

# Resolution 16: Calling on Cornell University to Protect and Accommodate Students During the Spike in COVID-19 Cases

**Abstract:** This resolution calls for more protective and accommodating measures for students, staff, and faculty to protect their wellbeing during the recent COVID-19 outbreak.

**Sponsored by:** Valeria Valencia '23, Annette Gleiberman '22, Morgan Baker '23, Kate Schrage '23, Dillon Eisman '22, Claire Tempelman '24, Deepak Ilango '22, Claudia León '23, Henry Wade IV '23, Duncan Cady '23, Joseph Mullen '24, Anuli Ononye '22, Adele Williams '24, Nicole Overton '23

**Reviewed by:** Executive Committee, 08/31/2021

**Type of Action:** Legislation

**Originally Presented:** 02/09/2021

**Current Status:** New Business

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**Whereas,** the administration has affirmed that their “goal remains to do everything we can to preserve both the student educational experience and the well-being of our whole community.”<sup>1</sup>

**Whereas,** the recent circumstances of the pandemic have made it increasingly challenging for students to both participate in and succeed in academic course work during the entire semester.

**Whereas,** Cornell University is currently experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 that is unprecedented<sup>2</sup> and dangerous, especially considering the Delta variant, which is twice as infectious and 60% more transmissible than the Alpha variant<sup>3</sup>.

**Whereas,** despite the fact that positive cases at Cornell have continued to skyrocket to more than fifty cases daily - a level Cornell has never seen before - Cornell has still made in-person classes mandatory, putting faculty, staff, and students at risk of contracting the disease.

**Whereas,** in the past few days we have seen the positivity rate by week – for the week of 8/24/21 – 8/30/21 - jump to 1.20% of those tested.<sup>4</sup>

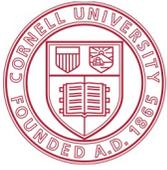
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<sup>1</sup> <https://covid.cornell.edu/updates/20210830-updates.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ithacavoices.com/2021/08/fueled-by-cornell-numbers-covid-19-positives-shatter-previous-local-records/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/27/health/delta-variant-hospitalization-risk.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://covid.cornell.edu/testing/dashboard/>



## Cornell University Student Assembly

26 **Whereas**, in a Cornell Daily Sun Article,<sup>5</sup> it was reported that despite the recent positive cases of  
27 COVID-19, Cornell maintains their commitment to in-person instruction for the remainder of the  
28 Fall semester.

29 **Whereas**, Cornell has stated online on their [COVID-19 dashboard](#) that classes in-person “will be  
30 held in-person only, with no options for students to participate remotely.”<sup>6</sup>

31 **Whereas**, Provost Kotlikoff and Vice President Lombardi have both recently communicated in  
32 an email sent to all students on August 13, 2021 that “Fall 2021 classes will not offer a remote  
33 option and will not be recorded.”<sup>7</sup>

34 **Whereas**, there has been no communication from University administrators concerning students’  
35 access to course materials since the entire campus moved to COVID-19 Alert Yellow.

36 **Whereas**, in a letter signed by over 100 members of the Cornell faculty on August 29, it was  
37 emphasized by the faculty that they “are concerned that Cornell is not doing more to minimize  
38 risk and prevent transmission of this virus.”<sup>8</sup>

39 **Whereas**, a circulating petition started by a Cornell undergraduate student asking to “Push  
40 Cornell University to Provide Remote/Virtual Course Access” has nearly 500 student  
41 signatures.<sup>9</sup>

42 **Whereas**, the current system places an undue burden on quarantining students who are left  
43 neither able to attend their classes in person nor virtually, which necessitates a temporary change  
44 to allow all students equitable access to course materials and educational opportunities.

45 **Whereas**, the vast majority of students currently bedridden and isolated do not have an alternate  
46 method of attending their classes, setting them far behind and creating an inequitable atmosphere  
47 of insurmountable pressure and stress merely days into the academic year.

48 **Whereas**, while some professors have created alternative means for students to complete  
49 coursework and watch recorded lectures, others have made attendance mandatory and part of a  
50 student’s grade, while not offering a remote learning option.

51 **Whereas**, it is understandable that not every classroom has audiovisual recording capabilities,  
52 but there are necessary steps Cornell University can and must take in order to ensure that  
53 students have equal access to their course materials.

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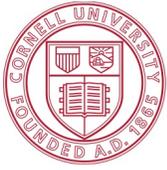
<sup>5</sup> <https://cornellsun.com/2021/08/30/administration-responds-to-covid-19-case-spike-reinforces-commitment-to-in-person-teaching/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://covid.cornell.edu/students/academic-policies/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://statements.cornell.edu/2021/20210813-in-person-operations.cfm>

<sup>8</sup> <https://cornellsun.com/2021/08/29/guest-room-letter-to-provost-kotlikoff-and-vice-provost-nishii/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/cornell-university-push-cornell-university-to-provide-remote-virtual-course-access>



## Cornell University Student Assembly

54 **Whereas**, in order to live up to its motto of “Any Person, Any Study,” Cornell must give  
55 students in isolation/quarantine the support they need to succeed academically and care for their  
56 mental and physical wellbeing.

57 **Be it therefore resolved**, Cornell University must commit to fostering a safe and equitable  
58 learning environment for all of its students during this unprecedented spike in COVID-19 cases.

59 **Be it further resolved**, Cornell University must distribute audio or video recording devices for  
60 classes not otherwise equipped with audio or video recording capabilities to allow instructors to  
61 record lectures for students.

62 **Be it finally resolved**, Cornell University must require professors to adopt the following student  
63 demands:

- 64 1. Offer a temporary virtual learning option
- 65 2. Offer recorded lectures to be made available online
- 66 3. Offer make up in person exams for students in isolation/quarantine
- 67 4. Offer virtual zoom office hours
- 68 5. Alter attendance and participation grading requirements to accommodate those who  
69 are unable to attend in-person lectures and discussions

70 Respectfully Submitted,

71 Valeria Valencia '23

72 *First Generation Student Representative At-Large, Student Assembly*

73 Annette Gleiberman '22

74 *Vice President of External Operations, Student Assembly*

75 Morgan Baker '23

76 *Vice President for Finance, Student Assembly*

77 Kate Schrage '22

78 *Community Member*

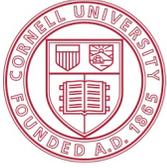
79 Dillon Eisman '22

80 *LGBTQIA+ Liaison At-Large, Student Assembly*

81 Claire Tempelman '24

82 *College of Human Ecology Representative, Student Assembly*

83 Deepak Ilango '22



Cornell University  
Student Assembly

- 84 *Undesignated At-Large Representative, Student Assembly*
- 85 Claudia León '23
- 86 *Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Assembly*
- 87 Henry Wade IV '23
- 88 *Minority Students Liaison At-Large, Student Assembly*
- 89 Duncan Cady '23
- 90 *Students With Disabilities Representative At-Large, Student Assembly*
- 91 Joseph Mullen '24
- 92 *Vice President of Internal Operations, Student Assembly*
- 93 Anuli Ononye '22
- 94 *President, Student Assembly*
- 95 Adele Williams '24
- 96 *College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Representative, Student Assembly*
- 97 Jenniviv Bansah '23
- 98 *Executive Vice President, Student Assembly*
- 99 Nicole Overton '23
- 100 *School of Industrial & Labor Relations Representative*
- 101
- 102