



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 19, 2015 Meeting

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

I. Call to Order (E. Johnston)

- E. Johnston called the meeting to order at 4:48pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach [2.5]; L. Bushner [2.5]; S. Chadhary [2]; J. Chessin [5]; V. Devatha [2.5]; 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]; S. Tayal [3]; P. Titcomb [3]; R. Uttamchandani [4.5]; K. Zhu [2]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* J. Batista (Unexcused) [1]; M. Chak (Excused) [3]; R. Dunbar (Unexcused) [2]; M. Stefanko (Unexcused) [4]

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes (E. Johnston)

- The minutes of November 12, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone (E. Johnston)

- VP Ryan Lombardi reiterated that the initial concerns he heard when visiting Cornell were around staffing and support for advocacy and resource centers. He announced the authorization of four additional staff members for front line work in such centers. R. Lombardi was yet to announce where staff would be hired, wanting to discuss with students the potential areas where new staff members would best serve the campus.
- Cornell Interfaith Council announced they would be hosting the Every Holiday Party in the Memorial Room this Friday November 21st.
- Class Presidents John Lowry '16, Alyannah Kassam '17, and Brendon Frankel '18 discussed the Student Union Board's decision to remove Class Councils from the Memorial Room. The SUB's reasoning was based on low attendance, but J. Lowry believed if a group came near capacity it would bring in the concern of a fire code violation, making the meeting potentially dangerous. For Spring '16, Class Councils reserved the Memorial Room, but they wanted to know definitively about future semesters. They reached out to the Student Assembly wanting a more full-proof way of assuring reservations. They recommended that the Assembly pass a resolution requiring

all groups that have associate deans as their advisors and have traditionally held their meetings in Willard Straight Hall to have precedent over SUB's decisions.

- IFC President Blake Brown '17 stated that the SUB and Interfraternity Council had reached an agreement allowing the IFC to meet for the remainder of the year. He further reiterated the request of the Class Council, and asked the Student Assembly to reevaluate their byline funding decision.
- Claire Zhang '16, Executive Director, Kristen Crasto '17, Director of public affairs, and Shikha Patel '17 Director of policy and regulations, all for the Student Union Board, clarified the goals of their new measures. They stated they were committed to fairness in the allocation of space to all student organizations, not just those traditionally with authority over the space. Due to changes in WSH's policy, the Board would now be able to host multiple events in the Memorial Room each day. The board wished to change either the time or space of current organizations to allow for greater accessibility. It takes the staff close to an hour to clean and prepare for large organizations, and these organizations additionally need time to set up events themselves. With the Memorial Room being a highly desirable space it was in the interest of the greater student body that the room reservations were reevaluated. They hoped in the future to get a Sense of the Body resolution, hold policy forums for new SUB policies, and effectively use the space over future years.
- G. Kaufman expressed a need to reevaluate the SUB's byline funding, not to decrease funding but to add a recommendation the SUB provide the Memorial Room to groups who have traditionally held the space.
- B. Bacharach asked what formal arrangements had been currently agreed to.
- D. Li stated she served on the Appropriations Committee, and that they recommend expectations. She stated they increased funding for the SUB because of events such as The Dr. T Project and distressing events.
- Shikha Patel requested the affected parties consider the idea that any group be able to use the Memorial Room.
- S. Tayal stated that previous reservations were unfair, because despite these groups representing large groups of students on campus they don't really give students a chance to hold their own events. He stated that byline recommendations are useless because they were not binding. S. Tayal requested the Assembly either change the funding now, or look to use Appendix B. He wanted all parties to discuss the issue in good faith.
- J. Chessin asked what specific events would be held.
- S. Patel stated the group looking to hold events would be any organization around campus wanting to host an event on central campus.

- M. Battaglia brought up that relying on good faith could allow the SUB to revoke their agreement at any time. He wanted to see the Assembly create a formal agreement either through ensuring future funding, or through enforcing Appendix B.
- V. Devatha asked what a policy forum would look like.
- Rashika hoped the forum would allow all student groups to state their requests, and that these events would be repeating.
- There was a motion to table the discussion to December 3rd.
- There was dissent.
- G. Kaufman stated he wanted to ask another questions.
- The motion failed by a vote of 2-14-0.
- There was a Point of Information over what the Assembly could control using a resolution over the policies of the SUB.
- There was a Point of Information on what changes new byline funding could enforce.
- There was a motion to table the discussion to December 3rd.
- The motion failed by a vote of 5-8-6.
- There was a motion to end discussion and informally discuss the issue at a later time.
- The motion was adopted by a vote of 18-2-0.

IV. Announcements and Reports

- New Feedback Platform for Voicing Feedback to the Student Assembly – Savarn Dontamsetti, Amit Mizrahi, Siddant Basnet, Sonia Appasmy, and Rachel Kwak all participated in Cornell Hackathon. They presented Momentum, a new application allowing students to propose resolution ideas to the Assembly. Users would be able to add posts, which moderators could then approve or delete. After the resolution ideas were approved, users and representatives could comment on the resolutions, and moderators would be able to update posts to share if ideas were being researched, or being drafted into a resolution. They also developed an algorithm to rank post ordering.
 - J. Chessin asked about testing the program, and if they could use it for another group before implementing it for the Assembly.
 - The presenters took this idea into consideration.
 - J. Selig thought it would be important to reach out to Cornell's IT department for future development.
 - V. Devatha asked about the role of moderators, and if the post are anonymous.
 - The presenters stated at this point in time posts would not be anonymous so representatives and moderators could reach out to those voicing concerns.
 - S. Tayal suggested those presenting look into receiving funding through the Infrastructure Fund.

- The presenters brought up that this could make for fewer speakers at open microphone.
- There was a motion to table the conversation to Communication Committee. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.
- Elections Update – M. Henderson announced that election committee has met about election rules; he requested students and representatives evaluate the changes.
- SAIFC – P. Titcomb mentioned the submission deadline for the Infrastructure Fund was Sunday, November 22nd.
- CJC, FS, UA, and Provost Curriculum Oversight Committee Updates – G. Kaufman commented that the CJC would continue meeting alternating Tuesdays from 4:30-6:00. He stated the Faculty Senate met last Wednesday and talked about policy 6.4. They additionally voted on a new resolution related to student-teacher relations 40/60.
- D. Li expressed that she would be hosting an event related to micro-aggression on campus on December 2nd at 8:00pm in the Memorial Room.

V. Business of the Day

- Byline Report: EARS
 - Rohan Bhatia '16 announced that Cornell Minds Matter requested to stay at \$1.50. The committee agreed to this amount, and recommended Minds Matter look into the potential of digital training in the future.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question. The Byline Funding was adopted by the Assembly by a vote of 22-0-0.
- Byline Report: Minds Matter
 - R. Bhatia stated Minds Matter requested to maintain \$2.00 funding from last cycle. Event breathe vs. depth was an issue, but the committee agreed to \$2.00.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question. The Byline Funding was adopted by the Assembly by a vote of 22-0-0.
- Byline Report: Outdoor Odyssey
 - R. Bhatia announced Outdoor Odyssey requested \$1.25, which the committee agreed to. He stated that group numbers have stayed the same over past years.
 - M. Henderson asked about the two members who were paid over the summer.
 - R. Bhatia shared that the assembly had not discussed this issue.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question. The Byline Funding was adopted by the Assembly by a vote of 22-0-0.
- There was a motion to suspend the agenda and move Resolution 32 to the top of the agenda. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

VI. Business of the Day

- Resolution 32: Addressing the Student Assembly Surplus
 - E. Johnston announced that this resolution would spend the Student Assembly's \$39,000 surplus. The executive committee came to an agreement that \$15,000 would be spent on tablets (Ipads) for Assembly members and other Byline funded groups, who could request the tablets for extended periods. The funding also granted money to Resource Center Fellows, with a \$3,000 salary and \$1,000 spending cap.
 - There was a motion to move this to Business of the Day. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.
 - G. Kaufman stated that buying Ipads would be a public relations nightmare.
 - J. Breuer voiced that as a community member, to see byline funded groups get defunded, while the Assembly spent a surplus on themselves would be an issue for himself, and potentially most of the student body.
 - B. Murphy proclaimed that Ipads would more likely cost \$12,000, and that the money for printing for one year costs close to \$4,500.
 - M. Henderson stated that Ipads could be used for other groups, that they would not be personalized, and that they could be monitored to limit access.
 - M. Battaglia requested that the surplus go to the Student's Helping Students fund, or if not that the surplus at least be spent on Ipads for all students.
 - D. Liu asked if the sponsors had reached out to Resource Centers regarding the fellows funding to ask how the centers themselves might like to use funds.
 - E. Johnston stated that this resolution addressed the issue at hand, which is the surplus. She believed the Assembly needed to spend this money to hold itself to the same standard as other organizations. She further communicated that she had reached out to a member of the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.
 - J. Berger reported this would be the last opportunity for the Assembly to spend the surplus before being reviewed by the Appropriations Committee.
 - E. Johnston hoped that by providing other byline funding groups with Ipads, there would be additional benefit.
 - M. Ghandour stated that they would be saving costs and that public relations could be maintained through communication and understanding.
 - S. Chaudhary mentioned that the printing costs were actually below \$3,000 per year. He asked how the money would be used by the Resource Centers.
 - R. Dunbar wanted members to look into using their own computers.

- P. Russell mentioned that as an Appropriation member, EARS expressed that they did not think Ipads would be used in their day-to-day activities.
- P. Titcomb asked about the use of Ipads compared to other tablets.
- B. Murphy stated Cornell has a deal with Apple through the Cornell Store, and additionally has the infrastructure to support Apple, which is why they have been using the term.
- E. Johnston brought up those organizations like EARS assume it would be unrealistic in their budgets to buy Ipads and currently print paper. She believed with the Student Assembly investing in the technology other groups would feel more inclined to take advantage.
- S. Tayal wanted to recommend not using color printing to reduce costs.
- D. Li recommended that the Assembly not rush into spending money.
- B. Murphy brought up that the Assembly had requested the use of color printing two years ago, and stated the Assembly has a large surplus now, but may not in the future.
- D. Li stated this money would be used best going back to students.
- E. Liu stated that Ipads would have an environmental effect themselves.
- E. Johnston stated the renting policy would be similar to the library system. She pushed that this plan solved multiple issues.
- R. Dunbar asked how the money was allocated to the fellows, and that he would rather see this money go towards undergraduates as opposed to graduate students.
- B. Bacharach stated that he believed the surplus could be used more effectively. He wanted a majority of the resolution amended and that they pass something tonight. He wanted to see money go towards the SHS internship program.
- There was a motion to amend the resolution to strike lines 16-48, and add after line 58, “Be it further resolved that the Student Assembly allocates \$12,000 to establish a pilot program to fund in various ways advocacy centers, like the LGBTRC, the WRC, the HRC, the A3C, 626, etc. ¶ Be it further resolved that the student assembly allocates \$15,000 to the diversity innovation fund to promote accessibility and inclusivity on campus.”
- B. Murphy mentioned again that this funding would not exist in future years, and that the Assembly should consider big projects they wanted to address.
- S. Tayal pointed out that this amendment would have a long lasting effect around campus.
- E. Johnston stated that with the funds moved to more general measures, there would be greater flexibility.

- D. Li wanted to Assembly to hold itself to the same standard that they held with CU-EMS.
- The resolution was amended by a vote of 14-2-0.
- There was a motion to table to executive session.
- The resolution was tabled by a vote of 22-0-0.

M. McBride adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 7:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies