



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 12, 2015 Meeting

4:45pm-6:30pm in Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order (J. Batista)

- J. Batista called the meeting to order at 4:48pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach [2.5]; J. Batistia [0]; L. Bushner [2.5]; S. Chaudhary [2]; M. Chak [2]; J. Chessin [0.5]; R. Dunbar [1.5]; M. Ghandour [4]; R. Gupta [2.5]; E. Johnston [0.5]; S. Karnavat [2]; M. Kasher [0]; G. Kaufman [0]; C. Li [2.5]; D. Li [3.5]; D. Liu [0]; E. Liu [4]; M. McBride [0]; V. Michel [2]; P. Russell [0]; J. Selig [2.5]; M. Stefanko [3]; S. Tayal [3]; P. Titcomb [3]; R. Uttamchandani [4.5]; K. Zhu [2]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* V. Devatha (Excused) [2]

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

- The minutes of November 5, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone (E. Johnston)

IV. Announcements and Reports

- Organizational Spotlight - Cornell First in Class – M. Chak stated that Organizational Spotlight would be a monthly means of highlighting Cornell groups for their efforts. The first organization was Cornell First in Class.
- Eduardo Medina '17 and Nicholas Karavolias '17 presented Cornell First in Class. They explained they were focused on supporting first generation college students. Some initiatives included study abroad help, alumni development, inclusivity training for staff, and trying to establish a library for first generation students. E. Medina stated they had been working across Ivy School campuses to assure dialogue and that they would be starting a photo campaign tomorrow, November 13th.
 - G. Kaufman asked about the biggest struggles first generation student's faced.
 - N. Karavolias stated language barriers and socioeconomic issues were two of the largest challenges.

- Parliamentary Berger – Berger announced that members who failed their parliamentary tests would have to take a new test on Sunday following a short presentation.
- NatureRx Walk with Garrett & Lombardi Sunday – M. Indimine mentioned that President Garrett, VP Lombardi, and Provost Kotlikoff would be walking with students around the plantations Sunday, November 15th.
- SAIFC Applications – P. Titcomb stated that the Student Assembly Infrastructure Fund Committee opened their website to proposal submissions.
- Dining – J. Chessin announced West Campus dining recently agreed to place table tents for three weeks with relevant information, which would also appear in March.
- It's Greek to Me Event – S. Tayal stated that ISU and Tri-Council would be hosting It's Greek to Me from 5:30-7:30pm in RPCC as a way of informing international students what Greek life entails on campus.
- Internal Operations – M. McBride acknowledged committees were having trouble with attendance, and also warned about attendance in general for all members.
- President Garrett and Ryan Lombardi wished the assembly a happy Thanksgiving. President Garrett talked about touring schools while traveling on Alumni trips, and also meeting with students at the Cornell in Washington program over the past weekend. President Garrett mentioned she was concerned about campus issues including student housing, student resource centers, space usage and reservations, and ways to reduce bureaucracy. She mentioned that the strategic planning process Provost Kotlikoff would be launching in the next 18-24 months would need student input possibly through committees on curriculum and technology. She announced the Student Health Fee would be paid for by an allowance in tuition for the next two years. President Garrett finally mentioned the importance of keeping track of mental and physical health, and looked forward to walking around Beebe Lake Sunday.
 - M. McBride asked about President Garrett's current accomplishments and also where the money paying for the Student Health Fee came from.
 - President Garrett stated the Provost and VP of Budget helped allocate money from the University's unrestricted funds. She was the proudest of the people she had brought to Cornell, including the Provost, VP Lombardi, and others.
 - S. Tayal mentioned that international students lead a large number of the programs around campus. He requested that international students be involved in developing the International Student Center. In this regard, S. Tayal requested similar benefits to that of the LGBTQ+ community.

- Garrett stated she was proud of the number of international students at Cornell. They just opened an office in Shanghai given donors, and she stated there were goals of bringing in more international students. She realized there were diverse arrays of issues,
- Lombardi stated VP for International Affairs Laura Spitz would be working to address these issues looking forward.
- Elizabeth '18 a student in CALS wanted to know what specific environmental initiatives Cornell plans to address.
- President Garrett stated there was a presentation on environmental initiatives earlier in the day. She encouraged reaching out to PAM in Human Ecology a department that was widely recognized at the presentation for policy initiatives. She mentioned the creation of a new minor through Engage Cornell - sustainable food systems. Lastly, using faculty and reaching out to government leaders President Garrett believed would be additional ways to get involved.
- Elizabeth '18 asked as an institution what Cornell could push for.
- President Garrett stated divestment from fossil fuels would be difficult to accomplish and would more than likely do less good than other initiatives. Working and producing resources and new ideas through education, she believed, would be the best approach.
- B. Bacharach - Chair of the Financial Aid Review Committee - wondered about decisions regarding financial aid.
- President Garrett acknowledged that the VP for Financial Aid was comparing Cornell to other institutions to see how best to address future issues. President Garrett expressed that Cornell would continue to be need blind. A great deal of endowment is stuck in other priorities making it difficult to expand aid, but the university spends \$270 million currently. The issue of undocumented students not getting full financial consideration was raised, and President Garrett hoped to look more into past standards that have only considered these students after documented students received their own grants and scholarships.
- S. Chaudhary mentioned that pooling programming housing in with North Campus created excessive requirements. Additionally S. Chaudhary mentioned the Muslim Cultural Center was moved from the 2nd floor to a smaller room on the 6th floor of Myron Taylor Hall, and asked that future priorities be given to minority housing and programming.
- VP Lombardi brought up that housing and Cornell's master plan would be created by thinking broadly and with a great deal of student input. He and Garrett both walked around a great amount during move-in day looking at

housing, and he recognized that space was at a premium. Concerning the lack of support for resource centers, VP Lombardi stated priorities for staffing and space have pushed the issue to the front of his periphery.

- G. Kaufman mentioned that the Provost was creating task forces, and he hoped that these groups would include students. He mentioned the past existence of a budget committee on the UA, and wished for greater student involvement in shared governance around campus.
- President Garrett mentioned she would share these ideas with the Provost. She was not sure if there would be space for students on committees, but would ask.

V. Business of the Day

- Byline Report: Women's Resource Center
 - M. Stefanko announced that the Women's Resource Center requested an increase from \$3.46 to \$4.00.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The Byline Funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 21-0-0.
- Byline Report: Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board
 - M. Stefanko stated that the WSH Student Union Board requested \$2.33 up from \$2.00. The Appropriations Committee believed that this was a large amount and requested funding to Cornell Cinema be eliminated or limited. The appropriations committee voted to approve \$2.14, due to the belief that there were excess funds.
 - G. Kaufman wanted the Board held accountable for their actions. G. Kaufman wanted to table the amount until the issue of requesting the IFC and the SA no longer hold their meetings in the Memorial Room was solved.
 - There was a **point of information** on the current status of this request.
 - J. Batista stated the Student Assembly was told to move out of the Memorial Room due to the number of weekly attendees. Given the need of accessibility and variation in attendee numbers, J. Batista stated that the Assembly would more than likely maintain the space.
 - M. Stefanko stated that he did not want to withhold the funding because it was unrelated to the conflict over space.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The Byline Funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 19-3-0.
- Byline Report: Collegiate Leadership Program
 - M. Stefanko announced that Collegiate Leadership Program requested \$5.00. M. He explained that they fund the newspapers around campus, and the current

request was based on lower readership numbers. The Appropriation Committee appointed a member to help the Program reevaluate their funding and approved \$5.00.

- There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The Byline Funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 20-0-1.
- There was a motion to table indefinitely Resolution 17 & 18.
- The resolutions were **tabled** by unanimous consent.

VI. Business of the Day

- Resolution 19: Transfer Option Newsletter (J. Chessin, G. Kaufman)
 - J. Chessin stated that this resolution hoped to communicate with potential future students about the current events around Cornell.
 - G. Kaufman stated this resolution hoped to start the conversation over how the administration was communicating with transfer students.
 - There was a motion to amend the resolution's title, line 5, 16, 17, and 21 to include "First Year Spring Admits".
 - M. Battaglia stated that "guaranteed transfer option" should be changed to transfer option.
 - The resolution was **amended** by a vote of 20-0-2.
 - D. Li addressed concerns about using Cornell Chronicle and the material included in emails. She wanted to additionally include regular transfer students.
 - G. Kaufman motioned to amend lines 5, 10, 16, 17, and 21 to include "and transfer students".
 - J. Chessin saw this amendment as a request to administrators to communicate with all students they could reach.
 - R. Dunbar was concerned why normal transfer students would be receiving these emails.
 - D. Li stated getting material, as a transfer student would help students see Cornell as a more viable option.
 - E. Liu stated that as a senior she did not receive emails before choosing Cornell, so she asked why
 - J. Chessin saw going to another university as a tough situation, and giving them more information would help them feel part of the Cornell community.
 - P. Biedenweg asked how emails would be sent to transfer students.

- G. Kaufman stated this would likely occur after transfers were accepted.
- The resolution was amended by a vote of 22-0-0.
- M. Battaglia motioned to amend the resolution and strike “guaranteed” from line five.
- The resolution was amended by a vote of 22-0-0.
- There was a motion to Call the Question.
- The resolution was adopted by a vote of 23-0-0 with two community votes in the affirmative.

VI. New Business

- Resolution 23: Elections Committee Vacancy
 - The resolution would fill a vacancy on the Elections Committee with John Goggins.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question.
 - The resolution was adopted by a vote of 22-0-0.

- There was a motion to move Resolution 21 to the top of the agenda. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent

- Resolution 21: Attendance Bylaw Change
 - J. Berger stated the point of this resolution was to standardize parts of the standing rules with the Bylaws. At this point there was no way to enforce standing rules, such as enforcing outreach events and attendance requirements at Executive meetings.
 - R. Uttamchandani asked about changing the amendment to include excused attendance.
 - J. Berger stated this resolution did not change any part of the Charter, which has jurisdiction over the attendance policy.
 - J. Chessin was concerned that not receiving notices of outreach events would make it unfair to force members to go to events without 72 hours notice.
 - M. McBride stated M. Chak would be providing details on outreach events.
 - G. Kaufman believed that going to specific events was not part of the Student Assembly’s role, and also that mandating two events every two weeks might set too low of a standard for the amount of community work a member should participate in.
 - There was a motion to move the resolution to Business of the Day. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

- J. Berger stated that these practices have been in the Standing Rules for multiple years, and that this was not the time to be debating these issues.
 - D. Li stated that the importance of the Student Assembly and its outreach requirements should come after an individual's academics, and job interviews. She wished to look at amending the Charter.
 - There was a **point of information** on the definition of excused vs. unexcused absences.
 - M. McBride stated excused absences allowed a member to proxy vote on old business resolutions.
 - M. Battaglia disagreed with D. Li's statement. He believed that being elected to represent students involved the responsibility of attending meetings that have occurred at the same time for roughly 30 years.
 - S. Tayal asked about how it would be possible to not count excused absences towards total absences.
 - M. McBride stated this would be a change in the Standing Rules and By-Laws.
 - M. Stefanko stated that having two events and one meeting a week should not be an issue for Assembly members. He stated that the standing rules were a bare minimum, and that there was a higher commitment level for serving students.
 - R. Dunbar asked whether the enforcement of the changes would be immediate.
 - M. McBride stated these changes would be enforced next semester.
 - P. Biedenweg stated six absences granted members a large margin of error.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**.
 - The resolution was **adopted** by a vote of 23-0-0.
- Resolution 20: Preferred Name on ID Cards to Promote LGBTQ+ Inclusivity
 - D. Liu stated this resolution would allow students to change their gender identity on internal documents.
 - There was a motion to amend line 15 to read "...change one's primary *or legal* name involves..." line 23 to include a footnote, and line 30 to read "...for students to have their preferred name;"
 - P. Biedenweg asked about line 60, which talked about the use of preferred names on ID cards.
 - The resolution was amended by a vote of 23-0-0.
 - M. Battaglia asked if the sponsors had met with administrators about these changes.
 - D. Liu stated he had met with Ulysses Smith, the LGBTQ resource center, and the Registrar's office.

- There was a motion to move the resolution to Business of the Day. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.
- R. Dunbar was concerned about the legal standards in regards to ID cards not stating a student's legal name.
- P. Titcomb was unsure about the legal barriers with ID cards being used for legal practices.
- D. Liu stated that an ID is considered an internal document.
- D. Li had concerns over university legislation and the legality of using an ID.
- D. Liu stated line 53 indicated that the university would look more closely at this issue.
- D. Li asked about the real need for ID cards having a preferred name.
- D. Liu stated this resolution was targeting students who were transgender, who might have difficulty explaining the reason a traditionally gender binding name was on their ID card.
- J. Selig asked about the concerns of people taking humorous names.
- J. Chessin asked if the non-LGBTQ+ community could change their names on ID cards.
- E. Liu asked about including international students in this name change. She asked if this name would effect the NetID.
- D. Liu stated this change should be a reflection of ones true identity, and that it would not change one's NetID.
- There was a motion to Call the Question.
- There was a motion to roll call vote.
- The motion failed by a vote of 6-11-3.
- The resolution was adopted by a vote of 23-1-1 with two community votes in the affirmative.

J. Batista adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 6:33pm.

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