



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, November 5, 2020 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:45pm.
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Bentley, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chuckwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. MoyE. Perez, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, L. Zumpano, S. Zverev, C. Huang
 - ii. *Members Absent:* D. Anadkat, J. Noriega, T. Reuning, R. Zohar

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

- a. Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq' (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq' 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:nq' dispossession, and honor the ongoing connection of the Gayogohó:nq' people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

III. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

- a. October 29, 2020
 - i. Motion to approve the October 29th minutes – **approved** 23-0-2

V. Presentations

- a. Presentation by the community and leadership of Tompkins County; Daniel Brown, Executive Director of Racker, Jason Molino, Tompkins County Administrator, Dr. Martin Stallone, CEO at Cayuga Medical Center, and Jennifer Tavares, the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce for the Ithaca region.
 - i. D. Brown expressed his appreciation for the students at Cornell University for their commitment to social distancing and mask wearing. When first learning that Cornell University would be having students in person, he was hesitant to believe the students would follow all guidelines. However, the students proved him wrong and stated that the students at Cornell deserve to be recognized by the local community, as their actions have met the highest standard of ethical behavior by promoting trust, fairness, kindness, and generosity. D. Brown also shared a message from James Brown, president of the Tompkins County United Way, which expressed J. Brown's gratitude for

Cornell University students for their commitment to the collective health and safety of the community.

- ii. J. Molino seconded D. Brown's statement and added that the relationship between Tompkins County and Cornell University has never been stronger. Additionally, J. Molino stated that students have set an example, not only in the community, but across the state and the nation. Tompkins County has the lowest infection rate per capita in New York State and the lowest death rate per capita in New York State. J. Molino stated that a huge part of that is because of students' actions and they deserve to congratulate themselves for their hard work and effort.
 - iii. Dr. M. Stallone seconded both J. Molino's and D. Brown's words. Dr. M. Stallone stated that the medical community and the hospital is incredibly proud of how students have conducted themselves. Testing program compliance, social distancing and mask wearing, limiting gatherings have contributed immensely to the low infection rate. Dr. M Stallone encouraged students to continue to be responsible, as those actions protect members of the community who the virus has more dire consequences than it might among college populations.
 - iv. J. Tavares stated that students play a large role in the economic activity in the community and the actions of students to be safe, have helped the livelihoods of those across the county. J. Tavares explained that students' commitment to safety blew her and the community's expectations out of the water and that the community hopes to continue to support the Cornell University students.
 - v. C. Huang expressed her appreciation for the community leaders for coming to this meeting and also recognized that the achievements have been a complete team effort between students and the community. As an out-of-state student, C. Huang stated her gratitude for being welcomed into Tompkins County.
 - vi. A. Miramontes Serrano agreed with C. Huang's statement and emphasized that people from everywhere are really happy to be in Tompkins County.
 - vii. L. Smith stated his thanks towards the presenters for creating an amazing community. Additionally, L. Smith stated he was impressed with the resources that have been dedicated from the community which allowed students to be successful in their efforts.
 - viii. S. Zverev explained that the student body has done such a great job in keeping with the rules and regulations due to Cornell Health working in unison with the medical centers. The administration has done a phenomenal job making sure that cases are low, and it is the harmony between students and administration that have led to such a successful result.
- b. Police Disarmament Teach-In led by SA Rep. and founder of Do Better Cornell Uchenna Chukwukere, Kataryna Restrepo, member of the Cornell Abolitionists Revolutionary Society, SA Rep. Lucy Contreras, Sherell Farmer, a member of CARS, and Conor Hodges who studies policing in the 1960s and in the Global War on Terror period.
- i. Policing in the United States originated from slave patrols, as when slaves ran away, squadrons of white volunteers were sent out to find them to crush uprisings and punish those violated any rules. From these squadrons, the first

police forces were constructed, which were overwhelming white and focusing on responding to disorder. Additionally, police have been used to uphold racist laws since slavery, including Black Codes, which prevented people from holding certain jobs and owning property, and Jim Crow Laws. The Ugly Laws targeted primarily low income and disabled folks and prohibited folks with any noticeable physically presenting disability from visiting public spaces. The Ugly Laws disproportionately targeted folks at the intersection of income and disability status. Police enforced laws which were incredibly racist and were directed at the most marginalized communities. I

After the abolition of slavery, some former plantations were converting to prison labor camps which were mostly populated by young black men and many were arrested based on false accusations. As prisoners were excluded from protections, they were forced to complete labor for free and under convict leasing, they were imprisoned and send back to plantations. Prison labor still exists today. Police brutality is defined as the use of excessive or unnecessary force by personnel affiliated with law enforcement duties when dealing with civilians and suspects. From 2015 to 2020, there have 5367 fatal police shooting. Among armed victims, Native Americans were killed by police a rate three times that of white people, black people were killed at 2.6 times the rate of white people and Hispanics are killed at nearly 1.3 times the rate of white people. Among unarmed victims, black people were killed at 3 times the rate and Hispanics at 1.4 times the rate of white people. There are many factors that contribute to police brutality, including aggressive defensive police officers and resistance to change in police unions. Qualified immunity is a traditionally created doctrine that shields government officials from being held personally liable for constitutional violation. More factors that contribute to police brutality are racism in police departments, the historical development of policing, militarization of police, tactics that escalate tension, such as stop and frisk, the inadequacies of police training, and psychology, as demonstrated in the Stanford prison experiment. Before the mid 20th century, some universities hired nightwatchmen with the primary responsibilities for reporting curfew violations and ensuring gender segregation. They didn't have the power of arrests or policy authority to conduct searches and were never armed. In the 1960s, things picked up in response to the unrest and social agitation on the end of Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and particularly on college campuses, the response to the draft and the drafting of men aged 18 to 24 to go and fight the war in Vietnam. New York State was at the center of some these debates over social unrest on college campuses, the most important incidences at Columbia and Cornell. The Cornell example, in particular, motivated schools to have campus police departments to break up student movements before they go to the point. One would expect that if the numbers of police officers on campus are increasing, the violent crime rates would also increase. However, this is not the case. The number of police officer on college campuses have continued to increase, despite decreasing rates of crimes on campuses decreased. From 2004 to 2010, the violent crime rates on campus decreased 27%, yet at the same time presence of police on campus have increased 94%. The most common crimes on campus involved property theft or damage or

underage drinking, and there is absolutely no need to be heavily armed to address those situations. There have been negative experiences with campus police all around the country, with examples at Smith College and UC Davis. There is not much criminological literature on campus police armament, however researchers in Norway found that Swedish armed police injured more citizens than Norwegian unarmed patrol. Another study found that the presence of a firearm enhances his or her sense of safety, but necessarily his or her actual safety. Additionally, another study found that unarmed police are similarly deterrent to crime to armed police officers. In conclusion, the history of policing is rooted in racism and targeted marginalized communities. Police brutality and armed police officers needs to be discussed for the safety and well-being of the Cornell community and across the nation.

- ii. J. Silverstein expressed his disappointment in the presentation for the demonization of police officers and hatred towards the police. J. Silverstein stated that the privilege of being a Cornell student allows them to not face the danger of the crimes the police do. Additionally, the Student Assembly voted to cut ties with the Ithaca Police department and the presentation suggested the abolishing of the Cornell University Police Department. J. Silverstein expressed his desire to redirect Cornell funds and opt of the Student Assembly in the future.
 1. U. Chukwukere exhibited his disappointment in J. Silverstein's lack of comprehension of the presentation. The presentation outlined the racist and horrific history of policing, not only in this nation, and the discrimination, marginalization and the oppression that policing has enacted on people of color.
- iii. L. Abd Elmagid stated her gratitude for the presentation and that if you were astonished about the idea of disarming campus police, you did not pay attention to the presentation, as there were several explanations as to why campus police should not be armed.
- iv. D. Johnson asked how prison labor was a term of slavery, if they are getting paid for their labor and if how campus police would respond to violent outbreak if they were unarmed.
 1. C. Huang answered that very often incarcerated folks are not getting paid for their labor and if they are, it is minimal amounts at that completely unacceptable, like \$1 an hour or \$0.13 an hour.
 2. S. Farmer stated that police on campus have actually never stopped an active shooting and that it is important to consider what the role of police actually is.
 3. M. Adeghe explained that prison labor is slavery and prisoners are not paid for the level of work that they do.
- v. R. Horrigan stated that J. Silverstein being white and in a place of privilege should not matter at all when proposing to abolish the police, as they are all

students on campus, regardless of their race. His opinion should not be invalidated because he is white.

1. C. Huang stated that this presentation was not about abolishing the police, it was about disarming the police.
 2. U. Chukwukere explained that the presentation showed that policing disproportionately affects black and indigenous people of people. There is a stark difference between the way police interact on average with white people versus black people. U. Chukwukere stated that there are countless stories of people of color with negative run-ins with CUPD and that everyone deserves to feel safe on campus.
 3. K. Restrepo referred to the point of the presentation about the Ugly Laws, which were laws designed to protect white women. It is important for any person on campus to recognize their privilege when police radically treat black folks and indigenous folks very differently. K. Restrepo stated that they were not invalidating J. Silverstein's opinions, they were just stated that he holds certain privileged identities that he needs to engage with and understand before making comments about how everyone should be okay with policing on campus.
- vi. Y. Yuan asked about what level of disarmament the presenters imagined for the CUPD.
1. C. Hodges explained that any weapon can be made lethal. In Norway, police officers have firearms in the vehicles that they can call on in cases of an active shooter. In the UK, there are specifically trained firearm officers and are pre-staged at different locations. At SUNY Cortland, they would have armed officers in police headquarters that could be called on for incidents requiring armed responses.
- vii. E. Perez expressed her concerns on why people are heavily relying on hypotheticals of violence, instead of believing the presentation.
- viii. C. Hodges explained that people in professions like law enforcement or military believe that any sort of possible threat must be guarded against through any possible means. The likelihood of violent outbreaks needs to be considered and especially in light of the ongoing harms of having that precaution in place with the opportunity costs of overfunding the CUPD and what else the money using to train them on firearms could be used for. Professor James Alan Fox at Northeastern University found that folks are more likely to be struck by lightning than they are to be murdered on a college campus.
- ix. S. Woldai asked what the difference between the training between CUPD and Ithaca Police Department. S. Woldai expressed her appreciation for the presentation.
1. C. Hodges explained CUPD attends full police officer training and have the same qualification standard as IPD.
- x. J. Silverstein stated his gratitude for R. Horrigan's statement, and it is inappropriate to suggest that his opinion is somehow invalid by the virtue of his skin color, which is in direct contrast with what heroes like Martin Luther King Jr stated. J. Silverstein asked how many students on campus were shot by CUPD officers in the last three years. He also explained that he never said

everyone should be fine with policing on campus, just that it is a reckless idea to disarm or abolish the police. J. Silverstein expressed his disdain for recognizing privilege before speaking, as it is an attack on free speech as in order to speak, he would have to agree with the presenters.

1. C. Huang explained that this presentation is not coming from just hating the police.
 2. U. Chukwukere stated J. Silverstein should not disrespect Martin Luther King and use him as justification for not understanding the presentation.
 3. K. Restrepo stated that recognizing privilege is not an infringement on free speech and that it is important to understand that police drastically interact differently with folks of colors and it is not an attack on J. Silverstein personally.
- xi. A. Wilk asked why we should wait for a student to be murdered by police to even stating considering disarming police.
 - xii. Y. Kaymyka expressed concern over the idea that the campus is safer when police are armed versus when police are unarmed. The primary concern is making sure all students feel safe on campus.
 - xiii. J. Silverstein stated that zero students were shot by CUPD in the last year.
 1. C. Huang expressed that imagining a student being shot by the CUPD is probably the worst possible scenario.
 2. U. Chukwukere explained that there should be not waiting until someone dies or get shot and injured before addressing the issues with policing.
 - xiv. S. Zverev stated concern that the people responding did not listen to anything in the presentation and that it is upsetting as the presentation was long and information. S. Zverev stated that a quota for deaths before action about the police makes absolutely no sense.
 - xv. C. Templeman thanked the presenters for the informative presentation and research and asked what sort of equipment the CUPD currently has apart from firearms.
 1. C. Hodges stated that we do not what equipment CUPD has and we do not know what their use of force police is. C. Hodges will be asked as part of the Public Safety Advisory Committee.
 - xvi. S. Farmer explained that they are trying to make a better campus and hold Cornell to their model of “any person, any study” by making this an equitable and safe community for any person. By disarming CUPD, they are being proactive as opposed to retroactive.
 - xvii. L. Contreras stated that the presenters will be sending all the sources and a document with FAQs to all SA members. If you are a community member that would like to receive it, message any of the presenters.
 - xviii. C. Huang asked anyone present who would like the slides from the presentation with message her privately. It is also recommended to watch the documentary “13th” on Netflix, as it is extremely relevant and informative.

VI. Adjournment

- a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 6:23pm (EST)

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanaban
Clerk of the Student Assembly