Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, October 22nd, 2020 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call
a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:47pm.
b. Roll Call
   i. *Members Present*: L. Abd Elmagid, D. Anadkat, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Bentley, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chukwukere, L. Contreras, S. Kapoor, A.
   ii. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Moy, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, S. Zverev, C. Huang
   iii. *Members Absent*: A. Gleiberman, J. Noriega, E. Perez, L. Zumpano

II. Announcements
a. N. Watson stated that internal elections will be this coming weekend, 10/24 and 10/25, for committee chairs and the Vice President of Research and Accountability.
   i. If any questions, reach out to N. Watson, C. Huang, or L. Abd Elmagid.
b. C. Huang stated that a socially distanced meet-up will occur tomorrow, 10/23, in the Arts Quad and more information is in Slack channel.
c. C. Huang clarified the procedural rules that if a member had a Point of Information, Point of Order, or Point of Privilege, which would allow them to interrupt the Speaker's List, the member should type said information into the Zoom chat.
d. L. Smith announced that OSGR is holding the Collegetown Neighborhood Council on Tuesday, 10/26, from 4pm to 5pm.
e. T. Reuning informed that VP Lombardi stated that CARES Act funding will be distributed by the end of October and COVID SSE Relief Grant is separate from the CARES Act.

III. Open Microphone
a. No speakers at open microphone.

IV. Approval of Minutes
a. October 15, 2020
   i. Motion to approve the October 15th minutes – approved 25-0-1

V. Business of the Day
a. SA R6 – Amending the Rank Choice Voting System for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections
   i. Abstract: This resolution is intended to amend the Rank-Choice system for all Cornell Student Assembly Elections.
   ii. U. Chukwukere states that main purpose is to not force voters to rank every single candidate in elections where Rank-Choice voting is being used.
   iii. A. Miramontes Serrano asked what the origination of this resolution.

        1.   U. Chukwukere explained that this resolution stemmed from past elections, including the most recent Fall 2020 SA President and Undergrad Representative to the UA elections.

        2.   Many votes were being invalidated because the voter had not ranked every candidate. There were cases where voters did not feel comfortable ranking certain candidates.

iv.   L. Smith asked what sections on the resolution were added and if this change will be applied to UA Representative elections.

        1.   U. Chukwukere stated that sections in red are what the amended sections of the charter and believed this should apply to that election.

v.   L. Smith proposed the amendment to add in on Line 61 to specify the President, Vice President, and Directly Elected UA Representatives elections.

        1.   Motion to amend Resolution #6 – ==amended== 25-0-1

vi.   A. Miramontes Serrano asked if this proposal will address lack of voting in SA elections.

        1.   U. Chukwukere stated that he believed that lack of voting in recent election was due to voter fatigue. In past years, voter turnout was around 30% to 40% and was much less in the most recent election.

vii.   D. Anadkat expressed his support for this resolution and asked whether they could extend this to all positions on the SA.

        1.   U. Chukwukere stated that he believed the other elections were fine the way they were

        2.   T. Reuning said this resolution is not relevant to the other elections. As the issue that is being addressed is that voters who do not rank every candidate is invalidated, this resolution addresses the Rank-Choice voting system. The other elections are based Plurality voting system, so that issue of voter disenfranchisement does not exist in those elections.

        3.   T. Reuning stated that changing the election style for the other positions is a different conversation and more research would need to be done in the history of those elections.

viii.   S. Zverev stated that he believed D. Anadkat's question was relevant towards this resolution, as he believes this resolution affects every election.

ix.   M. Shardow expressed her support in the Rank-Choice voting system, as she believes it is important for voters to rank each candidate. It will get more votes for each candidate and requires voters to research each candidate.

        1.   T. Reuning clarified that this resolution does not get rid of Rank-Choice voting, it just allows for voters not to have to rank each candidate. In some cases, voters do not want to vote for certain candidates, especially if said candidate has said harmful remarks about different communities.

x.   M. Baker expressed her support for this resolution, as it addresses the concerns with invalidated votes from past elections, and encourages fellow members to vote to approve the resolution. M. Baker also agrees with T.

Reuning that there should be more research into changing all elections before adding to this resolution and it should be its own resolution.

      xi.   A. Ononye expressed her support for this resolution and encouraged the SA to vote in favor of it. It will ensure that votes will not be invalidated, and voters will be ensured that their vote is counted. Historically, there has been a lack of transparency in current voting system and voters were not aware their votes were being invalidated.

     xii.   D. Anadkat expressed concern over the fact that some voters received confirmation emails about their votes, but votes were actually invalidated. Ballots need to be clear about the rules, which will lead to more voter turnout. D. Anadkat stated that the line "all other elections will be chosen by a plurality voting system" should not be included in this resolution.

         1.   Point of Information from M. Baker that the wording is already in the charter and is not what is being added to the charter.

         2.   U. Chukwukere states that changing all the elections should be a separate conversation.

     xiii.   Motion to vote – <mark style="background-color: #00FF00">approved</mark> 23-2-1

   b. L. Smith asked if it was possible to task the Executive Archivist to research into the precedent of the adoption of plurality versus ranked choice.

      i.   Executive Archivist M. Silaban agrees to look into this.

VI. Adjournment

   a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 5:22pm (EST)

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanahan
Clerk of the Student Assembly