feeling stressed. Response: Some students reference their syllabi more than others, and it's also important to have the information in as many places as possible. The hope is that also professors will use this as a starting point for dialogue regarding mental health.

J. Fridman references research indicating that a person's name/email and any assumptions made about ethnicity/etc. has a surprising impact. Maybe adding in a line mentioning the University Ombudsman would attempt to address this.

D. Kezerashvili mentions that extra additions to the suggested content might dilute the original intent and having too much information might be intimidating to read as a freshman.

Motion to table, seconded, approved by unanimous consent

VI. New Business

R. 10: Ex-Officio Charter Changes

R. 11: Ex-Officio Bylaws Changes

R. 12: Ex-Officio Standing Rules Changes – J. Berger and M. Henderson

These resolutions are meant to clarify the role of an ex-officio member.

Y. Bhandari asked if a specific number for outreach requirements should be made for the ex-officio members. Response: Since the ex-officio members represent diverse groups, it's probably better to not state a number and have the VP Outreach stay in contact with ex-officio members to ensure regular check-ins.

R. Gitlin highly recommends adding the Graduate Trustee as an ex-officio member. He also asked about enforcing attendance. Response: There is a statement in the Standing Rules that would exempt ex-officio members from absences arising from conflicts with their representative organizations.

Motion to move to Business of the Day, seconded, approved by unanimous consent.

Motion to amend line 42 to read "University Assembly members ex-officio positions as student governance liaisons for the duration of their terms", **seconded, approved by a vote of 16-0-0.**

Motion to amend Rule 1 starting line 17 to read: "Absences will not be recorded for ex-officio organizational liaison members if the absence is a result of a conflicting obligation related to their respective organization. Attendance requirements for all of the organizational liaisons shall be at the discretion of the executive committee. Absences for student government liaisons will not be under the discretion of the executive committee. ..."

S. Ali Khan thought that the motion would help the trustee and UA undergraduate representative regarding attendance concerns.

C. Cheng stated that the 3 resolutions were brought up with the intent of clarifying the ex-officio status and it would be hypocritical to be purposefully ambiguous about attendance and outreach. Debate also indicates that there are different kinds of ex-officio members.

Call to question on the motion to amend, **seconded, failed by a vote of 3-11-3.**

Motion to table these three resolutions, **seconded, approved by unanimous consent.**

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea Cheng