



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, February 27th, 2020 Meeting
4:45-6:30pm via Zoom

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, S. Ali, J. Anderson, C. Benedict, A. Cass, J. Clancy, O. Egharevba, M. Haddad, C. Huang, J. Kroll, Y. Li, G. Martin, N. Matolka, I. Pavlov, T. Reuning, P. Solovyeva, S. Sun, N. Watson, B. Weintraub, K. Wondmu, S. Xu, V. Xu, J. Youngblood, Y. Yuan
 - ii. Absent: M. Baker (excused), U. Chukwukere (excused), J. Feit (unexcused), L. Smith (excused)

II. Announcements & Presentations

- a. J. Anderson announced that the candidate information session for the S.A. elections will take place after the S.A. meeting in the Memorial Room.

III. Approval of the Minutes

- a. February 13, 2020
 - i. Motion to approve the February 13, 2020 minutes—**approved** by 20-0-1.

IV. Open Microphone

- a. A panel of representatives read a letter signed by the Cornell S.A. Black Caucus, Cornell Students for Justice in Palestine, Cornell Jewish Voice for Peace, Haven: The LGBTQ+ Student Union, and Cornell Men of Color Council. On March 1, 2020, student leaders at Cornell announced plans to attend the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in Washington D.C. The signatories of the letter joined together to condemn the actions of the student leaders in supporting an organization implicit in suppressing and sidelining Palestinian and LGBTQ+ rights. The panel noted well-documented abuse of Palestinian children and that AIPAC's anti-boycott campaign had spread to college campuses. In 2018, the University of California censored any and all faculty support of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. Last year, President Trump signed an executive order to punish academic institutions that do not combat pro-Palestinian student activities. Among speakers of this year's conference is Vice President Mike Pence, who has stated on the record that being gay is a choice and a learned behavior. He has a record of unacceptable actions, including cosponsoring a proposed amendment that would define marriage as solely between a man and a woman. The panelists also noted that AIPAC is one of the most powerful right-wing lobbying groups on Capitol Hill and serves as the main intermediary between the U.S. government and

the state of Israel. This relationship includes the U.S. sending \$3 billion in aid annually—much of which goes to Israel’s military industrial complex. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the U.S. has also helped to prevent adoption of any resolution condemning Israel for its racist policies and flagrant violations of human rights over 40 times. The AIPAC conference has been publicly condemned by many international figures, including senators. Senator Sanders has pointed out that the conference provides a platform for weaponizing anti-Semitism and hate to silence debate. As Cornell is a leading academic institution, the organizations penning the letter will not support those who choose to attend conferences promoting hatred and further marginalization of already disenfranchised people. The S.A. Black Caucus stated it chose to sign onto the letter based on its unequivocal support of the Palestinian people for their pursuit of liberation. Its members noted a refusal to stand by as student leaders choose to attend the conference with the intention of upholding settler colonialism and white supremacy. In addition, the panelists asked people to not confuse the lack of support for AIPAC as a lack of support for the Jewish community. They stand with the Jewish people in the fight against global anti-Semitism.

V. Business of the Day

- a. S.A. Resolution #39: Approving Special Projects Request for Smart is Strong Foundation
 - i. M. Adeghe noted that she mistakenly stated at the last meeting that Resolution #39 did not have to be approved by the S.A.. However, she was told that because it was introduced as New Business, it has to be voted on. She reiterated that The Smart is Strong Foundation will be receiving \$500 for the International Women’s Day Conference.
 - ii. Motion to vote on Resolution #39—approved 22-01.
- b. S.A. Resolution #31: Amending the Student Assembly Charter to Create a Ticket System for the President and Executive Vice President Election
 - i. M. Adeghe stated the issue has been previously discussed at the S.A. and she is opening it back up for suggestions and comments. The ticket system would not be going into effect this election cycle as it is already underway, but is intended for the future. The resolution could help lower barriers to entry to the S.A.
 - ii. Motion to table the resolution indefinitely—withdrawn.
 - iii. I. Pavlov expressed a concern that people wanting to run would not be able to find a running partner. She suggested having something in place to pair up those who want to run but do not have a partner.
 - iv. M. Adeghe added that this system will not resemble what last year’s looked like.
 - v. A. Cass expressed that the resolution was a generally positive idea but not an imperative one. In the interest of getting more things done, it may be advantageous to have the President and Executive Vice President (EVP) to be people who have similar stances on issues.
 - vi. O. Egharevba stated a concern that the ticket system may create an inequality where only the President and EVP positions are allowed to run with each other while other positions are not. While a ticket system makes sense for

national elections, they do not have political parties here. He also expressed a concern over the potential to “buy candidates.”

1. M. Adeghe stated she is interested in entertaining the idea but because there are so many seats open, endorsing on a lower level makes her feel it would create a party system. This can be discussed if the S.A. is open to it. However, she was not looking to tackle both the ticket and party system in the resolution. She is not opposed to political parties on campus, but she is aware that many are.
- vii. P. Solovyeva noted that the culture of the S.A. changes every year. The unintended consequences of two people from the S.A. partnering up and running may hinder others from running because they may not have S.A. experience. This may create more barriers to entry.
- viii. I. Wallace stated that with this change, candidates would no longer worry about their own candidacy but someone else’s as well. In addition, the two candidates would have to collect 650 signatures. This would raise the bar to entry.
 1. M. Adeghe explained that the extra 50 signatures was added because the two candidates would be running together. Individually, they would have to collect 300 signatures on campus. The number of signatures is not much higher and was not meant to be a barrier.
- ix. N. Matolka stated that the resolution is going in the wrong direction. The S.A. should be moving towards no endorsements at all.
- x. J. Feit disagreed and stated that endorsements are important and helpful. He suggested they should not consider the resolution until they have more substantial information to base decisions on.
 1. M. Adgehe noted she submitted a fact-finding effort. However, she does not feel they need to wait until May or April to discuss the resolution again. She does not feel the barrier to entry is any different. The candidates who run for President and EVP are typically not people who are complete outsiders and have never done anything with the S.A.
- xi. V. Xu added that having a President and EVP run separately brings the benefit of having two people of different viewpoints. They could balance each other out in a system of checks and balances. In addition, people should be the ones to decide who the best candidates are.
 1. M. Adeghe stated she has been entertaining the idea of having the President and EVP being internally elected. It is something the S.A. has done in the past and is likely something that will come up in the fact finding committee.
- xiii. B. Weintraub noted there have been people with no S.A. experience who have ran for the President position. He noted Trevor Davis who ran for S.A. President last year. He highlighted the oft-cited point that there is a lot of value in not having the top two people in the S.A. in complete agreement on everything. However, a lot of the work that is beneficial to the Cornell community is done by committees. Issues that are contentious oftentimes do not impact students as much as other issues, which are for the most part not contentious. The idea that the S.A. is not getting things done is inaccurate.

1. M. Adeghe clarified that the current S.A. was not her example of a dysfunctional and gridlocked assembly. Rather, she was referring to assemblies in previous years. In addition, bringing up Trevor Davis' campaign is not appropriate as he made it clear he was running on satire.
- xiii. I. Wallace made a motion to table S.A. Resolution #31.
 1. M. Adeghe dissented. She asked to table the resolution until after the next sprint.
 2. Vote to vote on the motion to table S.A. Resolution #31 indefinitely—passed with 17-4-2.
- xiv. Vote to table Resolution #31—tabled indefinitely with 15-6-2.
- c. S.A. Resolution #32: Support of the development and implementation of a Cornell Campus Circulator System
 - i. T. Reuning inquired for the impacts of a Cornell Campus Circulator System on TCAT, TCAT staff, and the local economy.
 1. J. Youngblood replied that the specific design is up to Transportation Services. It is likely to somehow affect TCAT as it would also run in the same town and may take riders out of TCAT service. However, he anticipates some partnership with TCAT.
 - ii. A. Cass added he would want some assurance that there would be collaboration between Cornell and TCAT. He suggested a wording change.
 1. J. Youngblood noted that if A. Cass drafted an amendment, he would be happy to include it.
 - iii. G. Martin stated that after Resolution #32 was brought up, he went to ask constituents and employees for their thoughts. The overall feedback was positive. The largest questions are around funding. It is also important to recognize that many employees do not live close to campus. A circulator could help ameliorate long commutes.
 - iv. I. Pavlov stated it is important to stress that campus and community travel is still integrated. As Cornell owns a large part of TCAT, it is likely that they will stay integrated. She asked if the Campus Planning Committee was consulted as they oversee the Campus Master Plan. They may have valuable input.
 1. J. Youngblood explained that K. Barth is on the Campus Planning Committee and the resolution was driven by him.
 - v. A. Cass asked if the resolution was going through all the assemblies verbatim or if it has been edited.
 1. J. Youngblood replied that the resolution in front of them is what has been submitted to all the assemblies. Most of the other assemblies have amended it in some way to add their feedback. The intention is for it to go back and be edited take into account the feedback.
 - vi. Motion to vote on Resolution #32.
 1. J. Youngblood dissented. He made a motion to amend the resolution to add on line 61:“Be it further resolved, the development of the Campus Circulator does not come at the expense of current bus subsidies to students.”
 - a. Amendment seconded.
 - b. Motion to amend Resolution #32—amended 19-0-1.

2. Vote on Resolution #32—**passed** 18-1-1.

VI. New Business

- a. S.A. Resolution #43: Opposing Re-envisioning the College of Human Ecology to the College of Public Policy
 - i. M. Haddad introduced S.A. Resolution #43. A faculty committee made a recommendation to reroute the College of Human Ecology into a College of Public Policy. Most students, faculty, and alumni are not in favor of this recommendation. M. Haddad stated she originally intended for the student body to vote on this. However, she would like to recommend they move the resolution to Business of the Day and vote on it today as a decision is expected to be made this weekend.
 1. M. Haddad made a motion to change the resolution from Sense of the Body to a recommendation from the S.A.
 - a. Motion seconded.
 - b. Vote to amend Resolution #43—**amended** by 17-0-1.
 2. Motion to move Resolution #43 to Business of the Day.
 - a. Motion seconded.
 - b. Resolution #43 moved to Business of the Day by 19-0-1.
 3. M. Haddad made a motion to note in line 56 a petition circulating that has garnered signatures from 460 students, 13 staff members, 8 faculty, and 27 family members of Cornell students as of 5:00pm.
 - a. Vote to amend Resolution #43—**amended** by 18-0-2.
 4. M. Haddad made a point of order. She asked for the names and comments on the petition to be included in the appendix.
 - ii. A. Cass asked M. Haddad who supported the recommendation beyond the faculty committee that made the recommendation.
 1. M. Haddad replied that not a lot of people supported it. The opposing view is that having a College of Public Policy will give Cornell better rankings and more policy majors. Of the 10 people on the committee, six were in favor and four were not. M. Haddad shared that she is a Policy Analysis and Management major and that the major will shift drastically were the recommendation be adopted.
 - iii. I. Wallace noted that students who are applying to Cornell have to do a lot more research when looking at the College of Human Ecology. However with a College of Public Policy, the focus of the college may be more obvious.
 - iv. S. Sun asked where the College of Human Ecology majors would be displaced.
 1. M. Haddad replied that the committee did not make a decision based on that. However, the president has stated that no major will be erased. There was another proposal to make a shared College of Public Policy between the College of Human Ecology and the College of Arts & Sciences. However, it did not get the majority vote. A large concern many have is the uncertainty of what will happen.
 - v. J. Feit stated that the College of Human Ecology has a distinct culture on campus. The other majors may be shifted to other land grant schools at

Cornell. He asked M. Haddad if she was aware of any changes that would be made to New York State funding allocations.

1. M. Haddad responded that she is not aware of any changes. However, it is a concern that many are expressing. She cited a letter to the editor published in The Cornell Daily Sun from an alumnus who studied Design and Environmental Analysis in the College of Human Ecology. The alumnus noted that her experiences in the College of Human Ecology made her a better policy analyst.
- vi. A. Cass noted it does not seem like anyone in the College of Human Ecology supports this and there are a lot of unclear details.
- vii. The S.A. was alerted to a message on their Slack channel. The recommendation to turn the College of Human Ecology will not be happening.
- viii. Motion to vote on Resolution #43—passed with 21-0-1.
- b. S.A. Resolution #44: Creating the Laundry Reform Task Force
 - i. M. Adeghe stated that she began conversations with the Laundry Services office to talk about free laundry and what it would look like. N. Watson came up with an idea to create a task force for centralization. She recommended also starting up the task force again next semester so the committee could be in constant communication with the office.
 - ii. J. Feit questioned why the Residential Student Congress was not working on the issue and asked M. Adeghe if she was working with them.
 1. M. Adeghe pointed out lines 35 and 36, which notes that the Residential Student Congress will have two seats on the committee. She is not sure the Residential Student Congress has started those conversations and intends to include them.
 2. J. Anderson added that the Residential Student Congress only has jurisdiction over North Campus and Collegetown. It is not intended to be an intensive advocacy body like the S.A., but rather a leadership development organization. The S.A. has a history of inviting the Residential Student Congress to partner on issues.
 - iii. Motion to move Resolution #44 to Business of the Day—moved with 21-0-1.
 - iv. Motion to vote on Resolution #44—passed with 21-0-1.

VII. Adjournment

- a. J. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 5:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Tran

Clerk of the Employee Assembly
Office of the Assemblies