S.A. Resolution #33
Winter/Summer Term Financial Aid

ABSTRACT: This resolution recommends that Cornell grant-based aid is expanded to include both summer and winter session enrollment. Currently, grant-based financial aid is only available for fall/spring terms. In the summer/winter terms, students only have aid in the form of work or loans. This resolution would benefit low income students, especially in light of COVID-19, who may have had to drop courses in light of personal hardships, and students who may be behind on credits necessary to graduate on time. We are requesting this adjustment to the financial aid policy be permanently implemented.


Whereas, Ezra Cornell’s founding vision of a university where “any person can find instruction in any study” is not realized as many students cannot afford the cost of attendance in winter and summer sessions; and

Whereas, the university’s financial aid website states, “our goal: remove financial barriers and allow students the opportunity invest in a Cornell education,” which is not applicable year-round; and

Whereas, 44% of all undergraduate students in the 2016-2017 academic year received Cornell grant-based financial aid; and

Whereas, low-income students who ordinarily qualify for grant-based financial aid are not eligible for winter or summer session aid, resulting in
• higher course credit loads during the academic year,
• students having less time to dedicate per class resulting in lower grades
• interference with other types of aid such as federal work study due to time restrictions,
• difficulty graduating on time,
• added academic stress that may jeopardize overall mental health; and

Whereas, winter and summer class can lighten the fall/spring workload, reduce stress, and act as a resume booster, making students more competitive candidates in the job recruiting and graduate school application process, and thus increasing the value of a Cornell degree; and

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Whereas, low-income students are at an academic disadvantage compared to their more affluent counterparts who can afford to take courses during the summer and winter session; and

Whereas, Cornell can be a leader and example by providing financial aid for winter and summer classes and holding up the values of equity. A few peer institutions have implemented grant-based financial aid for winter/summer sessions:
- Yale provides up to 50% of tuition for summer/winter terms
- Emory provides up to 75% of grants/aid for summer/winter terms; and

Whereas, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has drastically limited opportunities for Cornell students, disproportionately impacting those who need financial aid; and

Whereas, many students enroll in courses at local community colleges or use transfer credits given the more affordable cost of tuition, which in turn can create discontinuities in academic tracks; and

Whereas, reducing the cost of tuition through Cornell grant-based aid would make summer/winter classes more accessible to students. This could potentially increase the net revenue from winter and summer term and prevent the waste of resources from under enrollment; and

Be it therefore resolved, that Cornell University should provide need-based financial aid to students proportional to the amount of aid they receive during typical semesters; and

Be it further resolved, that students who are able to take summer or winter classes can reduce fall/spring course loads; and

Be it finally resolved, that students who were forced to drop courses due to unforeseen circumstances including COVID-19 may enroll in summer/winter courses to avoid falling behind or having to take excess courses above their respective college credit limits; and

Respectfully Submitted,

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