



## Cornell University Student Assembly

### Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 12, 2020 Meeting  
4:45pm via Zoom

#### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:48pm.
- b. Roll Call
  - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, D. Anadkat, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Bentley, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chuckwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Moy, E. Perez, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, L. Zumpano, S. Zverev, C. Huang
  - ii. *Members Absent:* J. Noriega

#### 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. Announcements and Presentations

- a. A. Ononye, on behalf of the Office of the Student Advocate, announced that Kataryna Restrepo '21 will be serving as the Director of Finance for the Office of the Student Advocate.
- b. L. Smith shared the link to the Tompkins County Website (<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/reimaginepublicsafety>) and announced that over the next couple of weeks Tompkins County and City of Ithaca are holding reimagining public safety forums and essentially designed to get community input about recent interactions with law enforcement. L. Smith

encouraged all members to join, as this has been a prevalent topic in Student Assembly meetings.

- c. A. Gleiberman stated that the research and accountability form is now live ([https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_74M5LAAEq0GLcpf](https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_74M5LAAEq0GLcpf)) and encouraged members to participate.
- d. C. Huang communicated that President Pollack recognized her letter that called for the university to declare Election Day a university holiday and would be taking this into account moving forward when establishing the academic calendar.
- e. C. Huang welcomed all guests to the Student Assembly meeting and reminded new folks about the Standing Rules.
- f. C. Huang asked for the agenda to be amended to remove Resolution #10 as the President's office responded to the resolution yesterday, 11/11.
  - i. Motion to amend the agenda – amended 27-0-1

#### **IV. Open Microphone**

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

#### **V. New Business**

- a. SA R11: Calling For the Disarmament of the Cornell University Police Department
  - i. Abstract: This resolution is calling for the disarmament of the Cornell University Police department.
  - ii. U. Chukwukere explained this resolution is the building off from the teach-in from last SA meeting (11/5) and has been a long time coming. Policing in American is rooted in racism, slavery, corruption, and violence, especially against black and brown people. American law enforcement began as slave patrols and union busters. U. Chukwukere stated that policing has upheld and enforced racist laws and policies that have disproportionately affect people of color.
  - iii. K. Restrepo explained that Ugly Laws were legislation that prohibited people with notable physical presenting disabilities from visiting public spaces starting back from 1860s all the way until the 1970s. They are one example of the disproportionately targeted folks at the intersection of race, income, and disability status.
  - iv. L. Contreras communicated several examples of similar universities disarming their police or plans to disarm their campus police, such as Portland State University, University of Chicago, and Harvard University.
  - v. M. Adeghe encouraged all to contemplate the last time they called the police and why you felt having the police being armed necessary.
  - vi. Y. Yuan thanked the co-sponsors for the resolution expressed the importance to think about the relationship between students and police presence on campus. Y. Yuan asked what the co-sponsors vision of police presence on campus would look like.
    - 1. M. Adeghe encouraged Y. Yuan to think about the last time he interacted with the police and if guns were necessary. In general, when was the last time you encountered the police and a gun was used in order to protect you and keep you safe.
    - 2. U. Chukwukere stated that armed police is not necessary, for example during mental health crises. In Philadelphia, a black man was having a mental health crisis and police officers eventually gunned him down.

- U. Chukwukere stated he does not feel safe around CUPD and wants a system that will protect all people, especially people of color.
- vii. A. Lampert explained she had the same question as Y. Yuan and additionally asked if there are mental health workers on campus already that would be able to handle these crises, or would this system need to be constructed.
    - 1. U. Chukwukere explained that currently the university does not have a response team in place, but there are people who could respond.
    - 2. T. Reuning stated that the closest thing available right now is the RA system, however it is unfair to place that kind of burden on them. Resources currently being used to give CUPD guns could be better spent getting a mental health crisis response team together.
    - 3. Point of Information: K. Butler stated that there is currently a unit in the works as an alternative to the police department.
  - viii. D. Anadkat commended the members of the community for joining and it's so good to see this outreach and engagement for such an important discussion. Previously, the Student Assembly voted to ban the Ithaca Police Department from the Cornell campus and is now voting to disarm the CUPD. D. Anadkat expressed concern for this resolution without clear alternatives and solutions in place now. D. Anadkat asked if there is a middle ground to come to where police officers leave their weapons in their cars and only carry them if they're responding to violence or an attack. This is a bold resolution and D. Anadkat expressed fear the University Administration will not pay much attention to it, which is increasingly common with the resolutions.
    - 1. Point of Information: U. Chukwukere stated that the SA did not vote to ban the IPD, the SA voted to dissolve ties with IPD.
    - 2. Point of Information: C. Huang explained that the President's Office is addressing resolution and had responded to two of the SA resolutions just this week.
    - 3. M. Adeghe restated her question of when has a police officer holding a gun or taser made you feel safe and that much of the counterarguments are just hypotheticals. It is not the role of the abolitionists to always have measures intact for what is going to happen in the future. When slavery was abolished, there was no plan for how people would operate without free labor. However, this doesn't mean slavery shouldn't have been abolished. M. Adeghe stated that just because there is no immediate resolution, doesn't mean it should not happen.
    - 4. T. Reuning asked if there has been documentation of an event where a school police officer actually prevented a mass shooting from happening. At Stoneman Douglas, when the shooting started, the school police officer left the school and did not make a difference. At

Virginia Tech, there was armed police officers that did not stop the mass shooting.

- ix. V. Xu asked if Cornell Police Officers were responsible for the protection of high-profile special guests on campus for events.
  - 1. T. Reuning explained that most high-profile guest have their own security details that are more qualified than CUPD.
- x. A. Gleiberman expressed appreciation for the resolution, however, stated that she has personally felt the need for CUPD when walking home late at night. She has felt very unsafe on campus extremely late at night and the protection of a CUPD officer has made her feel safe. A. Gleiberman stated that armed police are not needed for mental health crises or alcohol/drug cases.
  - 1. S. Woldai explained that she completely understands A. Gleiberman's concerns when walking home at night and have felt similar feelings on campus. However, having the CUPD walk her home scares her even more.
  - 2. M. Adeghe stated, as a black woman, that she could never imagine calling the police for anything. Additionally, M. Adeghe asked if being walked home by someone with a gun was what made A. Gleiberman feel safe or if it was just being walked home by someone.
  - 3. U. Chukwukere expressed that A. Gleiberman's standpoint and experiences are valid, but stated to not invalidate the experiences, fears, and worries of all other people of color, especially come from marginalized groups.
- xi. C. Tempelman asked for clarification on what the category of lethal weapons include.
  - 1. U. Chukwukere stated that it does include handguns, tasers, and batons.
- xii. M. Baker expressed concerns that in the event of a violent crime, like a robbery, stabbing, or murder police officers would be left defenseless.
  - 1. K. Restrepo explained that in most incidences of gun violence, police officers are able to detain the perpetrator without using the full force and CUPD would be able to respond without lethal weapons.
  - 2. T. Reuning supplied that in events like burglaries, police are called after the crime has already occurred. Someone else entering your space with a gun is not going to necessarily make you feel safer.
- xiii. S. Woldai asked for all people present to contemplate the last time, if ever, CUPD weapons were necessary and called for people to empathize with other students of campus, specifically students of color.
- xiv. L. Smith asked what the status of the police oversight committee was.
- xv. S. Kannan stated that experiences with law enforcement for minority individuals are subjective. As a brown minority American, S. Kannan never felt unsafe with their multiple interactions with CUPD. An article published in the Guardian states that law enforcement has stopped at least seven mass shootings.
  - 1. U. Chukwukere stated that one's lived experiences does not define the experiences of other people. One person of color feeling safe around CUPD does not discount the experiences of all other people

of color. This resolution is based on a lot of community outreach and many of the co-sponsors have lived experiences with the CUPD.

2. K. Restrepo stated that mass shootings are not common are very rare. More instances of police brutality happen compared to mass shootings in general.
  3. T. Reuning explained that even in the examples where law enforcement stopped a mass shooting, dozens of people were still killed or injured. If there was mental health resources or universal background checks in place, shootings could be prevented in the first place.
- xvi. M. Shardow stated she will cede her time to community member Z. Sherin, however does not sponsoring anything Z. Sherin says and does not want anything said held to her.
- xvii. Z. Sherin thanked M. Shardow for yielding their time. Z. Sherin explained that at their old school, before transferring to Cornell, there was an incident where in the basement of the library someone went on social media and stated that they were going to shoot up the school. It was a small incident and several students were shaken by it and lots of students asked about the logistics if the shooting did take place. Many students were comforted by the fact there was an armed officer on the second floor of the library. Z. Sherin asked how the SA would respond if there were a school shooting and the police were unarmed, leading to more lives to be lost.
1. K. Restrepo stated that in Z. Sherin's story, no lethal weapon was needed to stop the student and that this question has been asked multiple times. CUPD should not have weapons because they would not be effective in deterring any person from taking violence against students and we believe in preventative measures.
  2. M. Adeghe explained that this is a hypothetical and asked how the police would have stopped a shooting.
  3. T. Reuning stated it is the SA's responsibility to protect the student body within its ability and right now the most pressing threat to the student body, particularly marginalized students, is police with lethal weapons. The possession of lethal weapons by police does not prevent a mass shooting from happening, even in the example given.
- xviii. A. Gleiberman asked for what is categorized as a lethal weapon.
1. T. Reuning explained that the idea of non-lethal weapons is a misnomer, as any weapon can be made lethal.
- xix. K. Santacruz thanked the cosponsors of this resolution and the presenters from previous meetings for bring awareness to these issues. K. Santacruz asked if it would possible to provide a better definition of lethal weapon in the resolution.
1. U. Chukwukere stated it might be possible to make a few amendments, but anything a police officer is carrying is lethal.
- xx. Community member, Raquel, stated that believes guns do act as deterrents for crimes if they are present. Additionally, much of the argument is that this resolution is taking preventative measures, however, on the other hand, waiting for a violent crime to happen to arm the police is retroactive. For

drug and alcohol cases, there are medical amnesty laws and good Samaritan laws, so police do not come and shoot people.

1. A. Cintron explained that in the resolution, it is cited that studies have shown that unarmed officers are just as effective as armed police officers in deterring crime.
- xxi. D. Johnson stated that it is more appropriate to come up with an emergency response team before disarming the police and asked if they want Cornell to be completely defenseless against violent outbreaks. D. Johnson explained that he has met several CUPD officers personally and has observed that none of them are hateful or racist. D. Johnson explained that students should not have to worry about interactions with them based on race or skin color.
  1. M. Adeghe explained that police do not prevent mass violent outbreaks and that D. Johnson is not the arbiter of who is racist.
  2. U. Chukwukere expressed his displeasure with D. Johnson interrupting M. Adeghe as it is rude and disrespectful. As a white man, D. Johnson cannot tell people of color how they are supposed to feel around CUPD.
  3. T. Reuning stated that interrupting speakers is incredibly disrespectful, especially if they did not disrupt anyone else. T. Reuning explained that invalidating people's experiences is unacceptable.
- xxii. A. Miramontes Serrano expressed her appreciation to the sponsors of the resolution and as this is very high concern, asked if it was possible to table this resolution to next week.
- xxiii. K. Butler expressed her support for the resolution but stated some of the information in the resolution is misleading. Yale and Harvard have not officially disbanded, and Cortland released a 28-page report explaining and doing months of research. Other schools have spent more time and resources on this.
  1. U. Chukwukere that it is not misleading, and the sponsors have done much research and analysis on the information included in the resolution.
- xxiv. There was a motion to table the resolution.
  1. U. Chukwukere dissented.
  2. Vote to vote – **failed** 18-9-1.
- xxv. There was a motion to roll-call vote.
  1. Y. Yuan dissented.
  2. Vote to vote – **failed** 10-16-1.
- xxvi. There was a motion to vote.
  1. A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, and K. Butler dissented.
  2. Vote to vote – **failed** 7-21-1.
- xxvii. Motion to table Resolution #11 – **tabled** 25-3-1
- b. SA R12: Temporary Amendment of Appendix B of the Student Assembly Charter
  - i. Abstract: This resolution seeks to temporarily suspend Appendix B of the Student Assembly Charter that in-part outlines the off-year reporting duties of the Appropriations Committee for the 2020-2021 academic year.
  - ii. U. Chukwukere stated that every even numbered year, there is off-year reporting for organizations who receive direct funds from the student activity

fee. In a normal year, the SA would require them to come in and give an oral presentation, but due to the current pandemic it would be better to make it optional unless the Appropriations Committee mandates some to come in to discuss any discrepancies.

- iii. Motion to vote on Resolution #12 – approved 23-0-4
- c. Due to time constraints, SA President C. Huang passed chair duties SA Vice President N. Watson.
- d. SA R13: Approving the 2020-2021 Student Assembly Budget
  - i. Abstract: The resolution approves the Student Assembly operating Budget for the 2020-2021 Academic Year.
  - ii. U. Chukwukere explained that resolution is approving the budget proposal and the only change is the that support accounts were added for the Office of the Student Advocate, OSGR, and the Research and Accountability Committee.
  - iii. A. Miramontes Serrano asked what the budget of the Environment Committee goes into.
    - 1. U. Chukwukere explained that the budget for each of the committees are up to the discretion of the committee chairs and members of the committee.
  - iv. A. Miramontes Serrano asked, that due to the pandemic, would any committee be able to ask the SA for an extension of money if needed.
    - 1. U. Chukwukere stated that they potentially could.
  - v. Motion to vote on resolution #13 – approved 22-0-5.

## **VI. Adjournment**

- a. N. Watson adjourned the meeting at 6:34pm (EST).

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Ciara Shanahan*  
Clerk of the Student Assembly