



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 21st, 2019
Meeting, 4:45-6:52 pm in Memorial Room, Willard
Straight 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. Adege, J. Anderson, M. Baker, C. Benedict, A. Cass, U. Chukwukere, J. Clancy, O. Egharevba, M. Haddad, C. Huang, J. Kroll, Y. Li, G. Martin, N. Matolka, L. Ordonez, T. Reuning, L. Smith, P. Solovyeva, S. Sun, N. Watson, B. Weintraub, K. Wondimu, S. Xu, V. Xu, J. Youngblood, Y. Yuan
 - ii. Absent: I. Pavlov (excused)
 - iii. Arrived After Roll Call: J. Feit (excused)

II. Presentations

- a. University Budgeting
 - i. Charles Van Loan and Jaewon Sim presented on university budgeting.
 - ii. B. Weintraub said that he thinks that this is fantastic, and that very few people know about the Cornell budget. He added that one thing he would love to learn more about is the fact that multiple departments pay service charges back to Cornell that come out to a significant portion of their budget, and asked where those budgets come out of and if it is done in a similar fashion to how the SA functions.
 - iii. Y. Yuan asked how financial aid works in general, where the money for financial aid comes from, and how the pool and applicants are selected.
 - iv. C. Van Loan said that, as an example, a third of tuition dollars are pulled out for financial aid purposes and distributed among the colleges, and some money comes into that total from the endowment and from gifts. He added that they would like to clarify that, if not quantify it, to a degree that they understand how it happens, as well as the ramifications of any changes. He also said that individuals are now figuring out how much the tuition increase will be next year, what extra things could be done with more money or what would have to not be done with less money. He added that everything is about tradeoffs, and that CIS as an example has to pay \$150,000 each year to heat Gates Hall, and that they would need to figure out how much they would save by turning the thermostat down one degree, as an example. He also said that they need to understand that everything is about tradeoffs when they walk into a discussion where money is an issue.

- v. M. Haddad said that the presenters mentioned TAs and their pay, and asked if they could also look into RAs and evaluations regarding their pay. She added that she is an international student who is also an RA, and that she gets paid \$500 per semester, but can only work 20 hours each week because of restrictions from her visa.
- vi. C. Van Loan said that these questions are more of Ryan Lombardi's area of the university, particularly with regard to international students.
- vii. T. Reuning said that his concerns are surrounding the fact that students on financial aid can get their financial aid decreased by things like outside scholarships and the free housing that RAs get. He added that, in comparison to other Ivies, it is his understanding that Cornell's operating budget depends more on things like revenue as opposed to the endowment.
- viii. C. Van Loan said that T. Reuning brought up several good points there, including ballpark comparisons with peer institutions.
- ix. S. Sun said that she wanted to follow up on Y. Yuan's question, and asked if Cornell admissions are need-blind. She also asked what the rationale is for some dining locations only accepting BRBs, and why laundry is not free.
- x. J. Sim said that Cornell does have a need-blind admissions policy for domestic but not international students, and that this is a strategic decision by the university. He added that for BRBs, Cornell's dining model operates to recover costs, and so those facilities are operated how Cornell sees fit for breaking even every year, but that why some locations accept only BRBs is a very different conversation. He also said that laundry is also a cost-recovery method, and that this is also in R. Lombardi's umbrella, so they can look into that and get her a better answer.
- xi. B. Weintraub asked how Cornell deals with depreciation of physical assets, and as an example if what they pay for housing partially covers depreciation of buildings. He said that he has been looking at budget things, and that it mentioned that a very significant portion of their incoming revenues are coming from Weill, and asked where the money is coming in from, and if this is an opportunity for them to grow revenues and make the budget larger. He also asked if the SA can pull budgets for anything under Student and Campus Life.
- xii. J. Anderson said that the concept of that can be discussed, but that he will not consider the matter in a punitive way, even though charter is written in a punitive mindset.
- xiii. B. Weintraub said that it would be more out of interest than punishment.
- xiv. J. Anderson said that that is a different conversation.
- xv. C. Van Loan said that B. Weintraub brought up an interesting point, in that they want to make sure that undergraduates aren't subsidizing research and vice versa, and it's complicated but necessary to understand how they can isolate the Cornell Tech budget, for example, from other parts of the budget.
- xvi. J. Sim said that money from the Physicians Association doesn't necessarily come into the Ithaca budget, and that because they are expanding their presence in New York City, they can get donors there. He added that for Cornell's current finances, they are in healthy condition, and that when they use money to invest in new facilities and programs, there can be sudden drops in financial flows.

- xvii. B. Weintraub asked his question again regarding depreciation.
- xviii. C. Van Loan said that they have made note of that and will follow up on it.
- xix. T. Reuning asked whether or not needing to keep the ratio of in-state and out-of-state students due to being state funded inherently not need-blind. He added that there is not a lot of transparency in this process.
- xx. C. Van Loan said that that is a good point.
- xxi. J. Anderson said that if anyone would like the committee to explore something, he can send it to C. Van Loan, and that all assembly members probably have J. Sim's email. He added that G. Martin is filling in as parliamentarian today in the absence of Deborah Nyakaru and moved to amend the agenda such that Resolution 14 would be discussed before Appointments, and such that Senior Days and Class Councils would be added to the byline report – **amended**.

b. Health and Wellness Committee re: Final Exam Policy Revision

- i. N. Matolka, Y. Yuan, Ru Ekanayake, and Alexa Slyman presented.
- ii. J. Anderson asked what the people who mentioned there being more important issues to deal with said those issues might be.
- iii. R. Ekanayake said that they did not give examples, and that they thought that the policy would only affect one person.
- iv. M. Adeghe asked a question regarding this policy's interaction with the Academic Policy Committee (hereinafter APC).
- v. V. Xu said that this issue was brought up during the last cabinet meeting, and that they will be collaborating with APC.
- vi. M. Adeghe said that this was brought up in collaboration with not ending classes so late, and that one of the ideas was to add a final exam timeslot and asked what this would mean for staying later in both the fall and the spring semesters. She added that C. Van Loan had mentioned that Columbia University has four final exam timeslots, which she can see the benefits of, and asked how they balance that with not wanting to stay longer than they need to.
- vii. Y. Yuan said that he wants to point out that by changing the policy, they will definitely not avoid two finals in a thirty hour period, and that such a thing is bound to happen. He added that the registrar said that they run an algorithm based on pre-enroll data that minimizes conflicts, but that the schedule is released well before add/drop whereupon things can change drastically. He also said that what they are doing is minimizing general conflict for everyone, and that people don't want to stay here for too long, but that that is a new conversation to be had if they add an extra timeslot. He added that three timeslots is already somewhat overwhelming, and that such a change would probably not be good for mental health in general unless they can make some changes on exam times.
- viii. M. Adeghe said that she didn't hear her question get answered and asked how they plan on balancing it. She added that it sounds like this will increase the week, and so she is asking how they plan to balance that with the fact that no one wants to stay late.
- ix. J. Anderson said that the university calendar approval process happens on a five-or-so-year basis, and that they are approved five years out for the next

cycle. He added that if this gets approved, there will be no change until the next cycle, and that people should not quote him on the precise five-year figure he stated earlier.

- x. M. Adeghe began to ask a question.
- xi. J. Anderson said that this would be taken into consideration long-term.
- xii. Discussion continued in this regard.
- xiii. R. Ekanayake said that they are not pushing for a change to lengthen finals time, and that such a thing might be a repercussion to deal with down the road, but that they want professors to work around students' schedules more.
- xiv. J. Youngblood said that he understands that this pertains to finals in particular and asked if this can be extended to prelims.
- xv. Y. Yuan said that that is a conversation that should be had but has not yet been had, and that what's tricky about prelims is that some are in the evening and others are in class, and that professors are less reluctant to move in-class ones. He added that they should have that conversation, but that he believes that it is harder to achieve.
- xvi. V. Xu said that it is listed on the website and that she therefore wants to confirm that final exams are also including final deliverables.
- xvii. Y. Yuan said that they are not talking about that for now.
- xviii. V. Xu said that the website does list the deadline for projects and asked if that is not being taken into consideration.
- xix. Y. Yuan said that it will not be for now.

III. Announcements

- a. C. Huang said that there will be a sprint meeting on Sunday at noon.
 - i. J. Anderson said that sprint is a great time to talk about the free laundry initiative.
- b. M. Adeghe said that they approved a special projects request for the Dyson Students of Color Coalition, who requested \$1,000 for a winter clothing popup. She added that anyone who hasn't liked her Slack message regarding the gift exchange should do so if they want to participate.

IV. New Business I

- a. Resolution 14: Creation of the Office of Student Government Relations
 - i. J. Anderson presented the resolution.
 - ii. There was a motion to approve the resolution – **approved** 24-0-2.

V. Appointments

- a. Director of Student Government Relations
 - i. Aadi Kulkarni introduced himself and said that he has had some experience working in the federal level of government, and that he met J. Anderson last year who brought this opportunity to him. He added that he thinks that this is great in regard to what Cornell should be working on, and that it seems that J. Anderson and he both came to the same conclusion about how this would be great both for Cornell and for the Student Assembly.
 - ii. N. Watson asked what some of the things he would want to lobby for would be.
 - iii. A. Kulkarni said that this role is representative of what the Cornell students

- want, and that there is a difference between school priorities and student priorities, and that something that there seems to be agreement on is financial aid. He added that another example is in regard to Cornell's status as a land-grant institution, and that there is a lot of change going on in that realm. He also said that he sees this position as representative of what students want and would therefore be ad hoc in regard to choosing topics.
- iv. There was a motion to confirm A. Kulkarni as Director of Student Government Relations – **confirmed** 24-0-2.

VI. Approval of the Minutes

- a. November 14th, 2019
 - i. Motion to approve the November 14th minutes – **approved** 24-0-2.

VII. Byline Reports

- a. Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board (SUB)
 - i. M. Adeghe said that she would start with the three byline reports that were originally intended for this week, and that SUB was at \$0.50 and requested \$0.75, and that the committee voted to continue funding them at \$0.50 due to their large surplus, which was four times their disbursement. She added that they do not feel that they need an increase because of that, and that SUB does do great things.
 - ii. B. Weintraub asked if they can just get a little more information about why there was a fairly even split about why some wanted to fund them at \$0.75 and some did not.
 - iii. M. Adeghe said that she can provide context, and that SUB does do great things and does provide students with great programming in Willard Straight Hall, and the 4-6 split was probably based on that, and that it wasn't malicious in nature to not give them \$0.75. She added that it was a matter of there being a \$35,000 surplus when the organization receives \$7,000 each year, and that it can be spent down in two years.
 - iv. There was a motion to approve SUB's byline funding of \$.50 – **approved** 24-0-2.
- b. Welcome Weekend
 - i. M. Adeghe said that Welcome Weekend was in a very similar situation wherein they had between \$30,000 and \$40,000 of rollover due to the nature of the events they put on, and that it seems like this is the case from their budget. She added that they put on similar programming and have a similar function as SUB, and that both organizations have the same advisor, which she thinks is why they saw similar amounts of surplus.
 - ii. M. Haddad asked why AppsCom decided to increase funding for Welcome Weekend if they saw largely the same things as they did in SUB.
 - iii. Discussion continued in this regard, resulting in a realization that many assembly members were looking at the wrong byline report.
 - iv. There was a motion to approve Welcome Weekend's byline funding of \$2.40 – **approved** 24-0-2.
- c. Cornell University Programming Board (CUPB)
 - i. M. Adeghe said that CUPB was at \$8.55 and wanted to increase to \$13.55, and that they bring speakers to campus and were wanting to bring bigger

speakers, such as on the level of John Mulaney or Kevin Hart, and that they couldn't do that with the money they were receiving.

- ii. T. Reuning asked if they mentioned anything about bringing more diverse speakers.
- iii. M. Adeghe said that they didn't really mention anything like that, but that she does know that one thing they mentioned was that a lot of minority artists or speakers, specifically women, often charge a lot more, and so people might want to see, as an example, Beyoncé, but their current budget would not allow for that.
- iv. There was a motion to approve CUPB's byline funding of \$13.55 – approved 24-0-2.

d. Cornell University Class Councils (CUCC)

- i. M. Adeghe said that CUCC did not give them any detailed financial statements for last week's meeting, and they therefore tabled them to this week, and that she received their budgets later on, and there was nothing in them that made her feel like they should change the funding decision. She added that she would like to approve this now and keep them at the \$2.35, and that the only consideration was about the fact that they said that the bus program was not run by them and so it is therefore not in the budget, but that other people have informed her that that is not true. She also said that nothing in the budget was concerning enough to want to change the allocation.
- ii. There was a motion to approve CUCC's byline funding of \$2.35 – approved 23-0-3.

e. Senior Days

- i. M. Adeghe said that they similarly received Senior Days' budget, and that nothing was super concerning, and that the one piece of information that they did gain was ticketed events and the cost of those events per student. She added that she doesn't think that this should be overturned, but that they did get some clarifying information, and that this can be addressed if it is cause for concern.
- ii. B. Weintraub said that he wasn't at that meeting, but that he did look at the Senior Days application, and that his impression was that if they received less funding than they hoped for, that would mean less of an availability of free events. He added that his inclination is to provide as much funding as they are requesting, given that the impact of this additional funding is to make more events available to students who can't afford ticketed events, and that his inclination is to overturn this.
- iii. M. Adeghe said that she hears what B. Weintraub is saying, and that she doesn't think she has a comment.
- iv. M. Haddad said that she is unsure how much of the application B. Weintraub saw, and that some things on the budget did not add up, and that this is why AppsCom didn't feel comfortable giving them the full amount, because they don't know how it is going to be used.
- v. M. Adeghe said that in their Appendix B, they are only required to use 90% of their fee allocation on free events.
- vi. B. Weintraub said that M. Haddad has a completely valid point and that he respects that, but that he doesn't see any reason not to trust Senior Days, and

that he thinks that if they're trying to give more tickets to free events, he would hope that they have thought on that. He added that his inclination is for the extra \$0.80 per student that would provide for a lot more funding would make it as good as possible. He moved to overturn AppsCom's decision.

1. U. Chukwukere dissented and said that he thinks that it is very important to understand and respect the decisions of the people on AppsCom, and that they are the ones who look very closely at the budgets and sit through the hearings. He added that they know what they're talking about, and that it's a little weird that some people are questioning their ability to come through with their decisions.
 2. Vote to vote on overturning AppsCom's decision – **failed** 10-12-4.
- vii. There was a motion to approve Senior Days' byline funding of \$5.10 – **approved** 19-2-3.
- viii. N. Watson asked if M. Adege has a running total of all the byline allocations so far.
- ix. M. Adege said that she can run that up but has not done so yet.
- x. J. Anderson said that they only have three more organizations to see reports from.
- xi. J. Anderson moved to amend the agenda such that Resolution 18 be discussed next, followed by the Public Statement, as the community partner was present – **amended**.

VIII. New Business I & Business of the Day II

- a. Resolution 18: Approving Special Projects Request for IvyG
 - i. J. Anderson and Natalia Hernandez presented the resolution.
 - ii. K. Wondimu said that he went to IvyG two years ago when it was at Yale, and that it was an amazing experience and is great for first-generation students. He added that it's really refreshing and enriching to meet other first-generation students at Ivies sharing experiences and talking about what they're going through.
 - iii. C. Benedict said that he wanted to commend N. Hernandez on her efforts in planning this massive project and wished her luck.
 - iv. J. Anderson said that the other co-chair is Elia Morelos and that he has the pleasure of knowing both of them personally.
 - v. N. Hernandez said that she also wanted to shout out her committee and that the work in this is beyond what any two people can do.
 - vi. A. Cass asked if they can move this into business of the day at some point.
 - vii. C. Huang replied in the affirmative.
 - viii. A. Cass motioned to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **moved** 20-0-2.
 - ix. There was a motion to vote on the resolution – **approved** 20-0-2.
- b. Public Statement: Supporting Students at Syracuse University
 - i. J. Anderson informed the assembly that the updated statement is separate from the meeting packet and asked the members to review and ask if they have questions.
 - ii. C. Huang and C. Benedict presented the statement.
 - iii. J. Anderson stated that it is not a resolution so it does not need to be moved

- into business of the day.
- iv. There was a motion to vote on the statement – **approved** 20-0-2.
- v. G. Martin moved to amend the agenda such that Resolution 22 would be discussed next as he has a guest in attendance – **amended**.
- c. Resolution 22: Establishing an Equitable Event Registry System for Cooperative Houses
 - i. G. Martin, M. Adeghe, and Kyra Patton presented the resolution.
 - ii. N. Matolka asked why the administration hasn't considered this in the past.
 - iii. K. Patton said that they have gone to the administration and asked about holding various events at their house, and that they cite that the cap of 49 people at any co-op event is due to the paths of egress rather than the space itself. She added that this doesn't make sense to her, since all the houses have different sizes and different paths, and they put one number on all the co-ops, and that her co-op is the largest at 34 people, which means that even if every resident was in their room, they could only hold an event of 15 people, and that this means that they effectively cannot hold events. She also said that in terms of alcohol, she is unsure why they are not allowed to host events that have alcohol for people who are over 21 like fraternities and sororities are able to, and she was just told that they can't control who is over and under 21, which she feels like they can do in a manner similar to frats.
 - iv. J. Feit said that N. Matolka just asked his question, and that he thinks that this is some great work, and that he thinks that it is preposterous that this policy is in place, and that it didn't even occur to him. He added that he knows that the co-ops add value to their campus and community and thanked the presenters for ensuring that these policies are overturned.
 - v. M. Haddad inquired about how this would be put in place.
 - vi. G. Martin responded that it would be a registry system similar to that of Greek Life. The Office of Off-Campus Living would assist in facilitating this event registry system.
 - vii. A. Cass motioned to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **moved** 25-0-1.
 - viii. There was a motion to vote on the resolution – **approved** 25-0-1.
- d. Resolution 19: Creating Internal Elections Rules
 - i. N. Matolka presented the resolution and asked the assembly members take five minutes to read and review it.
 - ii. M. Adeghe voiced concern about anonymous comments or why someone wouldn't be identified if they were making a negative statement.
 - iii. N. Matolka responded that this is to be made to allow people to have space to make impactful statements. Leadership should be people who are comfortable with some conflict.
 - iv. M. Adeghe countered that it would be beneficial for the person who submitted the comment to have a place to speak.
 - v. N. Matolka responded that it would be possible to add that individuals could have access to their approved statements.
 - vi. M. Adeghe confirmed that individuals would be called upon for them to read their statements so that candidates would know who their comments are coming from.
 - vii. J. Anderson clarified that the comments would be approved and that the

candidate would then be allowed to read them.

- viii. M Haddad inquired about how this would apply to spring elections and if candidates are asked questions if that would allow for comments to be reopened.
- ix. N. Matolka replied that this would be implemented for the spring elections and that there would be space for a continuance of deliberation.
- x. B. Weintraub voiced concern that there is possibility for the individuals who are responsible for approving the comments to disagree with the statements that have been made and give way for the individual who made the statement to not be heard.
- xi. N. Matolka responded that he agrees this could potentially open up this idea. If statements are to be rejected, at the end of the day, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all. If someone does have something negative to say, it could be a conversation between the submitter and the Parliamentarian.
- xii. B. Weintraub then stated that someone may not be comfortable submitted an honest comment or statement if the composition of the assembly isn't favorable. He then voiced concern about comments being moderated by limited people.
- xiii. J. Anderson noted that there were ten minutes left in the scheduled meeting time and in the interest of time and other business to attend to, he asked the assembly to move to extend the meeting to 7:00 pm – moved.
- xiv. O. Egharevba stated that he appreciated this resolution and all of his questions had already been answered.
- xv. I. Wallace voiced concern that in the spring before the assembly is fully formed and internal elections are taking place, a lot of positions may not be filled if following this more formal process.
- xvi. J. Clancy responded to some earlier comments that it is important that anonymous comments be kept in place as they are insightful and gives the submitter protection to speak their mind.
- xvii. K. Wondimu concurred with J. Clancy's statement regarding anonymity and inquired about whether only positive comments would be allowed.
- xviii. N. Matolka responded that there are critiques and negative comments and there is a big difference.
- xix. J. Clancy asked for clarification if whether critiques would be acceptable.
- xx. N. Matolka replied in the affirmative; however, he added that examples would be requested to support the critique.
- xxi. T. Reuning voiced concern about comments needing to be approved. While this is acceptable with the current composition of the assembly, that may not be the case in five years. There is some issue with power dynamic if only three members of the assembly are reviewing and approving comments.
- xxii. N. Watson inquired the requirements of Rule 9 of the resolution.
- xxiii. N. Matolka responded that it shows a sign of demonstration of the candidate's interest in the position. He also responded to T. Reuning with potential options for review of the comments.
- xxiv. T. Reuning suggested an appeals process for the candidate to provide historical or background information.
- xxv. J. Anderson provided historical information that opening the review process

up to the entire Executive Committee does not alleviate the concerns that have been stated.

- xxvi. A. Cass inquired as to whether this is something that could be voted on now.
- xxvii. N. Matolka replied that it would most likely have to be tabled in order to clarify information.
- xxviii. V. Xu stated that logistically, if the time limits were kept in place in Rule 7.3 that it would result in a full day of elections. She suggested that it be changed to up to three minutes.
- xxix. N. Matolka replied that he would make note of that suggestion.
- xxx. G. Martin stated that anonymity is helpful as well as credibility.
- xxxi. N. Matolka responded that there are still issues to work out with the resolution. Major points of anonymity and who reviews and approves the comments.
- xxxii. There was a motion to table the resolution – **tabled**.
- e. Resolution 20: Setting the Special Projects Funding Guidelines
 - i. C. Benedict presented the resolution.
 - ii. M. Haddad inquired as to whether a conference would be considered a recurring event if it only happens every year.
 - iii. C. Benedict replied in the affirmative.
 - iv. M. Adeghe stated that it has been an issue this year that organizations have applied funding after their event has already taken place and it puts the SA in an awkward position.
 - v. C. Huang clarified that the Appropriations Committee has been informally following the processes within this resolution and the resolution is a means to make it a formal process.
 - vi. A member of the assembly motioned to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **moved**.
 - vii. There was a motion to vote on the resolution – **approved** 20-0-2.
- f. Resolution 21: Creation of the Diversity Innovation Fund
 - i. C. Benedict and C. Huang presented the resolution.
 - ii. B. Weintraub motioned to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **moved**.
 - iii. G. Martin motioned to amend the formatting of the resolution so that it reads “Sponsored by:” – **amended**.
 - iv. J. Youngblood inquired about the sustainability of this funding and if it was meant to be a one-time injection or would it be available in the future.
 - v. C. Huang replied that currently it is a one-time injection of funding; however, in the future, there is a strong possibility to be able to work this funding into the assembly budget.
 - vi. There was a motion to vote on the resolution – **approved** 19-0-2.

IX. Business of the Day II

- a. Resolution 17: Establishing a Framework for Electronic Voting
 - i. O. Egharevba presented the resolution.
 - ii. C. Benedict motioned to table the resolution due to a significant number of assembly members not present and felt it would be more effective to discuss when everyone is present.
 - 1. O. Egharevba dissented and said he wanted to respond.

2. The motion was maintained.
 3. Those on the speakers list were allowed to provide their comments and suggestions so that they could be worked into the resolution for further discussion.
 4. A. Cass stated that he feels Section 9, Rule 3 is beneficial for transparency in the voting.
 5. M. Haddad inquired as to how the votes would be recorded.
 6. O. Egharevba responded that votes are transmitted to members so they would see them.
 7. N. Watson stated that he wasn't sure just how much more accountable electronic voting would be versus the current placard voting process.
 8. O. Egharevba replied that there was room to make these meetings more efficient via the electronic voting versus placard.
 9. O. Egharevba withdrew his dissent.
- iii. Motion to table Resolution 17 to 12/5/19 meeting – tabled 19-0-2.

X. Adjournment

- a. **J. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Treat

Senior Coordinator, Office of the Assemblies