



Cornell University

Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	12/10/2020
Type of Action:	Recommendation
Status/Result:	New Business

1 S.A. Resolution # 23
2 Demanding Cornell Allows Anabel's Grocery to Reopen for the Spring 2021
3 Semester
4

5 **ABSTRACT:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Cornell prohibited Anabel's Grocery, a student-run
6 and non-profit grocery store on campus, from operating in its facilities in Anabel Taylor Hall this
7 fall. A wide spectrum of students experience food insecurity on Cornell's campus; however, first
8 generation, low-income, and BIPOC students are affected at a higher rate.¹ Rates of food insecurity
9 have worsened in the face of the pandemic.² The University cited the existence of the Cornell Food
10 Pantry as the reason Anabel's Grocery is a non-essential activity during the pandemic, but the two
11 entities serve different purposes. While the Food Pantry serves an immediate need for students in
12 crisis on campus, Anabel's Grocery sells fresh, affordable food at subsidized prices to Cornell
13 undergraduate and Graduate students that wish to shop in our store, with no qualifications needed.
14 Anabel's closure has limited students' options for accessing affordable groceries without a long,
15 often risky, commute to area grocery stores. Anabel's Grocery is prepared to operate safely in the
16 Spring semester, resuming what has actually become an essential service to the Cornell community,
17 particularly students with limited food budgets and modes of transportation who seek fresh,
18 affordable food.
19

20 **Sponsored by: Deana Gonzales '21, Lucas Smith '22, Catherine Huang '21, Amari Lampert**
21 **'24, Megan Feely '22, Chelsea Lee '21, Ryan Stasolla '21, Ellen Park '21, Emily Desmond '21,**
22 **Hanna Reichel '17, Matthew Stefanko '16, Emma Johnston '16**
23

24 **Whereas,** the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing barriers for Cornell students to access
25 fresh, affordable, and nutritious groceries due to increased financial pressures as well as the
26 potential risk of COVID-19 exposure at large stores and on the public transportation
27 required by many students to reach area grocery stores. Students of color and low-income
28 students are disproportionately affected;
29

30 **Whereas,** according to the 2019 PULSE survey, food insecurity affects a significant portion of
31 students on campus; 9.0% and 8.0% of Cornell students overall reported that they "often"
32 or "very often" ate less than they felt they needed due to financial constraints, respectively.
33 For Black respondents these numbers are 15.1% and 19.0% respectively, for Hispanic
34 respondents, 14.3% and 13.9%, for Asian respondents, 9.2% and 6.3%, and for White
35 students, 6.7% and 5.7%³;
36

1 <http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-CUE-Survey-tables.pdf>

2 https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Brief_Local%20Impact_10.2020_0.pdf

3 <http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-CUE-Survey-tables.pdf>



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37 **Whereas**, according to the 2019 PULSE survey, 14.6% and 17.9% of Cornell seniors reported that
38 they “often” and “very often”, respectively, ate less than they felt they needed due to the lack
39 of transportation to off-campus grocery stores. Juniors reported 16.0% and 16.2%,
40 respectively. Sophomores reported 17.6% and 13.6%, respectively. Freshman reported
41 13.0% and 10.9%, respectively⁴;

42
43 **Whereas**, [Anabel’s Grocery](#), a student-run, non-profit grocery store located on Cornell’s campus in
44 Anabel Taylor Hall, is committed to providing fresh, nutritious, and affordable food to all
45 Cornell students and to help students to learn empowering life skills such as how to cook
46 healthy and affordable meals, practice socially- and environmentally-conscious shopping, and
47 thus, help create a socially-just and ecologically-sound food system;

48
49 **Whereas**, Anabel’s provides one of the only places where students can purchase locally grown,
50 fresh, and affordable food on or near campus and meets the needs of people with special
51 diets like those who are vegan or lactose intolerant by prioritizing plant-based options;

52
53 **Whereas**, Anabel’s new cooperative and bulk purchasing strategies and a generous subsidy fund
54 make it possible to offer a variety of fresh and nutritious products, including local and
55 organic produce, at prices equal to or lower than Wegman’s, the local grocery store most
56 students use;

57
58 **Whereas**, in FY2020 (Fall 2019 and Spring 2020), Anabel’s saved shoppers, on average, 30% on the
59 cost of their groceries as compared to shopping at Wegman’s;

60
61 **Whereas**, Anabel’s has served over 1,400 unique students since its reopening in the Fall of 2019,
62 gained over 600 Anabel’s members, supported and purchased from over a dozen local food
63 producers, hosted educational events for over 200 students⁵, and disseminated countless
64 recipes for low-cost, quick and easy-to-make meals;

65
66 **Whereas**, Anabel’s average daily revenue has increased dramatically since its launch in 2017,
67 indicating success in meeting a demonstrated need amongst the student body. Anabel’s
68 average daily revenue: Fall 2018 (\$290.75), Fall 2019 (\$779.48), and Spring 2020 (\$1,071.36);

69
70 **Whereas**, according to the Fall 2019 Membership Feedback Survey, 187 students reported that
71 shopping at Anabel’s reduced five major barriers to accessing and cooking healthy food:

⁴ <http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-CUE-Survey-tables.pdf>

⁵ Anabel’s Grocery Giving Day Report, 2020



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Barrier	Pre-Anabel's	Post-Anabel's	Difference
Don't Know How to Cook	1.86	1.56	-0.30
Don't Own Cooking Equipment	1.93	1.67	-0.26
Produce Spoils Too Quickly	3.22	2.63	-0.59
Transportation	3.70	2.26	-1.44
Too Expensive	3.32	2.26	-1.06

1 = Not a barrier, 5 = A huge barrier

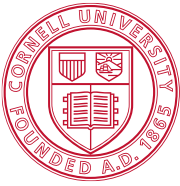
72
73 Note the highest ranked barrier prior to Anabel's is transportation, which had the largest change
74 after Anabel's reopening;

75
76 **Whereas**, as part of its COVID-19 campus reactivation plan, Cornell has deemed Anabel's Grocery
77 to be a non-essential activity and has therefore prohibited Anabel's to operate in the Fall
78 2020 semester and decided it should stay closed in Spring 2021 semester;

79
80 **Whereas**, reopening Anabel's in the Spring semester with online ordering and payment along with a
81 touchless pick-up system that incorporates robust COVID-19 safety protocols would adhere
82 to Cornell's need to de-densify campus and reduce the potential risk of students' COVID-
83 19 exposure by allowing them to purchase food on campus rather than travelling to grocery
84 stores off campus. If fewer students travel to off-campus stores, this could also reduce the
85 potential risk of COVID-19 exposure for the greater Ithaca community;

86
87 **Whereas**, in an impact survey conducted this semester (as of December 5, 2020), 60.9% of
88 respondents indicate they are spending more money on groceries this semester versus when
89 Anabel's was open; 75.5% of respondents indicate transportation is a barrier to getting food
90 and 75.5% of respondents indicate that Anabel's reduces this barrier; 55.5% of respondents
91 indicate that cost is a barrier to getting food and 60.9% report that Anabel's reduces this
92 barrier; 73.6% of respondents indicate that time constraints are a barrier to getting food, and
93 58.2% report that Anabel's reduces this barrier; 77.3% of respondents shop at Wegman's
94 instead, now that Anabel's is closed, and only 5.5% use the Cornell Food Pantry;

95



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96 **Whereas,** over forty undergraduate and graduate students voiced their desire for Anabel's to reopen
97 in the impact survey, including this testimonial: *"PLEASE PLEASE OPEN I BEG YOU. It*
98 *is not fair especially in a pandemic. I don't have a car and TCAT takes soo long to go anywhere. If i go to*
99 *wegmans it would take 2-3 hours. This is not sustainable for me. Also, it is truly sad that buying more eco-*
100 *friendly products or produce is more expensive. Can you reconsider for next semester? :("* and *"please reopen*
101 *next semester! Wegmans is always very crowded and I am worried I will contract COVID off campus."*
102 More testimonials are available in [this document](#);

103
104 **Whereas,** while Cornell offers a food pantry located at 109 McGraw Place, this is a downstream
105 solution to food insecurity and food access. Long lines to attend a food pantry on an Ivy
106 League campus raise questions as to why this issue exists in the first place. According to
107 Ellen Park, one of the student managers at the Cornell Food Pantry, the majority of people
108 served by the food pantry are not undergraduates, but instead Cornell staff and graduate
109 students. Anabel's provides an upstream solution to address food insecurity on campus by
110 providing affordable, healthy, and local food.

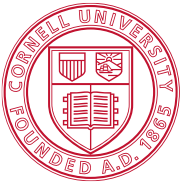
111
112 **Whereas,** the products at the Cornell Food Pantry and at Anabel's differ greatly; Anabel's product
113 mix is predominantly whole grains, fresh produce, legumes, plant-based milks, tofu, miso,
114 whole grain bread, spices, herbs, nuts and seeds;

115
116 **Whereas,** the plant-forward, whole food product mix offered by Anabel's has been demonstrated
117 through evidence-based science, including the [EAT-Lancet Report](#), to support human health
118 and the health of the planet. Good nutritious food is fundamental to maintaining a healthy
119 body and mind;

120
121 **Whereas,** Anabel's supports the local food economy at a time where many farmers and producers
122 face significant challenges, and, through its collective economic structure, Anabel's gives all
123 students the buying power to support just and equitable producers they would otherwise not
124 have access to. Anabel's purchases from the following farms, local producers and suppliers:
125 Remembrance Farm, Six Circles Farm, Crooked Carrot, Dilmun Hill, Cornell Orchards,
126 Stick and Stone Farm, Headwater Food Hub, Wide Awake Bakery, PlowBreak Farm, Finger
127 Lakes Farm, Regional Access, Greenstar Cooperative Market, and Cortland Produce;

128
129 **Whereas,** all students on the Anabel's team take the engaged-learning practicum course in Social
130 Entrepreneurship, AEM 3385, in which they learn about inequities and racial disparities in
131 the food system, how to run and manage a social impact-focused enterprise, and how social
132 enterprises like Anabel's can contribute to creating an ecologically-sound and socially-just
133 food system. This course is part of the Dyson School's Grand Challenges initiative;

134
135 **Whereas,** the Anabel's team developed a new operations plan in the summer of 2020 in order to
136 adhere to COVID-19 reopening guidelines. The reopening plan includes an online ordering



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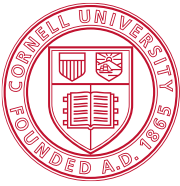
137 and payment system, with shoppers coming to Anabel Taylor Hall to pick up their bagged
138 groceries during predetermined time slots. “Curbside” pickup would occur outside Anabel
139 Taylor Hall, with shoppers alerting the Anabel’s team via text when they have arrived.
140 Vendors would deliver to the loading dock behind Anabel Taylor Hall during a
141 predetermined window of time and text the Anabel’s team when they have unloaded. If
142 Anabel’s is allowed to reopen, it will adhere to robust COVID-19 safety procedures
143 including the following: a group of five team members or fewer at a time will work
144 scheduled hours in the store to pre-package orders, stock product and staff the curbside pick
145 up window, wearing masks and gloves and remaining distanced from each other; one team
146 member will be designated as a sanitizer at all times, sanitizing high-touch areas in the store;
147 pickup will be contactless, and scheduled for one shopper to pick up at a time; vendor
148 deliveries will be contactless;

149
150 **Whereas**, Dr. Anke Wessels, the executive director of the Center for Transformative Action and
151 lecturer for the Anabel’s Grocery practicum course in social entrepreneurship, AEM 3385,
152 will serve as the Unit Safety Monitor;

153
154 **Whereas**, the funding used to launch Anabel’s Grocery in 2017 was donated from the Student
155 Assembly Students Helping Students endowment, which accrued funding through
156 contributions of tens of thousands of former Cornell students through over one decade of
157 Student Activity Fee (SAF) payments. The Undergraduate Student Assembly invested
158 \$320,000 originally. Of that amount, \$40,000 was for the subsidy fund and \$40,000 for
159 operating costs. The remainder went to the Office of the University Architect to renovate
160 the space; Cornell Dining contributed additional funds to cover cost overruns. Additionally,
161 the Graduate Student Assembly approved \$20,000 per year for four years of which Anabel’s
162 has received \$40,000 to date;

163
164 **Whereas**, Anabel’s was created with help from student funding and should be used to support
165 students, especially in times of great need such as these;

166
167 **Whereas**, the following student organizations are in support of this Resolution: Black Students
168 United at Cornell University, Climate Justice Cornell, Cornell Chapter of the Food Recovery
169 Network, Cornell Hydroponics, Cornell Computer Reuse Association, Zambia Community
170 Education Initiative, Cornell Thrift, Cornell Compost, Cornell Epsilon Eta, Dilmun Hill
171 Student Farm, Cornell First Generation and Low Income Graduate Student Organization,
172 Cornell Undergraduate First Generation Student Union, Cornell Latinx Association of
173 Prelaws, Cornell Democrats, Climate Reality Project Campus Corps Chapter at Cornell,
174 LGBTQ+ Graduate Student Association, Graduate Labor Organization, Cornell Vegan
175 Society, Haven: the LGBTQ+ Student Union, MEDLIFE Cornell, Gender Justice Advocacy
176 Coalition, South Asian Council, Cornell Asia Pacific Student Union, Cornell Students 4
177 Black Lives; and ILR Graduate Student Association



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178 **Whereas**, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and a renewed national conversation about
179 antiracism, it is more important than ever that Cornell supports every effort that provides *all*
180 students access to affordable, nutritious, fresh food right on campus;
181

182 **Be it therefore resolved**, the undergraduate Student Assembly asks that Cornell allows Anabel's
183 Grocery to reopen for online ordering and curbside pick up, with sanitation and safety
184 precautions at the same caliber as the Cornell Food Pantry and other Cornell Dining
185 locations;
186

187 **Be it therefore resolved**, Anabel's acknowledges Cornell's successful efforts to ensure a low
188 prevalence of COVID-19 on campus, and with this in mind, Anabel's will work within
189 Cornell's protocols to operate starting the Spring 2021 semester and make all adjustments
190 needed to comply or exceed with safety requirements adhered to by Cornell Dining, the
191 Food Pantry, and other on-campus food service establishments;
192

193 **Be it further resolved**, Cornell should commit to supporting Anabel's Grocery as an essential
194 service and its efforts to reopen the store starting the Spring 2021 semester.
195

196 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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198 Deana Gonzales '21
199 *Co-Chair, City and Local Affairs Committee of the Student Assembly*

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201 Lucas Smith '22
202 *Co-Chair, City and Local Affairs Committee of the Student Assembly*

203
204 Catherine Huang '21
205 *President, Cornell Student Assembly*

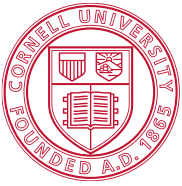
206
207 Amari Lampert '24
208 *SA Liaison to Anabel's Grocery*

209
210 Megan Feely '22
211 *Anabel's Grocery Team Member*

212
213 Chelsea Lee '21
214 *Anabel's Grocery Team Member*

215
216 Ryan Stasolla '21
217 *Anabel's Grocery Team Member*

218



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- 219 Ellen Park '21
220 *Anabel's Grocery Team Member*
221
222 Emily Desmond '21
223 *Anabel's Grocery Team Member*
224
225 Hanna Reichel '17
226 *Board Co-Chair of Anabel's Grocery*
227
228 Matthew Stefanko '16
229 *Anabel's Grocery Co-Founder*
230
231 Emma Johnston '16
232 *Anabel's Grocery Co-Founder*
233
234 *(Reviewed by: City and Local Affairs Committee on 12/8/2020, 7-0-0)*