

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, October 14, 2021 Meeting

4:45 PM – 6:30 PM

via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. A. Ononye called the meeting to order at 4:46pm (EST).
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* M. Baker, J. Bansah, D. Cady, P. Da Silva, D. Eisman, A. Gleiberman, P. Gronemeyer, D. Ilango, J. Jiang, A. Juan, J. Kim, A. Lampert, C. León, Y. Logan, L. Lu, J. Mullen, N. Overton, N. Reddy, K. Santacruz, L. Smith, M. Song, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, H. Wade, A. Williams, E. Yan, A. Ononye
 - ii. *Members Absent:* E. Bentolila, M. Louis, K. Thakkar

II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (Cayuga Nation)

- a. Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq̓ are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York State, and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq̓ dispossession and honor the ongoing connection of the Gayogohó:nq̓ people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

III. Consent Agenda

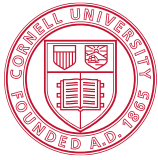
- a. A. Ononye stated that Resolution 5 was acknowledged by the President, Resolution 6 was tabled indefinitely, Resolution 7 was acknowledged by the President, Resolution 8 was tabled indefinitely, and Resolutions 9 and 10 were acknowledged by the President. Any specific comments from the President are on the Office of the Assemblies website.

IV. Open Microphone

- a. There were no speakers present at open microphone.

V. Presentations and Forums

- a. Student Assembly and Shared Governance by the Director of the Office of the Assemblies, G. Giambattista.
 - i. The assemblies at Cornell and the Faculty Senate are the expressions of the University's commitment to shared governance and constituent representation. In 1955, the Board of Trustees transferred the responsibilities of nonacademic policies to the President of the university. Prior to that, the Faculty made decisions regarding policies and procedures affecting students and staff. Cornell's shared governance bodies are an outgrowth of the unrest on campus in 1969, which culminated in a mass meeting of over 7000 people camped in Barton Hall for three days discussing conditions on campus. The ultimate recommendation was that a self-governance system be established on campus that was representation and democratic, which resulted in the



Cornell University Student Assembly

establishment of the assemblies and other representative bodies. Cornell is one of the relatively few institutions in the nation that allows the campus community to directly elect constituent members to its highest governing body; the current student-elected trustees are S. Woldai and L. Davis-Frost. Each assembly serves as a bridge between the larger population and the administration and recommend changes to university policies that affect the constituencies. These recommendations are subject to approval by the President who reviews and responds to all the resolutions passed by the assemblies. The governance system allows members of the community to have access to information involving matters of concern to them and the authority to examine these issues and make recommendations to the administrations. The success of the assemblies is dependent on three elements; hard-working, dedicated volunteers who are committed to serving the university, the administration, which includes middle level managers who work closely with the assemblies, and active communication between the assemblies and their constituents. The SA and GPSA are financed through the Student Activity Fee and the EA and the UA are financed through the Office of the Assemblies budget. The Office of the Assemblies is located in 109 Day Hall and members of the assemblies are always welcomed to swing by or use the space to do assembly work. It is a staff of six, including G. Giambattista, W. Treat, and four student clerks. Robert's Rules is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and allows the Assembly to make decisions without confusion. The role of the president is to moderate the debate, unless they are engaged in the issue of the resolution. All of the assemblies are ruled by their governing documents, which may be changed internally, and some changes require the approval of the president. A charter is the basic rules of the assembly and the bylaws are the detailed procedures and rules for the assembly. Standing rules are approved by the assembly and must be renewed each year by the incoming assembly. A few basic principles include courtesy for all, consideration of only one subject at a time, the minority must be heard, and the will of the majority must prevail. Quorum is the minimum number of voting members required to do business, which is half the assembly plus one. Having the floor means that the person has the exclusive right to address the assembly regarding a motion. There is a great cheat sheet for Robert's Rules and the processes available on the Office of the Assemblies website. The legislative actions of the assemblies are most typically drafted as a resolution and developing a resolution includes several steps. The general rule of thumb for a resolution is that you should have a pretty good idea of the outcome of a vote before you even get to the floor of the assembly.

- ii. J. Jiang thanked G. Giambattista for addressing the assembly and asked if the President has the right or the power to overrule or veto any decision that is passed by any of the assemblies.
 1. G. Giambattista explained that the authority of the assemblies is to make recommendations and the President will always respond to the



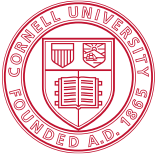
Cornell University Student Assembly

resolutions either accepting them, acknowledging them, or rejecting them.

2. J. Jiang asked if there is a group of people who decide or does the President decide on their own.
 - a. G. Giambattista stated that the President does have a cabinet mostly comprised of Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, and other senior administrators that serve as their advisory group.
 - b. J. Jiang asked if the President has a community like a central political bureau where the President decides on resolutions based on everybody's recommendation.
 - i. G. Giambattista explained that the President has a deal of respect for the folks that advise them. The President is the decision maker for the university, but G. Giambattista does not know the actual structure of how decisions are made.
 - c. J. Jiang asked if the only people who can veto the decision at the present level is the Board of Trustees.
 - i. G. Giambattista answered that the President reports to the Board of Trustees.

VI. Announcements and Reports

- a. M. Baker announced that the Appropriations Committee will be meeting the Interfaith Council and SAFC on Monday, October 18, in 145 McGraw Hall.
- b. Byline Reports
 - i. Slope Day Programming Board
 1. M. Baker explained that the Slope Day Programming Board requested \$21 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$21. Despite their large rollover, the Slope Day Programming Board wants to come back with a bigger and better Slope Day and will be allocating more money to the talent fee. The Committee feels that since Slope Day is the largest annual outdoor student gathering, it should receive the \$21 they requested.
 2. Motion to approve – **approved** by a vote of 24-0-1.
 - ii. Collegiate Readership Program
 1. A. Gleiberman explained that the Appropriations Committee recommended \$4.30 be allocated to CRP.
 2. Motion to approve – **approved** by a vote of 24-0-1
 - iii. Multicultural Greek and Fraternity Council (MGFC)
 1. M. Baker explained that the MGFC requested \$1.07, which is a 7-cent increase from the 2020-2022 allocation. The Appropriations Committee recommended to allocated \$1 because MPFC has a rollover around \$10,000. The Committee recommended that the rollover money be spent. The MGFC will not be appealing this decision.



Cornell University Student Assembly

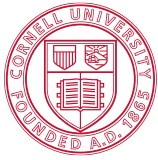
2. D. Cady asked for clarification about the Outreach program and any other information given and what the processes for monitoring that is, if there are any.
 - a. M. Baker stated that MGFC is familiar with and the leaders of their suborganizations and said they are going to make sure and contact them, as well as do that in the future at the beginning of each academic year.
 3. A. Ononye asked how MGFC's rollover compares to other organizations' rollover and how the committee factors that into the rationale of their recommendations.
 - a. M. Baker explained that for the Slope Day Programming Board they did not consider their rollover because they were going to use and spend that towards fixing up facilities and talent fees in one big event. MGFC is different because its suborganizations have a bunch of little events and it makes sense for them to use their rollover before allocating more money.
 4. L. Smith motioned to approve the recommendation and stated that the assembly does not have to table individual reports, they only have to table the final dollar value recommendation, based on provision byline cycles.
 - a. M. Baker asked for that clarification that in the last byline cycle, the SA presented and vote on individual byline reports on the same day.
 - i. L. Smith stated that is correct and that only the final recommendation at the end of the whole process has to be tabled.
 1. M. Baker stated that the SA Constitution does not reflect that.
 5. A. Ononye stated that they agree with M. Baker's sentiments, as members need time to read the reports.
 6. L. Smith withdrew their motion and stated they should revisit this idea next week.
- iv. EARS: Empathy. Assistance & Referral Services
1. M. Baker stated that EARS was allocated \$1.50 in 2020-2022 Byline Cycle, they requested \$1.60 for 2022-2024 cycle, and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$1.30. There is a lot of potential for EARS to save money by buying things in bulk, spending less on promotional materials, as 40% of their budget goes to advertising, and that their services are open to the greater Cornell community and it is first come, first serve; this means there are undergraduate students, who are paying for their services, are on the waitlist because they signed up after a graduate student or a staff member. The Committee hopes that in the future, a larger proportion



Cornell University Student Assembly

of their budget will go toward actual peer mentoring and training costs.

2. D. Cady stated they appreciate the work of the Appropriations Committee and asked how much the SA will not be allocating to EARS and what they will be cutting down on.
 - a. M. Baker explained that one of the members of the Appropriations Committee had an analysis that brought their budget to \$1.16, which was cutting out the big line items of concern.
 - b. D. Cady asked what the considerations were on cutting down promotional materials.
 - i. M. Baker explained that EARS usually takes about 100 trainees, with about 30 people on the waitlist, on a first come, first serve basis. The Appropriations Committee would like undergraduate students to be prioritized, as they are the ones funding this organization.
3. A. Williams stated that in the past year, EARS were having difficulty being allowed to train students, because some of the guidelines were changing. As EARS is one of the only campus mental health services that students are able to get involved with, as well as other staff and community members, A. Williams asked if there are any reasons why they made such a significant cut to the amount they requested. It is really important to have that money for promotional costs so that students know that there are mental health resources available to them, as well as promoting the organizations enough so that students can sign up before staff and others.
 - a. M. Baker explained that last year, EARS could not do peer counseling and they have now replaced that completely with peer mentoring. When you take in all the concerns about their allocations, the recommendation would actually be much lower, but the Appropriations Committee thought \$1.30 was appropriate.
4. J. Mullen stated that it seems counterintuitive to lower their allocation when promotion is one of the most of critical parts of the existence of EARS.
 - a. M. Baker explained that EARS has room to cut their budget for t-shirts, Instagram ads, food and their staff retreats.
5. D. Cady asked if the SA could allocate \$1.50, instead of \$1.30, which recognizes that EARS could be more frugal with their budget.
 - a. M. Baker stated that the process for overturning the Appropriations Committee decision is a two-thirds vote by the SA.
6. L. Smith stated that the Appropriations Committee is doing a great job at being critical, but that EARS is being a bit underfunded with



Cornell University Student Assembly

that estimate. L. Smith asked if they knew how much graduate students are in the organizations and if they are eligible for funding from the GPSA.

- a. M. Baker stated that they do not currently getting funding from the GPSA.
7. J. Bansah asked why the SA is decreasing student organizations budgets when the SA is not struggling financially.
 - a. M. Baker stated that the Appropriations Committee started by voting on recommending \$1.60, which received 0 votes. The next highest number proposed by a committee member was \$1.30 and that was approved by the committee.
8. N. Overton echoed D. Cady's sentiments and stated that they do not understand why the funding is so low and being able to reach people effectively is important. N. Overton asked why recommendations like \$1.50, \$1.40, or \$1.55 were not considered.
 - a. M. Baker stated that they do not propose the recommendations, the committee members do.
9. A. Gleiberman voiced their support for the Appropriations Committee recommendation and stated their primary role is to deliver peer mentoring services to students and not to be an advertising agency.
10. V. Valencia asked what the process is for overturning the recommendation.
 - a. M. Baker explained that someone would motion to overturn the recommendation and then fill in the number, which requires a two-thirds vote.
11. A. Williams stated they were disappointed the committee did not even consider giving EARS the same allotment with strong suggestions to fix their budgeting.
12. A. Ononye asked what happens if at the end of the semester, the total amount the SA allocates is under what they have given to organizations in the past.
 - a. M. Baker stated that at the end of the cycle, they add up the individual amounts and that total is the Student Activity fee. Right now, it is \$309, and each student is charged \$309 when they pay to attend Cornell. The money that all these organizations are operating on right now was allocated in Fall 2019.
13. D. Eisman echoed A. Gleiberman's sentiment and stated their support for the committee's recommendation. The committee took many things into considered and much of EARS's budget does not primarily serve the students in general.
14. A. Juan stated that they understand that this contributes to the final student activity fee and two years ago, the fee went up 32%. A. Juan would prefer that it does not go up any higher this year.



Cornell University Student Assembly

15. P. Gronemeyer stated that the assembly should trust the committee members and the process. P. Gronemeyer asked if EARS has appealed the decision.
 - a. M. Baker stated that the EARS has not appealed this decision yet.
16. C. León reemphasized earlier concerns that a higher possible allocation was not considered first.
17. D. Cady stated that the assembly should table the report and have a larger conversation next week and hopefully propose a change.
18. M. Song stated that defunding EARS is a disservice to the Cornell community and impedes students access to an equitable learning environment.

VII. Business of the Day

- a. Staffing Committees
 - i. L. Smith stated that this process started in executive session and should continue in executive session.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. A. Ononye adjourned the meeting at 5:54pm (EST).

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanahan
Clerk of the Student Assembly