



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Type of Action:	Legislation
Status/Result:	New Business

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S.A. Resolution #14 Increasing the Minimum LEED Certification

Abstract: This resolution urges the Board of Trustees to increase the minimum LEED certification from Silver to Platinum for campus buildings in the Climate Action Plan and conduct an Environmental Impact Statement for the North Campus Residential Expansion.

Sponsored by: Grace Park '19

Whereas, Cornell President Martha Pollack has taken a positive step towards a fossil fuel-free world by reaffirming Cornell's 2015 commitment to the American Campuses Act on Climate Pledge, which echoes the terms of the Paris Agreement;

Whereas, Cornell University has publicly committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035;

Whereas, While Cornell has reduced carbon emissions by over 30 percent since 2008, and by almost 50 percent since 1990 despite a 20 percent growth in square footage, this figure does not include emissions from upstream methane leakage which has increased;

Whereas, when upstream methane emissions are taken into consideration, as required by the State Environmental Quality Review, total greenhouse gas emissions have increased 10-fold since 2008 to over 600,000 metric tonnes of CO₂;

Whereas, currently Cornell has committed to LEED Silver certification for all projects over \$5 million under the Climate Action Plan, with the NCRE project set to meet LEED Gold;

Whereas, LEED certification alone is insufficient to account for energy impacts;

Whereas, the Passive House metric prioritizes building energy performance of buildings and was used for the CornellTech buildings on the New York City campus;

Whereas, per the current design, the residential rooms will have a 22% window to wall ratio, despite the sustainably optimal ratio being 15%, leading to inefficient insulation and increased energy consumption;

Whereas, there is insufficient information regarding the cumulative window to wall ratio that includes the ground floor common areas, which are depicted as fully glass and when accounted for, would exacerbate the possibility of energy inefficiency;

Whereas, this decision for window area was influenced by aesthetic purposes and concerns for mental health, yet neither students nor student groups dedicated to the issue of mental health, like Cornell Minds Matter, were consulted;



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44 **Whereas**, the timeframe to engage students and to submit input on the project was limited as
45 students only received one minimally publicized email about opportunities to provide comment;

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47 **Be it therefore resolved**, that Cornell undergo an Environmental Impact Statement for the North
48 Campus Residential Expansion project;

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50 **Be it further resolved**, that Cornell use the Passive House metric and commit to obtaining LEED
51 Platinum certification;

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53 **Be it further resolved**, as part of an effort to improve energy efficiency of the new dorms that the
54 common area window to wall ratio is very conspicuously stated publicly and is *significantly* reduced,
55 and that the window to wall ratio is decreased from 22% to 15%;

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57 **Be it finally resolved**, that NCRE project meet the time constraints of the Climate Action Plan, of
58 being carbon neutral by 2035 and publicly and clearly announce when other impacts (such as
59 upstream methane leakage) require the purchase of carbon offsets;

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61 **Be it finally resolved**, that Cornell Administration establish updated and plentiful communication
62 prior to construction to voice concerns, and throughout the process to regard the immediate
63 wellbeing of students, by providing a platform for students to communicate concerns or requests
64 with administration in the form of a public panel or forum

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66 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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68 Grace Park '19
69 *Art, Architecture, and Planning Representative, Student Assembly*

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71 Julie Kapuvari '19
72 *Climate Justice Cornell*

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74 Jenny Xie '20
75 *Climate Justice Cornell*

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77 Zoya Mohasin '21
78 *Climate Justice Cornell*

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80 *(Reviewed by: Environmental Committee, 5-0-1, 10/2/2018)*