

Cornell University Student Assembly

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Type of Action:	Internal Policy
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #12 Revising the Student Assembly Bylaws to Dictate that Community Votes be Conducted Online

ABSTRACT: Resolution to revise the Student Assembly bylaws to dictate that community votes be conducted online, in order to ensure that community votes are accessible, orderly, and private.

Sponsored by: Julian Kroll '20, Masa Haddad '21

Whereas, the current Student Assembly policy regarding community votes is delineated in Article IV, Section 7 of the Student Assembly Bylaws.

Whereas, the current procedure for collection of community votes outlined in the bylaws is problematically vague. In regards to voting procedure, the Bylaws only state that the votes will be collected by the Parliamentarian after verification of Cornell Undergraduate status.

Whereas, in-person verification and voting are only feasible for a limited number of attendees during any given Student Assembly meeting. If the Student Assembly's Parliamentarian is tasked with verifying an inordinate number of attendees, it is unlikely that they will be able to do so in an organized and secure manner.

Whereas, in-person verification and voting are seldom private. As observed during the Student Assembly community vote conducted on April 11, 2019, physically collecting community votes forces students to choose between their privacy and their right to vote.

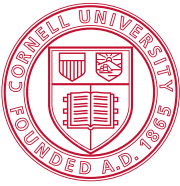
Whereas, assuming that verified votes are recorded by the parliamentarian with no bylaws-mandated supervision, the parliamentarian could remain in possession of collected voting information after the Student Assembly meeting's conclusion. This information could be circulated without the voters' knowledge or consent.

Whereas, during the Student Assembly community vote conducted on April 11, 2019, several students stated that they were personally imperiled by this lack of privacy.

Whereas, a digital community vote would eliminate this lack of privacy. While a Qualtrics survey would display to the assembly the number of votes cast in the negative and affirmative, the Qualtrics survey does not record the voting choice of the individual.

Whereas, physically collecting community votes creates an accessibility differential that empowers groups of high average socioeconomic status and disempowers groups of lower average socioeconomic status.

Whereas, a higher proportion of lower-income students have on-campus jobs, lab obligations,



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and/or other work engagements that they are unable to cancel. Consequently, fewer members may find themselves able to attend a 3-hour long meeting on a weekday afternoon.

Whereas, groups comprising individuals of lower socioeconomic status face more boundaries to mobilizing members than groups of higher SES. As a result, groups of lower SES are underrepresented in community votes.

Whereas, digitally collecting votes would resolve this accessibility issue. By allowing students to vote on their mobile devices or computers and extending the voting time-frame, we can reduce the probability of a student being unable to cast a community vote due to time constraints.

Whereas, we propose to collect community votes through a Qualtrics survey formatted with a Cornell University Web Authorization Portal (Henceforth CU Web-auth). The CU Web-auth will verify Cornell Undergraduate status before allowing individuals access to the voting Qualtrics. The site containing the Qualtrics link will also feature a live stream of the Student Assembly debate on the relevant issue and a link to the text of the legislation being considered.

Whereas, The Qualtrics survey will intake voting information, display vote results (negative vs. affirmative), but will not keep record the personal voting information of verified students. Records will only indicate whether or not a student submitted a vote.

Whereas, we propose that voting will begin at the beginning of the Student Assembly meeting at which the final vote is conducted and closed as the assembly votes commence.

Be it therefore resolved, lines 256-259 of the Student Assembly Bylaws will be removed and replaced with the following language:

D. "All community votes shall be submitted through a Qualtrics survey to which a Cornell University Web Authorization Portal has been applied. The link to this survey will be made easily accessible on the Student Assembly website. The relevant deliberations that occur during the assembly meeting shall be live-streamed on the same page. The page must also feature a link to the text of legislation being voted upon. The voting shall commence at the beginning of the Student Assembly meeting at which the final vote is conducted. The voting shall end at the commencement of voting for assembly members, at which point the tally of community votes will be announced to the Student Assembly. It will be the responsibility of the Parliamentarian to work in tandem with the Office of the Assemblies in order to execute all tasks except those relevant to the live stream, which shall be the responsibility of the Student Assembly Clerk.

Be it finally resolved, after item 6 of Article 3, Section 8 of the Student Assembly. Bylaws, which



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identify the duties of the parliamentarian, the following language will be inserted:

7. The parliamentarian shall be responsible for facilitating digital community votes, pursuant to procedures established in the Student Assembly Bylaws Article IV, Section 7, item D.

Respectfully Submitted,

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(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-0, 11/05/2019)