Cornell University
Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly
Agenda of the Thursday, October 22nd, 2020 Meeting
4:45 – 6:30 on ZOOM

I.   Call to Order

II.   Announcements and Presentations
a. Internal Elections for Committee Chairs and Vice President of Research and Accountability this Weekend
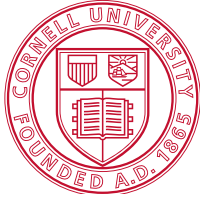b. Socially-Distanced Meet-Up on Friday!

III. Open Microphone

IV.   Approval of the Minutes
a. October 15th, 2020 Minutes

V.   Business of the Day
a. Resolution #6: Amending the Ranked Choice Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections

VI.   Adjournment

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, October 15th, 2020 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call
a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:48pm
b. Roll Call
   i. *Members Present*: L. Abd Elmagid, D. Anadkat (late), M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Bentley, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chukwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Moy (late), E. Perez, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, L. Zumpano, S. Zverev, C. Huang
   ii. *Members Absent*: J. Noriega, M. Shardow, S. Woldai

II. Presentation
a. President Pollack and Vice President of Student and Campus Life Lombardi
   i. President Pollack thanked the students for their efforts in keeping COVID cases down on campus and stressed the continued need for vigilance in social distancing, wearing a mask, etc. She also mentioned that the University is stressing awareness while traveling during Thanksgiving break – if you travel home, please stay home.
   ii. President Pollack provided updates on the following:
      1. Faculty accomplishments
      2. Federal funding and disbursement – CARES Act; increase in hiring of financial aid advisors
      3. Campus Code of Conduct proposed amendments
      4. Faculty Senate creating center for diversity and inclusion (I missed the other item that she mentioned just before this)
      5. Staff development for diversity and inclusion
      6. Carbon neutrality – immediate moratorium on investments in fossil fuels
      7. Naming of two North Campus residential buildings – Toni Morrison and Ruth Bader Ginsberg
      8. There will be a comprehensive mental health review report to be released in a couple of weeks; increased telehealth options; SCL has been developing online events for socialization
   iii. C. Huang asked President Pollack regarding PSAC and receiving information regarding the funding for CUPD.
      1. President Pollack stated that she believes information regarding the funding of CUPD is public information and will look more into that.

iv. N. Watson asked about students who are studying remotely and canceled their housing for the fall and what their options would be for the spring.
1. VP Lombardi stated that there will be enough space for students who wish to return to campus in the spring.
v. N. Watson questioned President Pollack and VP Lombardi regarding housing for transfer students (resolution from Spring 2020)
1. VP Lombardi stated there have been some obstacles related to the pandemic, so they want to ensure there is enough space before committing to anything.
vi. V. Xu offered appreciation from international students with relation to ICE and asked if there will be more proactive approach with visas and offers of work after graduation
1. President Pollack stated they will continue to work with the consortium. New visa rules are more related to graduate students than to undergraduate students. Federal Relations office is in communication with congressional offices.
vii. T. Reuning thanked President Pollack for bringing up the delays in financial aid and stated that some students, including himself, still have not received aid. He also asked about the application process for the funding that is available.
1. President Pollack stated that she will take up with Financial Aid regarding the students who have not received aid yet.
2. VP Lombardi stated there is two different emergency funds, one with an application. He is unsure of when the funds will be distributed and will contact the Financial Aid Office.
viii. L. Smith asked about the search process for the Dean of Students
1. VP Lombardi stated that while he was upset to see Vijay leave, Marla Love has done an exceptional job in the interim. Due to the hiring freeze, they will be keeping Love in place until there is a more appropriate to open the search.
ix. U. Chukwukere expressed that there are community concerns and CUPD policing around campus and stated that students have expressed the need for options or alternatives. He asked if there would be any research into this.
1. President Pollack stated that they will be looking into other options and services.
x. M. Adeghe asked if there is a threshold as to when Greek Life might be abolished due to student deaths and other incidents.
1. President Pollack stated that they cannot discuss the open lawsuit; however, she stated that there is a need for balance.
2. VP Lombardi stated that he thinks there will always be a place for small residential communities on campus and that there needs to be space to create this type of community.
xi. After President Pollack and VP Lombardi left the meeting, T. Reuning asked if anyone knew if COVID-testing for off-campus students would continue after Thanksgiving.
1. C. Huang stated that she believed testing will be available, however, she will follow up with the appropriate offices.

III. Open Microphone

    a. No speakers at the open microphone.

IV. Approval of Minutes
    a. September 3, 2020
        i. Motion to approve the September 3rd minutes – ==approved== 19-1-2
    b. October 8, 2020
        i. Motion to approve the October 8th minutes – ==approved== 24-0-3

V. New Business
    a. SA R6 – Establishing a Plurality Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections
        i. Abstract: This resolution is intended to establish a plurality voting system for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections.
        ii. U. Chuckwukere stated that he would make an amendment to the resolution as it stands to change it so that there is still ranked choice; however, it would not invalidate a ballot of a student that didn't rank all the candidates
        iii. K. Butler expressed concern whether this would affect freshman elections.
            1. M. Adeghe stated that the freshman race is not a ranked race, thus it would not be affected.
        iv. L. Abd. Elmagid asked if votes would still be transferred or not.
            1. U. Chukwukere stated that currently the ballot is invalidated if not all candidates are ranked, and he believes the votes would still transfer.
        v. K. Santacruz asked if there had been steps to talk with the people who handle the software of the voting system to provide a warning or alert.
            1. U. Chukwukere stated there was a message included during the re-election.
        vi. K. Santacruz asked about what would happen in the events of a tie.
            1. U. Chukwukere indicated that it would still be a ranked system, but a voter would not have to rank every candidate.
            2. T. Reuning stated that the likelihood of there being a tie would be very low as the votes would still be transferred.
        vii. C. Tempelman asked how the system would work to adjust for the changes in the resolution.
            1. U. Chukwukere stated that the software or system would need to be updated or adjusted.
        viii. V. Xu expressed confusion regarding the language in the resolution.
            1. U. Chukwukere indicated that he has already amended and changed the language and the updated version will be in the Box for SA members to review.
        ix. S. Zverev stated that a ranked system encourages students to learn about the candidates and their platforms, rather than just voting for one person.
            1. U. Chukwukere responded that without an option of "no confidence", it did not give the voters the means to vote and rank candidates they were familiar with.
        x. M. Adeghe stated that with ranked choice, you vote moves up with each tabulation.
        xi. D. Anadkat informed that the way that the resolution is present, it would still allow for the voter to rank the candidates they want to vote for and the votes would still carry with each tabulation.
        xii. Motion to table – ==approved== 25-0-2

b. C. Huang stated that committee chair elections will be upcoming and to reach out to L. Abd Elmagid if you are interested or have any questions.
      i. Committee chair applications will be open and available potentially tomorrow, 10/16, with a deadline in the next week.
   c. N. Watson stated that Orientation has been uploaded to the Box and the VP for Research and Accountability position has reopened; this position will be voted on in the next couple of weeks.

VI. Adjournment
   a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 6:05pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanahan
Clerk of the Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

<div align="center">

S.A. Resolution #6

Amending the Rank Choice Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections

</div>

ABSTRACT: This resolution is intended to amend the Rank-Choice system for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections

Sponsored by: Uche Chukwukere '21

Whereas, Rank Choice Voting is the system that is currently employed for the President, Executive Vice President, and reserved Undesignated Representative At-Large student-elected positions on the Cornell Student Assembly.

Whereas, Rank Choice voting is a system in which voters rank their candidates based on their personal preferences

Whereas, The Office of Assemblies specifically states that, "Ranked choice voting (also called Instant Runoff Voting/IRV, or **"Hare System"** Voting) is a method of voting in which voters rank candidates in order of preference - 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. All first choices are tallied and in a single-winner race, if no candidate receives a majority (50%+1) of first-choice votes, the less popular candidates are eliminated and ballots cast for these candidates are redistributed to more popular candidates, based on their voters' second choices, until one candidate wins with a majority. **As a result, every vote counts and very few votes are "wasted." Voters cast their vote for their favorite candidate knowing that if he or she doesn't gather enough votes to win, their vote will count toward their second choice. Your vote always counts for your highest ranked candidate until he or she is elected or eliminated and your vote continues to count once your favorite candidate is elected or eliminated until all the seats are filled.** This helps ensure that more voters than ever are represented by someone they voted for and provides greater opportunity for more diverse representation."

Whereas, The Office of Assemblies has participated in a form of voter disenfranchisement by invalidating the votes of voters who did not fully rank all candidates in a specific race

34   **Whereas,** In the 2019, 1435 ballots were deemed "empty" in the Presidential Election, 1761 ballots

35   were deemed "empty" in the Executive Vice President Election, and 2038 ballots were deemed

36   "empty" in the Undesignated Student Assembly Representative At-Large race

37

38   **Whereas,** In the 2020 Fall Reactivation, second round election, 37 votes were invalidated in the

39   Presidential Election in part because voters did not rank every single candidate

40

41   **Whereas,** In the 2020 Fall Reactivation, first round election, many more votes were going to be

42   invalidated due to voters have their votes invalidated because they did not rank every single

43   candidate and as a result the election for certain races had to be redone with clarification of the

44   reason for invalidation despite no true attempt of notifying voters of this technicality the first time.

45

46   **Whereas,** These empty votes included voters who did not fully rank every single candidate

47

48   **Whereas,** This is unacceptable because voters should be able to rank as many or as few candidates

49   as they so choose and not have their votes invalidated

50

51   **Whereas,** In the spirit of Rank Choice Voting, not ranking a candidate is equivalent to a motion of

52   no confidence and should be accepted as such and the candidate(s) that were ranked should have

53   those votes counted towards them

54

55   **Be it therefore resolved,** In following elections, all elected positions should go by a rank-choice

56   voting system that does not invalidate ballots of voters that do not decided to rank every candidate.

57

58   **Be it finally resolved,** The following amendments are made in Section 2: Election of Voting

59   Members for the Cornell Student Assembly Charter:

60

61   "The President, Executive Vice President, and other Undesignated at Large representatives will be

62   elected by a single transferable voting system. Voters may rank all candidates on the ballot for each

63   of these races and any ballot that has candidate(s) who is/are left unranked the ballot shall not be

64   invalidated and will count towards the ranked candidate . All other representatives shall be elected

65 ==by a plurality voting system. Voters will cast one vote per available seat, (e.g. if three Arts and==

66 ==Sciences representatives are to be elected, the voter will vote for three candidates).”==

67

68 **Respectfully submitted,**

69 Uche Chukwukere '21

70 *Vice President for Finance*

71

72 *(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-2, 10/14/2020)*