



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, February 18, 2021 Meeting
4:45pm via Zoom

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:47pm (EST).
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, M. Baker, J. Bansah, K. Butler, C. Castillo, U. Chuckwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Lampert, A. Miramontes Serrano, K. Santacruz, T. Reuning, 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:* E. Moy, E. Perez

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. C. Huang asked for the agenda to be amended to include a presentation from C. Van Loan of the Faculty Senate.
 - i. Motion to amend the agenda – **amended** Unanimous Consent
- b. C. Van Loan asked for student input regarding on how the faculty should process student petitions and what students think about petitions. C. Van Loan stated they were interested in the student-faculty communication process and how to make it more effective when petitions are involved.
 - i. Y. Yuan stated they believe there are two different types of petitions. One type is more of people sharing their grievances. This usually is a platform where it does not confirm if you are a Cornell student or not. Y. Yuan stated that those petitions do not have to be legally-binding. Another type of petition is more official, where there is a process to authenticate who signs the petition. There should be a way for the Faculty Senate to address these petitions once they reach a certain threshold.
 1. C. Van Loan stated that authentication can be an issue, but not a major one.
 - ii. L. Abd Elmagid explained that petitions are very important to voicing student opinions. One petition that comes to mind is from Spring 2020 where students wanted to change grading options due to the pandemic.
 - iii. K. Butler expressed concern about how many people are actually able to view petitions, as they are typically just shared through social media or email



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- which does not reach the entire Cornell student population. It may be important to create a way for petitions to better reach everyone.
- iv. A. Miramontes Serrano agreed with K. Butler, where petitions could benefit from more information and reaching larger populations.
 1. C. Van Loan stated that these issues are common and would hope that petitions could be advertised through the SA.
 2. A. Miramontes Serrano stated that it may be helpful to increase responsiveness from students by setting up a system similar to the Daily Check, which has had high response rates daily from students.
 - v. K. Santacruz explained that other institutions have been able to send out mass emails explaining what the petition is and positions on the matter. It may be helpful to send petitions like that encouraging students to fill it out.
 1. C. Van Loan stated that it has to be a very delicate balance. If you are sending emails asking for responses too often, it will hurt the response rate.
 - vi. C. Huang affirmed that students are finding the best ways to advocate for themselves through things that can be done virtually such as online petitions. C. Huang suggested that it may be helpful to create a petition type that is binding, or at least has a little bit more of an accountability mechanism.
 1. C. Van Loan stated they will talk with their colleagues about creating a way to use petitions as a suitable mechanism that is easy to get responses. Petitions are great for different reasons such as calling attention to important issues that sometimes get overlooked.
 - c. K. Santacruz presented on the professional organization Cornell Grub Ventures. It is the first agricultural food-focused venture capital organization. Cornell Grub Ventures was created by external and internal transfers and their mission is to build an entrepreneurial network of students interested in learning about venture capital, promoting food security and creating a social impact.
 - d. M. Stefanko and V. Xu informed the SA of the initiative One Fair Share: Addressing Homelessness. Prior the pandemic, there were about 160 homeless people in Tompkins County and if these numbers follow nationally, it is expected that there will be an increase because of COVID-19. M. Stefanko and V. Xu identified a number of different organizations that could be great partners for an effort from the Student Assembly. It is really pertinent for the SA to act on this issue, as we all bear some form of responsibility for what the community looks like. Rent prices are pushed up and the people at the bottom get pushed down heavily. This initiative seeks to be a step in addressing that problem and contributing our fair share as community members.
 - i. U. Chukwukere expressed support for this initiative and asked what the expected funding needed would be.
 1. M. Stefanko stated they are still unsure of the specific dollar amount, as in an ideal world, it would be a much money as they were able to



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- receive. They do not want to tell a non-profit they would be receiving X amount of money and continually lowering that amount.
- ii. A. Miramontes Serrano asked if there was something students could do to combat rent pricings increasing.
 1. M. Stefanko stated that this initiative is more of a temporary band aid solution and a small thing we can do to make people's lives a little bit more livable. It would be amazing to complete a massive solution, however that is a little bit higher level than what the SA is able to do.
 - iii. L. Smith stated that the mayor is very focused on the goal of making Ithaca a housing-first community.
 - iv. M. Stefanko encouraged anyone with any questions, comments, or criticism to please reach out.
 - e. There was a motion to confirm E. Rubin as Director of the Office of Student Government Relations.
 - i. Motion to confirm E. Rubin – **confirmed** 23-0-1

IV. Open Microphone

- a. S. Kapoor stated that the Academic Policy Committee have been working on a future resolution regarding extending grant based financial aid to Summer and Winter terms in addition to the existing loan and work-based aid offered. If you are interested in this issue, please reach out.
- b. K. Butler shared they were thinking of selling their clothes online and donating the proceeds to a charity. If anyone is interested in this idea, K Butler encouraged members to reach out.

V. Approval of the Minutes

- a. February 11, 2021
 - i. Motion to approve the February 11th minutes – **approved** Unanimous Consent

VI. Adjournment

- a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 5:33pm (EST).

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanahan
Clerk of the Student Assembly