

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly Minutes of the October 20, 2022 Meeting 4:45 PM – 6:30 PM 407 Willard Straight Hall

I. Call to Order

- a. President V. Valencia called the meeting to order at 4:55pm

II. Roll Call

- a. *Members Present [21]: S. Ali, S. Bhardwaj, D. Cady, K. Chan, G. Dong, A. Lampert, B. Kotb, J. Lee, A. Lewis, J. Mayen, M. Song, V. Valencia, R. Chatterji, K. Liu, A. Richmond, Y. Yuan, B. Luckow, C. Ting, R. DeLorenzo, P. Da Silveira, B. Mehretu*
- b. *Members Excused: M. Baker, E. D'Angelo, J. Kalinski, D. Edelman, N. Son, JP. Swenson, L. Lu,, D. Nachman, S. Williams*

III. Land Acknowledgment of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (Cayuga Nation)

- a. Chair V. Valencia stated the land acknowledgment

IV. Late Additions to the Agenda

- a. None

V. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the October 20, 2022 meeting minutes
 - i. D. Cady motions to amend “Caddy to Cady,” passed by unanimous consent
 - ii. C. Ting motions to amend “Kolinski to Kalinski,” passed by unanimous consent
 - iii. S. Bhardwaj motions to approve the meeting minutes, passed by unanimous consent

VI. Open Microphone

- a. None

VII. Announcements and Reports

- a. V. Valencia reminds members of the attendance policy
- b. V. Valencia announces the fall retreat this weekend
- c. V. Valencia announces there will be meetings “print meetings” this Sunday and every Sunday going forward to discuss what everyone is working on
- d. K. Chan emphasizes to fill out the form for the fall retreat



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- e. K. Chan announces she put a new document on the box that's an updated version of all the amendments and changes posed in the last 4 weeks related to Resolution 8
- f. M. Song announces the Diversity and Inclusion committee will have its first meeting on Sunday and it's not too late to apply to the committee
- g. Clyde Lederman announces that he'll be participating as an ex-officio member today
 - i. V. Valencia clarifies that technically every undergraduate student is ex-officio to the SA
- h. S. Bhardwaj announces the Student Health Advisory committee that's having its first meeting on Saturday
- i. K. Chan states it would be a good idea to put committee meetings in the slack

VIII. Initiatives

- a. None

IX. Presentation and Forums

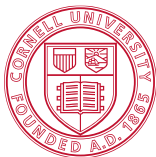
- a. President of the Big Red Bears, William, is back because their funding request was denied
 - i. Wants to further understand what the justification was
 - ii. The main purpose of this project is student safety. The current way of transporting Touchdown is not safe or effective
 - iii. The members were shocked that the SA would deny the request, so was faculty and other students
 - iv. Shares an anecdote about a club member who had to walk a long distance in the costume and almost got heat stroke. He had to run into Teagle and find a broom closet to get water before passing out
 - v. R. DeLorenzo stated that the request did not get approved because of the amount requested and the current amount in the club's account
 - vi. One time Touchdown was almost hit by a car because the bag is dark
 - vii. R. DeLorenzo stated there was some concerns about logistics and risk management, but the project has already been approved by Risk Management
 - viii. William states they have a space lined up for parking and Cornell has said they can grant an all-access parking pass. They will also ask event holders to provide designated parking spaces
 - ix. William states the request was also denied because of the amount in relation to the Special Projects funds. States that \$10,400 was given to another club who provided a one-page resolution with little detail, while theirs was 3 pages. There were many others ranging from \$2,500-\$10,000. Recently, the



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SA gave \$5,000 to one organization to a gala that utilized Touchdown. Spent \$4,000 on a camera, \$1,900 in prizes, and \$4,000 for goody bags

- x. President states their request is for a strategic long-term solution to a problem that represents a landmark of Cornell
 - xi. V. Valencia asks if William can stay for the presentation by R. DeLorenzo
 - xii. William responds that he can
 - xiii. R. DeLorenzo asks how long the issue of lack of transportation has been an issue for Big Red Bears
 - xiv. William responds it's been an issue for a while, he joined during Covid, and it took awhile to figure out what the best solution would be
- b. R. DeLorenzo gives a presentation on the funding of Big Red Bears
- i. Found that in Fall '19 they were allocated over \$2,000, in the Spring '21 they were allocated over \$2,000 again, but only spent \$80 because it was during Covid
 - ii. In Fall '21 they only spent \$200 on cleaning. They had a spending cap of \$6,000, but it was impacted by Covid
 - iii. In Fall '22 they had the same \$6,000 spending cap. They used \$5,744.41 and a lot of that went to new outfits, costumes, and props
 - iv. A lot of the money being allocated is not being spent or spent on costumes and props
 - v. Big Red Bears spent \$6,913.61 between Fall '19 and Spring '22 and \$4,389.16 went to costumes and \$4,447.03 went unspent. They started to max out their spending tab starting last spring
 - vi. The Big Red Bears have an endowment from the class of 1970. There's a reported balance of \$7,462.37 in the fund.
 - vii. R. DeLorenzo states the endowment is actually way higher. There was a purchase this year of a new Touchdown costume that was \$11,240, so the Big Red Bears must have had at least \$17,702.37 in the Class of 1970 endowment alone. This isn't inclusive of the \$6,000 SAFC spending cap
 - viii. Only \$2,833.88 have been spent so far from the \$6,000 SAFC cap
 - ix. In the current semester, they've spent \$2,380.40 so far of their \$6,000 cap. This was maintenance of the suit, website renewal, traffic cones, signs, and costumes
 - x. Purchases were requested and approved before the allocation for special project was approved
 - xi. Although the reported amount for the costumes was \$2,380.40 another order of \$3,229.77 will be used for more costume materials in Spring '23



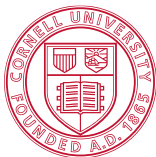
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- xii. In the 2022-2023 academic year, they're expected to spend \$5,610.17 on costumes for the mascot of their \$6,000 cap
- xiii. Addressed the student safety issue. States the SA cares about student safety, but you have to sign an agreement to assume risks and waive claims when you sign up for the Big Red Bears
- xiv. Gave five officers who would drive the golf cart and all signed the waiver
- xv. States that people who are part of the club assume the risks and it should be up to Cornell to provide an adequate transportation system if they deem necessary
- xvi. States a golf cart would be great, but thought needs to be put into where could it be permanently stored (not just parked), where and when it could be driven, who is trained and approved to drive it, who would be responsible for funding and upkeep of the car long term
- xvii. From Fall '19 to Spring '22 spent \$4,389.16 on costumes and \$4,447.03 allocated money left unspent
- xviii. At the beginning of F'22 the Big Red Bears had at minimum \$17,702.37 in their class of 1970 endowment, yet spent \$11,240 on two new suits with intention to purchase another one if the opportunity arises
- xix. In academic year 2023, they intend to purchase \$5,185 worth of outfits
- xx. At no point since Fall' 19, has money been set aside for the long-term investment of a golf cart. There has been some money used for traffic cones and decorations for the golf cart and \$11,240 of the class of 1970 endowment in the purchase of new suits
- xxi. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Big Red Bears will have a minimum of \$13,462 to spend on a golf cart, if they do not spend any more this year, and this number is actually much higher
- xxii. States potential recommendations: pool funding sources together for purchase of golf cart in Fall '23. The cost of the golf cart is \$11,446, so one option is to use the class of 1970 endowment. This is \$7,462.37 + whatever is put in in the future and the utilization of future SAFC funds is \$3,984
- xxiii. Another option is to talk with Athletics about how they could better support the Big Red Bears
- xxiv. Last option, is to apply to SAFC special events fund, grants, or get alumni donations
- xxv. V. Valencia asks if William would like to respond. He states a lot was true and some was not completely true because it's difficult to tell these things from the outside



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- xxvi. States the \$5,185 was just a quote from the costume company and then they determined what they could realistically get
- xxvii. They have been working on internal initiatives to diversify some of Touchdown's outfits in terms of religious holidays
- xxviii. Continues that of course there is a waiver and this was not in place until this semester, possibly because safety was now being raised as an issue. Just because we signed risk away that doesn't mean we should ignore obvious issues, that doesn't seem right
- xxix. In terms of the general purchase of outfits, we're a mascot so that's kind of the whole point
- xxx. States he wasn't in a leadership position until Spring '21, so he was not in full control until Fall '21
- xxxi. They didn't spend much until Spring of '22 because he didn't know what SAFC was and he was not on campus during Covid, so he didn't have a good grasp of what the issues were. This is also why nothing was sent aside for the golf carts
- xxxii. The primary reason for purchasing the new suits is that the old Touchdown costume was not flexible enough for different heights. The new suits address these issues
- xxxiii. The aesthetic changes were to make it more in line with the Athletics logo and less scary because children were scared of him. They do a lot of family friendly events, so in general they wanted to make him happier looking
- xxxiv. They tried to save the suits with some repairs, but ultimately it was necessary to get new suits
- xxxv. It is unfortunate that all these changes are happening at one time, part of the blame is Covid, but this is the way the timing has worked out
- xxxvi. C. Ting asks how much effort and detail has gone into the long-term issues with owning a golf cart?
- xxxvii. William states risk management has already approved it, a parking space and long-term storage areas has been approved
- xxxviii. B. Mehretu motions to limit debate to 5 minutes, passed by unanimous consent
- xxxix. S. Bhardwaj asks if they have spoken to the Dean of Student and Campus Life about if they could use their golf cart?
 - xl. William states that's where they started. There are only certain times when they're allowed to use the golf cart by the state of New York, so that doesn't work
 - xli. J. Lee asks why did it take so long to understand they needed a golf cart?

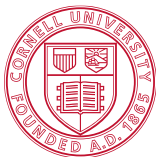


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- xlii. William responds it was the time it took for him to come into the club and figure out there's a problem and then plan a solution. SAFC funding doesn't rollover, so they can't use the Covid funds now
- xlili. D. Cady states this should be an Athletics department problem and not a student problem. SA could best help them by getting involved in helping them work with Athletics
- xliv. William responds that athletics is a big event requester, but not their "home." They fall under Student and Campus life
- xlvi. M. Song asks why costumes cost so much (\$400 for a cape)? Are there club fundraising efforts?
- xlvi. William answers the costumes are all custom because you can't put real clothes on Touchdown. The Class of 1970 endowment is the main fundraising, but private events also will occasionally pay them for appearances

X. Business of the Day

- a. A. Lampert motions to move up Resolution 10 before 8 and 9, since it'll take 10 minutes max
 - i. M. Song dissents because Resolution 8 has been pushed off for a month and a half, in a vote of 7-13-1 the motion does not pass
- b. Office of Ethics presents Resolution 8
 - i. V. Valencia announces that a vote will be conducted at 6:15pm
 - ii. K. Chan states everything in red is everything that has been amended and that has been proposed to be amended
 - iii. V. Valencia states that all amendments need to be discussed and voted on
 - iv. S. Bhardwaj motions to amend line 39 and strike "must" and replace with "can," passed by unanimous consent
 - v. M. Song motions to get rid of everything in red because these amendments were not actually made
 - vi. Clyde Lederman states that these were not amendments just suggestions
 - vii. V. Valencia states a best practice is to not add amendments to the resolution that haven't been voted on
 - viii. M. Song withdraws her motion
 - ix. P. De Silveira asks if there has to be a point of order for a guest to participant in debate
 - x. C. Taylor states that any member of the Cornell community can be an ex-officio member and participant if they are recognized by the chair



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- xi. D. Cady states that they would have to introduce every piece of red text as single amendments, which would take forever. States he thinks this should be done as a sperate resolution because there's too many changes to make in one sitting
- xii. R. DeLorenzo motions to postpone the consideration of Resolution 8 indefinitely
- xiii. A. Lampert dissents because this is the fifth time the Office of Ethics has come. It's ridiculous that people didn't go to them over the 2 months we've had this amendment, in a vote of 3-13-4 motion fails
- xiv. M. Song asks when they're voting
- xv. V. Valencia responds 6:15pm
- xvi. S. Bhardwaj motions to amend line 86 to add "at the conclusion of the academic year the chairperson will present a comprehensive analysis of each voting members performance on the Student Assembly and this information will also be available to the public," passed by unanimous consent
- xvii. Office of Ethics responds that this could be an over-step on their part. They don't see everything and they work on more of a holistic basis
- xviii. Office of Ethics continues this is why it important to talk with them before anything passes. They have discussed these points and have reasons why they didn't do them
- xix. P. De Silveira motions to reconsider the passed amendment, passed by unanimous consent
- xx. D. Cady states we should just vote on the resolution and make sure we talk to the Office of Ethics before we do anything in the future
- xxi. D. Cady motions to end debate and go into voting, passed 17-0-2
- xxii. V. Valencia states it requires a 2/3 vote, which is 13 yes votes
- xxiii. Vote of 8-7-4 this resolution fails
- xxiv. V. Valencia states the Code of Ethics has already been passed and added it to the charter. Want to be transparent and honest to the community and this almost makes it seem like we don't. What can happen is another resolution is introduced with different wording and amendments that deals with the same bylaw amendments
- xxv. A. Lampert states that everyone needs to do their best to make amendments immediately and talk to the Office of Ethics
- xxvi. P. Da Silveira asks if we're allowed to make comments
- xxvii. P. Da Silveira states on the document there was 15 sponsors who were willing to work on it. They need to work better with the Office of Ethics and have better communication and compromise



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xxviii. S. Bhardwaj motions to extend time to 6:40, passed 16-0-2

c. A. Lewis presents Resolution 9

- i. A. Lewis states that the hotel committee will help increase involvement and awareness in the Student Assembly on campus through unique school-wide events
- ii. S. Bhardwaj asks if they would be willing to make it a sub-committee of the Communications and Outreach committee
- iii. A. Lewis responds she's open to that
- iv. D. Cady states they could do that simply by replacing "ad-hoc" with "sub-committee of the Communications committee" in a couple different lines
- v. M. Song states she agrees with that idea and it solves some issues with redundancy
- vi. K. Chan motions to postpone to next week since all sponsors are not here, in a vote of 14-1-4 resolution is postponed

XI. New Business

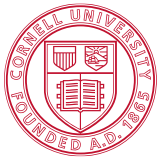
a. Resolution 10 is presented by Pareesay Afzal and A. Lampert

- i. IRS requires Cornell to withhold 14% of the financial aid refund that international students receive in taxes and may not be eligible for return upon filing taxes
- ii. This is a significant amount and since it's billed at the beginning of the academic year students receiving financial aid are short \$3,000 to \$3,500 that they would have spent on housing, transport, book, etc...
- iii. Students are not adequately notified of this tax withholding. They have unexpectedly discovered this withholding. It can only be discovered by going to the Financial Aid policy page
- iv. This has caused international students' financial difficulties as they are only able to work 20 hours a week and many are working very close to this to make ends meet to compensate for the withholding
- v. Request SA to recommend that the financial aid office to better notify international students through effective channels about this withholding, to provide emergency aid to students receiving full financial aid who are impacted by this withholding, and to develop a more streamlined method to not charge students who are exempt from this tax (because of a tax treaty with the US)



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- vi. Another member of the International Student Union continues that this policy only affects international students who are receiving full or almost full financial aid, so finances are a huge part in deciding where they go to college
- vii. The fact that this is not stated anywhere, and is discovered once they go here, creates a lot of pressure for them
- viii. This is not feasible for these students to afford because it can be 60% additional to what the estimate family contribution was
- ix. If there is a tax or charge that can almost triple a student's bursar fee this should be stated somewhere beforehand, there should be funds to address it, or it should be stated in the financial aid award that students are given
- x. B. Kotb asks where is this information available
- xi. Not sure when someone becomes eligible for this tax. The only way they discovered it was when they were actually billed for it. It was not included in their financial aid award or in an email notification
- xii. K. Chan asks if we can include a recommendation to make this information available when international students are applying for financial aid
- xiii. Responds that's a good idea. It is present on the webpage, but not in an accessible location
- xiv. D. Cady suggests having the Office of Financial Aid come present at the Student Assembly to comment on this
- xv. Responds they'd have to discuss with the international community, but this does seem helpful
- xvi. Clyde Lederman asks if the tax withholding gets returned to the students at the end of the year and are there other ways of mitigating this?
- xvii. Responds that not a lot of international students receive financial aid, so the community is small. The people she knows have been successful in getting it returned after filing taxes. It would be most helpful to just know about this in advance.
- xviii. R. DeLorenzo motions to extend time by 10 minutes, passed by unanimous consent
- xix. A. Richmond states the wording is fairly strong in lines 49-52 and how they can quantify using this language
- xx. Responds the only official testimony is on the The Sun article regarding this issue. There's no way to quantify mental stress, but a lot of students are working close to the 20 hours per week and that shows that students are being disproportionately affected.
- xxi. B. Mehretu states that lines 49-52 are very important and we should keep the resolution with those lines



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- xxii. M. Song motions to end debate, passes 17-0-2
- xxiii. Resolution 10 passes in a vote of 17-0-2

- b. D. Cady motions to move into Executive Session with the parliamentarian, passed by unanimous consent
 - i. The following nominations were made:
 - ii. Appropriations Committee member: B. Mehretu

XII. Adjournment

- a. K. Chan motions to adjourn, passed by unanimous consent

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Megan Birmingham
Clerk of the Assembly