



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 14th, 2019

Meeting, 4:45-5:37 pm in 701 Clark Hall

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. J. Anderson called the meeting to order at 4:45 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
 - i. Present: M. Adeghe, J. Anderson, M. Baker, C. Benedict, A. Cass, U. Chukwukere, J. Clancy, O. Egharevba, J. Feit, M. Haddad, C. Huang, J. Kroll, Y. Li, L. Ordonez, I. Pavlov, L. Smith, P. Solovyeva, S. Sun, N. Watson, K. Wondimu, S. Xu, J. Youngblood, Y. Yuan
 - ii. Absent: G. Martin (excused), N. Matolka (excused), T. Reuning (excused), B. Weintraub (excused)
 - iii. Arrived After Roll Call: V. Xu (excused)

II. Approval of the Minutes

- a. November 7th, 2019
 - i. Motion to approve the November 7th minutes – **approved** 21-0-1.

III. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

IV. Byline Reports

- a. Convocation
 - i. M. Adeghe said that they will be tabling two of the three byline reports on the agenda today, and that they would start with Convocation's byline funding since that is the organization who they will not be tabling today. She added that they requested to be raised from \$16.85 to \$18.00 so that they could get more high-profile speakers, and that there were some questions that the committee asked that they did not answer, which disappointed the committee, but they decided that bringing in high-profile speakers for the weekend is important. She also said that she has an amendment that she would like to add, and that Convocation is currently under the Class Councils constitution, rather than their own, so they will work with them on making their own constitution since they are a byline organization.
 - ii. M. Adeghe moved to amend Convocation's byline funding such that the following text is added: "The Committee and the Assembly ask Senior Convocation to write a separate constitution that provides guidance to executive board structure and financials of the organization to better guide the organizations. In addition, the Convocation Chair position should be removed from the Class Councils constitutions, as the two organizations are fundamentally distinct and separate" – **amended** 21-0-1.
 - iii. Motion to approve Convocation's byline funding – **approved** 22-0-1.

- b. Class Councils
 - i. M. Adeghe said that Class Councils' main mission is to foster class spirit and pride, and that the committee wasn't comfortable with giving them an increase in funding since they did not give them a detailed budget, and that what they were given was not a budget at all in the committee's opinion. She added that they're tabling this funding until next week so they can see if they can get a more detailed budget, and that the report will be redone for next week once they have enough information to determine whether or not they warrant an increase. She moved to table Class Councils' byline funding – **tabled** 22-0-1.
- c. Senior Days
 - i. M. Adeghe said that Senior Days had a similar situation, and that they had a slightly more detailed budget and hence got a slight increase, but that they also lacked a detailed budget, as well as some information the committee thought necessary to give them full funding, and so she suggests that they table this funding as well. She added that they also reached out to them for a more detailed budget, and that it makes sense that this is happening because both Class Councils and Senior Days have the same advisor. She moved to table Senior Days' byline funding – **tabled** 21-1-1.

V. New Business I & Business of the Day I

- a. Resolution 15: Creation of a Working Group of Student Assembly Composition, Structure, and Representations
 - i. J. Anderson moved to amend the agenda such that Resolution 15 would be considered before Resolution 14 – **amended**.
 - ii. J. Anderson presented the resolution.
 - iii. O. Egharevba asked if the members would be committee members, current SA members, or a mixture of both.
 - iv. J. Anderson said that they would be SA members, and that he imagines that there would be periods of public feedback.
 - v. J. Feit said that he was ecstatic when he saw this resolution on the agenda, and that he thinks that they need to see this happen, and that it is crucial that they evaluate the composition of who they have representing them. He added that it has been too long since they've looked at this, and that he would hope that they can have this committee remain year-to-year to ensure that things are constantly reevaluated. He also said that Cornell is a huge and unique school with so much potential and diversity, and that potential and diversity must be represented here.
 - vi. J. Anderson said that if they wanted to maintain the committee year-to-year, it would have to be a future bylaws amendment, which would be up to the working group to determine if they want to do that.
 - vii. J. Clancy asked if they're sure that the allocation numbers won't change with regard to North Campus expansion, especially with regard to numbers of freshman and sophomore students.
 - viii. J. Anderson asked if J. Clancy could elaborate.
 - ix. J. Clancy obliged.
 - x. J. Anderson said that he does not know the answer to that, and that question would be better for the Provost's office, and that this would be a great question for VP Ryan Lombardi, who he could put J. Clancy in contact with.

- xi. M. Haddad began to say that she was confused about the content of lines 41 through 45.
- xii. J. Anderson said that those lines are in Resolution 14, and that the resolution currently being discussed is Resolution 15.
- xiii. C. Huang said that lines 39 and 40 mention that the SA will vote to implement these changes, and asked if this meant that they will put these changes in place for the spring election cycle or for next year.
- xiv. J. Anderson said that they would ideally be before the petitioning period if the SA decides to take the recommendations of the working group, and that this assembly has the power to deny the recommendations. He added that he is asking the working group to think about is the biggest picture and ideas, and then moving down to the smallest changes.
- xv. There was a motion to move the resolution to Business of the Day – approved 22-0-1.
- xvi. There was a motion to vote.
 - 1. M. Haddad dissented.
 - 2. The motion was withdrawn.
- xvii. M. Haddad asked how the demographic analysis will reflect people who are multiracial.
- xviii. J. Anderson said that he is sure that this is something that the demographic report can capture, and that he is not an expert, but that he is sure that they can utilize a system where people who identify as such will be represented.
- xix. Discussion continued in this regard.
- xx. Deborah Nyakaru said that Cornell actively has demographic data for students, and that they would likely look at that first before soliciting information from students.
- xxi. M. Haddad said that her problem with that is that Arabs like herself are sometimes caught in different categories and are often identified as white.
- xxii. J. Anderson said that other universities have had workarounds for that.
- xxiii. J. Feit asked what will happen once they have findings about demographics, and that it's great to assess and see a problem, but doing something about it is what counts.
- xxiv. J. Anderson said that the demographic report will be published to the student body, and that it will not be a silver bullet solution, but it will keep people aware. He added that they will understand the blind spots that they have as an assembly, and understand that if there is a resolution that has a disparate impact around a certain identity and looking at what that representation is.
- xxv. J. Feit asked if they can grant a seat to a minority representative if it is found that the assembly has a percentage of white students greater than that of the white population on campus.
- xxvi. J. Anderson said that this is why they are asking to do the demographic report beforehand, and that he thinks that this will also inform their election outreach.
- xxvii. Discussion continued in this regard.
- xxviii. Motion to approve Resolution 15 – approved 22-0-1.
- b. Resolution 14: Creation of the Office of Student Government Relations.
 - i. J. Anderson and L. Smith presented the resolution.
 - ii. M. Haddad asked if the position detailed in the resolution would be an SA

member or someone else next year once L. Smith ceases to serve in that position.

- iii. J. Anderson said that it would be the chair of CLA, which can be an SA member, and that it is a dually-held position.
- iv. J. Youngblood asked if the presenters know how many lobbying trips were set in the last few years.
- v. J. Anderson said that from an SA standpoint, he was the first EVP to start this process, and that he doesn't know about any trips beforehand. He added that Albany is less popular than Washington, D.C. for students because the issues are more niche, and that they do want students in the halls of Albany. He also said that if any person did any of this before his time at Cornell, he is unaware of it.
- vi. C. Benedict asked if the \$10,000 from SPF would be accessible for outside groups lobbying for issues that the SA approves of.
- vii. J. Anderson said that it's just a fund transfer to the office, and that a big part about the lobbying is that of the partnership, and that such organizations will always be invited into the fold. He added that an organization that contacts them and says they would like to lobby an issue would get put in contact with OSGR and use money from them, and that the student organization would be using that budget, rather than their own.
- viii. There was a motion to amend the resolution such that "nor" in line 42 is changed to "or" – amended 21-0-1.
- ix. There was a motion to move the resolution to Business of the Day.
- x. J. Anderson said that this is a bylaws resolution, and so it will have to be tabled.
- xi. Motion to table Resolution 14 – tabled 21-0-1.
- c. Resolution 16: Creation of the "One Cornell Fund"
 - i. J. Anderson presented the resolution.
 - ii. O. Egharevba asked how this is different from a lot of the byline organizations that do collaborate with each other or fund specific events for specific times, or otherwise promote these sorts of collaborations already in general.
 - iii. J. Anderson said that he understands O. Egharevba's question, but that he does not believe that the premise of the question is actually occurring, and that some organizations like ALANA encourage collaboration between their suborganizations, but most aren't. He added that this is another avenue to get money to the student body, and that if he is in an organization with a budget of \$500, and another organization approaches that one with a collaboration because of some intersection, this is an avenue for them. He also said that more conscious and collaborative programming is important, and that it is important for them to support that.
 - iv. C. Benedict asked if student organizations could apply both for SPF and for the One Cornell Fund (henceforth OCF).
 - v. J. Anderson said that they could in theory, but not in practice, and that if he were to hold a collaborative event, OCF would be the primary source, and that is dependent upon the reviewing committee. He added that if they apply to both for the same event, they will look toward OCF first for a collaborative event. He also said that he thinks that there would sometimes

be cases in which they can get grants from both, and other cases where they get one but not the other, particularly when it doesn't warrant big community impact.

- vi. L. Ordonez asked if suborganizations can apply for this funding.
- vii. J. Anderson said that any registered organization can do so.
- viii. L. Ordonez asked if this includes two suborganizations under the same umbrella.
- ix. J. Anderson replied in the affirmative.
- x. J. Youngblood asked what the plans for future funding of this are, and what would happen when the \$10,000 from SPF runs out.
- xi. J. Anderson said that the question at hand would be whether or not they will run out this year, and whether or not the fund is attractive if they do not run out. He added that he would hope that next year's SA finds a way to split their SPF proportionally if this proves to be popular, and that he is sure that they can provide for this through partnerships with organizations like SAFC.
- xii. M. Adeghe asked a question.
- xiii. J. Anderson said that he plans to move this procedure into AppsCom during a non-bylines year.
- xiv. M. Adeghe said that the standing rules this year were done as fall and spring, and asked if this would be done in the same way, or if J. Anderson would prefer a year-by-year basis.
- xv. J. Anderson said that he prefers year-by-year, and that even in a bylines cycle year they are seeing SPF requests and working on Appendix B, and that they plan on ramping up AppsCom's duties in non-bylines years.
- xvi. There was a motion to move this resolution into Business of the Day – moved 22-0-1.
- xvii. Motion to approve Resolution 16 – approved 22-0-1.

VI. Business of the Day II

- a. Resolution 12: Revising the Student Assembly Bylaws to Dictate that Community Votes be Conducted Online
 - i. O. Egharevba began to present Resolution 17, but there was a realization that the version of the resolution in the meeting packet was not the most up-to-date version, and so Resolution 12 was presented while O. Egharevba found and sent out the most recent version of Resolution 17.
 - ii. J. Kroll presented the resolution.
 - iii. Community member Jillian Shapiro said that she thinks that there are ways to make community votes more private and accessible without opening the floodgates for lack of a better term, and that as an example, when Hillel has e-board elections, there is a risk of votes becoming a popularity contest and involving asking people who don't care about the outcome to vote, and that one solution would be to have a request for an absentee ballot be a possibility. She added that this would be for people who can't make it to the meeting but consciously want to vote because they care, and that there are ways to have in-person votes that are more private, and that saying votes out loud is not the most private, but that she is sure that there are ways to scan a person's ID and not have their vote be able to be traced back to them. She also said that she thinks that for the BDS vote last year, being present for the resolution was important so that people could see the reactions in the room

and hear the points being made, and that she thinks that making the system should be made more accessible and private while making it more meaningful.

- iv. J. Kroll said that they acknowledge the value of having discussion in the SA, and that they hope people will still come after that, but that he doesn't think it'll come to a popularity contest, and that he thinks that issues for which the community votes will be relevant and polarizing issues. He added that he is hard-pressed to believe that people will sign away their vote because a friend asked them to, and asked whether she would blindly vote or give it some thought if someone sent the BDS vote to her. He also said that the Hillel vote is less comparable because SA votes affect everyone on campus, and that he doesn't think the two situations are entirely comparable. He added that they had discussed some alternatives regarding privacy, and that it is problematic that there is no oversight on what the parliamentarian does.
- v. J. Shapiro said that in that same vein, there are ways to make sure that the parliamentarian doesn't have access to who voted what, and scanning the ID but not tracking the vote is a way to do that, which was not done last semester. She added that they talked about something being relevant to the whole campus, but the BDS resolution wasn't relevant to everyone and for many, it was a matter of what their friends thought and voted, and that it needs to be in line with the wants and needs of the student body.
- vi. J. Kroll said that he thinks that the crux between the two proposals is accessibility at the cost of people who do not care as much being able to vote, or vice versa, and that he thinks that the former is more important when they have these votes that are so polarizing, emotional, and important.
- vii. I. Pavlov said that she thinks that they need to be valuing the privacy and accessibility above all else, and that everyone has the right to vote as an undergraduate student, and that if someone sees a vote in a GroupMe and doesn't know anything about it, they're not going to vote on it.
- viii. M. Adeghe said that she does not want to go into what happened last semester, but that she thinks that they saw a lack of accessibility, and that she thinks that accessibility alone is a good reason to support this.
- ix. A. Cass said that they think that any issue brought before the SA is relevant to everyone on campus, and that the SA represents all undergraduate students, and that they think that they can debate proposals, but the assembly has gone back and forth since last meeting and settled on this as a proposal to protect privacy and ensuring accessibility. They added that they think they settled on having the vote open for the meeting rather than beforehand, and that it is important to emphasize that any democratic process could have someone walking into a voting booth and voting randomly, but that barriers should not be put up to prevent that person from voting, and that accessibility is more important.
- x. J. Feit said that there are valid concerns that they need to relinquish some of their personal politics to strive to reach a more democratic body, and that he thinks that they have to make the process more accessible, and that just because someone is not perceived as having a vested interest doesn't mean that their voice doesn't matter. He added that he doesn't think that it's fair for people who need to work during a meeting to have their voices silenced,

and that they need to embrace the community consensus, and so he will be voting in favor of this resolution.

- xi. M. Baker asked how they will verify that students are voting, and how they will prevent hacking.
- xii. M. Haddad said that CU Authorization will be used.
- xiii. M. Baker asked what would happen for a person that knows another person's NetID.
- xiv. There were simultaneous responses from many people on the assembly.
- xv. J. Anderson asked that people not give out their passwords.
- xvi. M. Haddad said that they did check, and that the data can be altered to make sure that only undergraduate students have access.
- xvii. O. Egharevba said that this is a good idea in theory, and asked what mechanisms or resources will be used to prevent low-information voting.
- xviii. J. Kroll said that he thinks that they have instances of low-information voting when votes are taken in person, and that the only difference is that high-SES people are more likely to be able to show up even if they don't care about the issues, and that the page to the link with the vote will also have the link to the resolution.
- xix. O. Egharevba asked if there would be the link to the livestream.
- xx. J. Kroll said that they had originally wanted that, but that the OA claimed that they would be better off without it due to the low quality of the livestream, so that people who want to hear the discussion can come to the meeting.
- xxi. O. Egharevba said that he would look more favorably on this resolution if the option were there so that people could see it before they vote.
- xxii. J. Anderson said that the link to the agenda is in all of their agenda blasts.
- xxiii. A member asked if the link would be open all day, only during the meeting, or for some other time frame.
- xxiv. M. Haddad said that voting would open at the start of the meeting, and would go until debate closes, and that they would then hear the community votes before the SA votes.
- xxv. C. Benedict said that he wanted to highlight that he is pretty sure it is not the job of this assembly to assume students' background knowledge, and that they need to ensure the accessibility and make sure that students vote. He moved to approve Resolution 12 – **approved** 22-1-1.

VII. New Business II

- a. Resolution 17: Establishing a Framework for Electronic Voting
 - i. O. Egharevba presented the resolution.
 - ii. N. Watson asked where they will be getting the iClickers from.
 - iii. O. Egharevba said that they are provided by the OA through Academic IT, and that they can buy their own if they want, and that he does not see any reason why they can't get their own. He added that the ones the OA provided were for the trial run.
 - iv. N. Watson asked where the money for the iClickers would come from.
 - v. O. Egharevba said that it would probably come from the administrative budget, but that it would be a one-time cost, and you would be given an iClicker for your term, and return it once your term ended.
 - vi. O. Egharevba said that it would come to about \$500 or \$600 dollars for 28

iClickers, and a base station on top of that would bring the total cost to \$750, but that this would be a one-time purchase.

- vii. J. Kroll said that his concern with this is that they will waste more time in discussing whether they want to waive the use of iClickers than they will save by using iClickers, and that he thinks that it is more transparent having placards raised. He added that the iClickers have been waived in the past for this specific reason, and that he doesn't think they are saving energy or time by doing this.
- viii. O. Egharevba said that a person could possibly be unable to make it to a meeting due to other commitments, and the livestream is low quality, and that he doesn't think it's fair to make the assumption that people can make it to these meetings all of the time. He added that the vast majority of SA votes are not controversial, and that they don't spend an hour or 90 minutes discussing them, and that the case that J. Kroll described would be a boundary case in his opinion. He also said that they get a few controversial things each year, and that those votes would be decided ahead of time, and if it is still controversial after that decision, they would go straight into voting on that, and that is why he wanted to close debate on this particular issue with a majority vote rather than a 60% vote.
- ix. J. Clancy said that he wanted to thank O. Egharevba for putting so much time into this, and that from what he saw in the trial run, he agrees with J. Kroll that it takes up more time than it saves, and that it takes up their time from other issues they could be voting on. He added that he understands O. Egharevba's concerns and that he appreciates that he has looked at it bigger-picture and its implications, but that he thinks that it is making a simple process way too complex. He also said that he is not convinced that there's a set need that warrants the changing of the system.
- x. J. Feit said that he thinks his concerns have already been expressed, and that they are reinventing the wheel here, and that their vote should be held accountable if they are looking for more transparency. He added that if they go on the premise of motions largely not being controversial, then they can say that there are very few negative votes, and that those would be relatively easy to post online anyway. He also said that the cost is closer to \$50 per iClicker, not \$20, and that this could put additional economic burden on them, and that he thinks that placards are better than instituting new technology that looks and feels better.
- xi. O. Egharevba said that he knows that this change is radical in the eyes of the assembly, and that we as humans tend to oppose things that are radical, and that he thinks that this would be more accessible for students, particularly low-income students who might have to take jobs as was mentioned in the last resolution. He added that some people can't come to meetings and sit for two hours and wait to see how a vote goes, and that this would bring more transparency to the assembly at large since they have a record of who voted what, and that he thinks that people have a right to see who voted for what. He also said that opposing this under the guise of it being new technology or not having done it before and therefore not doing it now is not sensible in his mind, and that he is not saying that the argument is invalid, but that he is trying to get people to understand where he is coming from.

- xii. C. Benedict said that O. Egharevba was speaking about how this is similar to the last resolution, and asked if O. Egharevba voted in favor of the last resolution.
- xiii. O. Egharevba replied in the negative and said that this was because of the lack of options for livestreaming, and said that he doesn't see how this is relevant.
- xiv. M. Haddad asked how secret ballot votes would be conducted.
- xv. O. Egharevba said that they would just randomize which iClicker is used, and each person would use someone else's, so that the votes would be visible, but no one knows who voted for what.
- xvi. M. Haddad said that she feels like someone could easily figure out who voted what in such a case, and that she could keep an eye on someone who she would want to see the vote of. She added that she thinks that it's a great idea for these votes to be put in the minutes through the iClickers, and asked if there is a chance that they could use both, and that she feels like that would be a solution even though it is hectic.
- xvii. O. Egharevba said that he thinks they might be able to get the votes on the screen so the community can see how each individual voted if they're there, and that would be something he can look into between now and next week.
- xviii. There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - 1. O. Egharevba dissented, and said he wanted to hear more people's voices.
 - 2. The person who made the motion maintained it.
 - 3. There was a vote-to-vote – **status unclear at the time of voting** 12-10-1.
 - 4. O. Egharevba asked whether or not a vote-to-vote requires a 60% majority.
 - 5. There was research on this.
 - 6. J. Anderson said that a vote-to-vote requires a two-thirds majority, and so the vote-to-vote **failed** 12-10-1.
- xix. V. Xu said that she first wanted to recognize the effort that O. Egharevba put into this for researching and finding a new solution, and that for randomizing the iClickers, they could just get rid of the labels, and eventually get a second set to be used for randomized voting. She added that her main support for this resolution is that there are cases where assembly members look at others when deciding how to vote, and that she feels like the iClickers give people an opportunity to just vote how they are thinking.
- xx. M. Adeghe said that she does want to commend O. Egharevba for his work on this, but that she thinks he is putting words into people's mouths which she does not think is acceptable. She added that in practice, this seems like it will add time, effort, and confusion into something that is not a big issue, and that she doesn't think that placard voting is an issue at all, and that she thinks that they are trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist here.
- xxi. O. Egharevba said that as with any new procedure, there will be times where it isn't perfect, but in the long run, it is an investment in both the SA and in the community because they are providing transparency to the community. He added that for quick votes, this is more efficient for them, and that these concerns are valid, but that once they figure things out over time and what

works and what doesn't, it will be a fair investment for the body.

- xxii. M. Adeghe asked if O. Egharevba could also address her point of putting words into people's mouths.
- xxiii. O. Egharevba said that he apologizes if J. Feit felt uncomfortable by his response, and that his point was not to put words into his mouth but for him to recognize his vision.
- xxiv. L. Ordonez asked what a secret ballot is and if they have ever used it.
- xxv. J. Anderson said that it was used last year, and that there are interpretations that they can use it.
- xxvi. L. Ordonez asked if it was therefore the case that they do use it, but only rarely.
- xxvii. J. Anderson said that it is not explicitly in their documents, but is implicitly allowed to them through parliamentary procedure.
- xxviii. A. Cass said that they agree with what V. Xu said about there being a risk of people voting based on how other people are voting, but that they also want to echo what M. Haddad said about iClickers being traced back to a number, and that it seems like just writing the vote on a piece of paper would make more sense. They added that they understand the desire to have votes recorded even if they are not contentious, but that they are not sure that this is the way to do it given the cost and the complications.
- xxix. There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - 1. O. Egharevba dissented and said he wanted to respond.
 - 2. The motion was maintained.
 - 3. O. Egharevba withdrew his dissent.
- xxx. Motion to table Resolution 17 – tabled 21-0-1.

VIII. Executive Session

- a. J. Anderson moved the meeting to executive session at 6:14 pm.

IX. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,
John Hannan
Clerk of the Assembly