



# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, December 3, 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. Batista [1]; L. Bushner [3]; M. Chak [3]; S. Chadhary [2]; J. Chessin [.5]; V. Devatha [2.5]; R. Dunbar [2.5]; M. Ghandour [4.5]; R. Gupta [2.5]; E. Johnston [1]; M. Kasher [0]; G. Kaufman [0]; C. Li [2.5]; D. Li [4]; D. Liu [0]; E. Liu [4.5]; M. McBride [0]; V. Michel [2]; P. Russell [0.5]; J. Selig [2.5]; M. Stefanko [4.5]; S. Tayal [3.5]; P. Titcomb [3.5]; R. Uttamchandani [4.5]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* S. Karnavat (Unexcused) [3]; K. Zhu (Unexcused) [3]

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

- The minutes of November 19, 2015 were approved by unanimous consent.

### III. Open Microphone (E. Johnston)

### IV. Announcements and Reports

- Elections Update - M. Henderson announced that he would be making public the elections calendar for the spring elections by the end of the week.
- Condom Couture Fashion Show - M. Indimine stated the Condom Couture Fashion Show would be this Friday, December 4th.
- SAIFC Report - P. Titcomb stated 47 projects submitted for SAIFC, and that the committee would be reviewing the recommendations this weekend.
- Committee Chair Reports:
  - Dining Committee Director Laurel Moffet '16, and members J. Chessin, and Gabi Lynch declared that Cornell Dining was rated 10<sup>th</sup> in the country and 1<sup>st</sup> in New York by two separate reports. They announced a new web application *Cornell Dining Now*, and discussed the panel on food insecurity they held with the Food Recovery Network and members from Anabel's Grocery.
  - Environmental Committee members discussed closing gaps between behavior and practices, including plastic bottles. They hoped to readdress the campus

waste system by implementing a colored stickers system matching products with their proper waste containers.

- Residential Life Committee chair E. Liu discussed improving the housing lottery system, creating a more detailed timeline for RA applications, and general housing options. She suggested working with the Residential Student Congress, and implementing more energy saving measures in resident halls.
- Communications Committee Chairs M. Ghandour and M. Chak discussed events such as Off-Campus Housing, they held a meeting for Media Consultation, and were working alongside with Slope Media to create a Skim. They additionally were working on Spring Election promotional material.
- Appropriations Committee Chair M. Stefanko stated committee members hoped to find 15 organizations that needed help with funding, and would try to work alongside them helping with spending and budgeting next semester.
- Academic Policy Committee Chair G. Kaufman discussed open course evaluations, and mentioned that the committee passed three resolutions currently on the meeting's agenda.

#### V. Business of the Day

- Byline Report: Class Councils
  - M. Stefanko announced that Class Councils requested to increase their funding to \$3.50. The committee disagreed with this amount, recommending they work to increase membership numbers. The committee approved \$2.20.
  - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The Byline Funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 20-1-1.
- Byline Report: Senior Days
  - M. Stefanko stated Senior Days requested an increase to \$5.00. The committee believed they didn't need an increase and voted to keep funding at \$4.85.
  - 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: Club Insurance
  - M. Stefanko stated Club Insurance maintains club liability and cover damages up to three million dollars. The committee voted for \$5.10.
  - 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: Student Assembly

- M. Stefanko stated during the Student Assembly's review the most senior member not on the Assembly chaired the committee. M. Stefanko stated he presented the Assembly's plan to spend their surplus and requested \$2.00.
- J. Battista stated that the Student Assembly members met over the weekend in an open meeting where they took an informal vote on how to address their surplus.
- 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: SAFC
  - M. Stefanko stated the SAFC funds 500 student organizations on campus. He requested amending the SAFC's funding from \$94.00, to \$93.41 to create a rounded number for the entire Student Activity Fee.
  - There was a motion to amend SAFC funding to \$93.41.
  - The Byline Funding was **amended** by the Assembly by a vote of 22-0-0.
  - 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 34 to the top of the agenda. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous consent.
- Resolution 34: Student Activity Fee for the 2016-2018 Funding Cycle
  - M. Battaglia asked why Big Red Bikes was not able to appeal their funding.
  - J. Battista stated they were late to submit their application.
  - M. McBride stated that increasing the Student Activity Fee by 2.3% would be a decision that might not reflect Cornell's values of supporting students of all socio-economic levels.
  - M. Stefanko stated that given the broad range of programs and the impact of the funding he disagreed with the assessment. He mentioned that this was the lowest increase in the past four years.
  - E. Johnston stated the purpose of the Student Assembly Fee was a response to other funding around campus. She saw the funding as a piece of the greater university and overall tuition.
  - D. Li mentioned that the role of the Appropriation's Committee was to look individually at the amount each organization deserved. She believed that comparing Cornell's Student Activity Fee with other college's fees was not a true reflection of Cornell's values, as other schools may fund more organizations through administrative expenditures.

- P. Titcomb mentioned that in regards to Big Red Bikes, Cornell is creating an organized bike share program for the Fall 2017.
  - S. Tayal stated that most cuts were made because a number of organizations had surpluses. He requested to junior members that in the future these organizations recover allocations.
  - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. Resolution 34 was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 23-1-0.
- Special Projects Funding
    - Parliamentarian Berger stated that for projects in the \$400-\$1500 range, only 1/3 of Assembly members needed to vote in favor.
  - Special Projects Funding: Lending Library
    - M. Stefanko stated this would be a \$1000 request to supplement donations on behalf of the Durland Alternatives Library, operating out of Anabel Taylor Hall. This funding would allow any student to rent textbooks on a per-semester basis.
    - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 24-0-0.
  - Special Projects Funding: ECO
    - R. Dunbar brought up that the Appropriations Committee has continually held groups to a high standard in regards to conferences throughout the year.
    - M. Stefanko mentioned that this standard was in regards to sending members to outside conferences creating large costs per attendee.
    - J. Battista clarified that member G. Kaufman was who brought up cuts to conference funding.
    - E. Johnston stated this request filled funding gaps for ECO, an organizations that was unable to receive Byline Funding.
    - S. Tayal mentioned that this event would be the first one of this magnitude that he had seen throughout his time at Cornell.
    - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. The funding was **adopted** by the Assembly by a vote of 22-0-2.
  - There was a motion to suspend the agenda and move Resolution 31 to the top of the agenda. The motion was **adopted** by a vote of 20-0-0.
  - Resolution 31: Approving the Election Rules

- M. Henderson stated the Elections Committee made multiple changes to the election rules. He stated there was mainly a new system of flexible funding, and a change on the social media policy, focusing the rules on Cornell's IT a policy. The committee wished to eliminate the clause focusing on criticizing an opponent's character. He wanted voters to be the deciders of what constitutes a well-spoken candidate, not putting the election's committee in charge of defining someone's actions as criticizing. The committee kept endorsements restricted, because it helps incumbents and hurts new candidates. It also hurts students running for positions because they feel inclined to take sides.
- M. Battaglia wanted to address outreach events, and asked how the Election Rules would affect the Standing Rules in regards to the need to attend two outreach events every two weeks.
- M. Henderson stated the word "host" meant that Assembly members would not be allowed to create their own events.
- E. Johnston saw endorsements for President and EVP as more transparent. She saw the restriction of endorsements as a way of keeping support secret.
- M. Henderson stated that under the Spring 2014 rules, candidates were forced to make decisions about endorsements and there were greater hostilities.
- M. McBride mentioned that endorsements were a mechanism for accountability.
- There was a motion to amend line 306 to include "on behalf of any other candidate *except if the candidate does so for another candidate and the President and/or the EVP races*", to amend line 308 to include, "in any coordination of campaigning activities *except if the candidate does so for another candidate in the President or EVP races*.", and to amend Article 2 Section B, beginning on line 310, to insert, "2. Special circumstance for the President and EVP elections ¶ Candidates in any race, besides those running for the position of President of EVP, will be given the freedom to distribute promotional material, send electronic communications, campaign on behalf of, and speak for candidates in the President or EVP races. Candidates who chose to do so are considered supporters and are held accountable to all clauses in these rules that pertain to candidates and their supporters. ¶ The President and EVP are strictly prohibited from coordinating activities. ¶ Candidates are strictly prohibited from performing the actions above for candidates not in the president of EVP races".
- There was a **Point of Information** if EVP's and President's would not be allowed to endorse candidates, but that instead, other members could endorse Presidents and EVPs.
- M. McBride stated this was the case.

- M. Battaglia mentioned that with the upward endorsements, it keeps incumbents much more electable. By amending the Election Rules in this fashion, members would be supporting their own future campaigns.
- S. Tayal stated this would promote a “you give I take” mentality. Still, he believed that the amendment promoted free speech, which other amended changes to the Election Rules promised.
- M. McBride stated that this would make candidates more accountable.
- There was a motion to amend.
- There was dissent.
- G. Kaufman believed discussion needed to continue.
- The motion to vote failed by a vote of 11-9-1.
- Parliamentarian Berger believed that the past rules left too much ambiguity over endorsements, and that this amendment made collaboration between members more visible.
- P. Biedenweg stated the amendment did not promote the election of outside members.
- M. Henderson believed that this was a pro incumbent amendment, and would create a hostile election.
- B. Bacharach stated that incumbency had more to do with knowing how to run a campaign.
- Y. Bhandari stated that you should be able to endorse candidates because it allows for you to discuss past resolutions and cooperation with other members.
- The resolution was amended by a vote of 17-4-0.
- There was a motion to amend line 138 to read, “...that conforms to the specifications *noted in the online candidate registration form.*”, line 167 to read, “...website expenses (*web hosting, domain names, and online advertising*), chalk...”, and strike from lines 235 and 236 “in person” and “109 Day Hall”.
- There resolution was amended by a vote of 21-0-0.
- There was a motion to table the resolution.
- The motion failed by a vote of 7-12-1.
- There was a motion to Call the Question.
- Resolution 31 was adopted by the Assembly by a vote of 18-0-0.

J. Battista adjourned the meeting at 6:52pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies