



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, September 10, 2015 Meeting
4:30pm-6:30pm in Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order (J. Batista)

- J. Batista called the meeting to order at 4:32pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* J. Batistia; L. Bushner; M. Chak; S. Chaudhary; R. Dunbar; M. Ghandour; R. Gupta; E. Johnston; S. Karnavat; G. Kaufman; C. Li; D. Li; M. McBride; V. Michel; J. Selig; P. Titcomb; R. Uttamchandani; K. Zhu
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach (Excused); E. Liu (Excused); M. Stefanko (Excused); S. Tayal (Excused)

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes (J. Batista)

- The minutes of September 3, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone (E. Johnston)

IV. Announcements and Reports

- Assembly Elections (M. Henderson) – Director of Elections Henderson announced information for the upcoming Freshman and Transfer elections and also about recording attendance for all candidates present.
- Assembly Committee Applications (M. McBride) An announcement that applications for the Student Assembly Committees will be extended from Friday September 11th to next Friday, September 18th.
- M. Chak, VP for Outreach, noted she would be holding two seminars for off-campus housing on Sept. 16th and Sept. 25th from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in coordination with the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, and the Office of Off-Campus Living.
- Student Trustee Update (Y. Bhandari) – Trustee Bhandari spoke about being a resource for the Student Assembly and greater Cornell University community. She also mentioned her willingness to discuss any issues.

V. Anabel's Grocery & Food Security Presentation

- The project sponsors M. Stefanko, E. Johnston, and Laurel Moffat '16 presented on the proposal for Anabel's grocery, a new established grocery store that would be located in Anabel Taylor Hall.
 - E. Johnston spoke about survey data, which asked "During the current academic year how often have you skipped a meal due to economic constraint?" They found that 22% of students identified that they had skipped meals due to financial constraints.
 - M. Stefanko spoke about the reasons for establishing a grocer on campus, and concluded student financial struggles and the need for a long-term solution as the reason for this proposal.
 - Laurel Moffat, one of two proposed executive directors, spoke about the benefits of an on campus grocer, which include a provided space free of rent utilities. The store would run on a volunteer labor model and would be established as a non-profit, non-taxable entity. Moffat stated the University of Georgetown has a similar student run grocer, which has existed for 20 years. The store would have a competitive edge towards students who are food insecure, and through use of USDA's food insecure model subsidies would be allocated. Partnering with Light Changing Labs, and other organizations such as student life, and a list of competitive distributors, would also be ways to save costs.
- Question and Answer
 - Q: M. Battaglia asked about the large amount of funds being taken from Students Helping Students, and also about the possible bankruptcy of the Summer Experience Grant due to constraints.
 - A: M. Stefanko spoke about finding a balance between the two expenses and a possibly capping the grant at \$25-30,000, instead of the \$50,000 allocated last year.
 - Q: Nelson Billington '19 asked about the payment methods, and about the revenue model.
 - A: Laurel Moffat stated that the grocer would take credit/debit and cash. She also mentioned that they would be unable to accept Big Red Bucks, but in the future they may take City Bucks.
 - A: To understand revenue, M. Stefanko spoke about the profit margins being a best estimate, and the subsidies being updated on a yearly basis. Given the stage, the estimations are hard to gauge, they have used other school's models to understand costs.
 - Q: J. Burger asked about reducing the stigma of food insecurity
 - A: Laurel Moffat spoke on employee discretion

- A: M. Stefanko spoke about possible card membership and more anonymity
- A: E. Johnston spoke about continuing to reach out for community feedback
- Q: M. Indimine asked about the difference between Greenstar and this proposal
- A: M. Stefanko noted that Anabel's grocery store has received an endorsement from Greenstar, and that both business models serve their own niche.
- Q: J. Selig asked about getting support from Student Health Services, and also asked about using Life Changing Labs.
- A: M. Stefanko answered that support will hopefully be coming from the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly. He also expressed a desire to look for members and outside groups to help with fundraising.
- Q: S. Chaudhary asked about a breakdown of the \$291,000 estimated costs, and how the idea of the market came into creation.
- A: M. Stefanko talked about the \$291,000 possibly being an overestimate, which could drop to as low as \$215,000.
- Q: Ex-Officio C. Welling asked about the estimations of finances. He also asked about gaining data and dealing with food waste.
- A: M. Stefanko talked about U Michigan and Georgetown collaborating and providing data.
- A: Johnston talked about flexibility of switching out products and using close to expired food being used for food demonstrations.
- Q: Ex-Officio N. Gabriel asked about the application for food subsidies.
- A: L. Maffot talked about the USDA model, online forms, and trying to focus on credibility.
- Q: R. Dunbar asked about religious preferences for food sales especially with the location of the grocer being proposed inside of a religious center.
- A: L. Maffot stated that any meat sold will be sold frozen and no religious groups so far have objected to the proposed produce.
- Q: M. McBride asked about finances and trying to fundraise early on.
- A: M. Stefanko talked about building relationships and gaining trust before asking for donations. He also emphasized not prioritizing early funding over the potential of a long-term investment.
- Q: Y. Bhandari asked about how the issue of too many customers would be addressed.
- A: M. Stefanko answered that by using surveys and measuring how the first days go they will learn if daily deliveries are a necessity.
- Q: D. Li asked about stabilizing the student subsidies for multiple years.

- A: M. Stefanko answered that the potential for undercutting students is holding this idea back.
- Q: S. Chaudhary wondered if the proposed 10% subsidy is too low for those who are most food insecure.
- A: M. Stefanko responded that the subsidy is meant more for aid, and not as a means of paying for a student's entire diet. Additionally, if in the future the project shows itself to not be addressing the issue of food insecurity, M. Stefanko concluded the subsidies might be increased.

VI. Business of the Day

- Resolution 7 – Approval of the Welcome Weekend Constitution (M. Stefanko)
 - The welcoming committee changed their constitution and needed the approval of the Student Assembly for final approval.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. Resolution 7 was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 15-0-0

VI. New Business

- Resolution 8 – Affirming Learning Style Diversity in Introductory Science Course (G. Kaufman, M. McBride, R. Dunbar, L. Bushner)
 - The sponsors gave an overview of the proposal.
 - Introductory courses in Biology and Chemistry require study sessions that are 1.5 hours per week and are mandatory. Anywhere from 2-5% of the grade in these courses is dependent on attendance of these study sessions.
 - The resolution suggests for the removal of this practice and that an extra course to be added which would be Pass/Fail to serve as a supplementary course.
 - S. Chaudhary asked whether the course instructors for each class was asked about their practices and their suggestions. G. Kaufman stated that three of the professors do not support the study groups; while two hold that the study groups are helpful.
 - M. Ghandour asked about what would be the effects of this resolution
 - G. Kaufman responded that the effect would be leverage to begin discussions about possible alternatives.
 - D. Li asked about the possibility of adding additional lab sections and discussions if the study session is removed.
 - E. Johnston asked about the faculty's reasons against it.

- G. Kaufman said the faculty saw the study sessions as extra homework, and also as a helpful means of learning which wouldn't occur without the grade incentive.
- Y. Bhandari asked if the extra credit helps as a grade buffer.
- J. Burger stated that the Assembly lacks experience and knowledge of hard sciences and wondered whether older students who took these courses would view these sessions as helpful.
- L. Bushner stated that surveys could be used in the future.
- M. Battaglia asked about the referendum process.
- M. McBride stated that it might be confusing to do a referendum, but that a survey for students from each class would be a better alternative.
- P. Biedenweg asked about including the study sessions and their times in the course description.
- L. Bushner stated transparency would be a key factor aiding the process.
- M. McBride motioned to table the item. The motion to table was passed by unanimous decision.

J. Batista adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 6:32pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Biedenweg
Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies