



# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, December 3, 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 4:36pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach [2.5]; J. Batista [1]; M. Chak [3]; S. Chaudhary [2.5]; J. Chessin [0.5]; R. Dunbar [2.5]; M. Ghandour [4.5]; R. Gupta [2.5]; E. Johnston [1]; M. Kasher [0]; G. Kaufman [0]; D. Liu [0]; E. Liu [4.5]; M. McBride [0]; V. Michel [2]; P. Russell [0.5]; J. Selig [2.5]; M. Stefanko [5]; S. Tayal [3.5]; P. Titcomb [3.5]; R. Uttamchandani [4.5]; K. Zhu [3]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* L. Bushner (Unexcused) [4]; V. Devatha (Unexcused) [3.5]; S. Karnavat (Unexcused) [4]; C. Li (Unexcused) [3.5]; D. Li (Excused) [4.5]

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

### IV. Announcements and Reports

- Committee Reports:
  - Financial Aid Chair B. Bacharach hoped to expand the Students Helping Students and Internship Programs. The committee also was addressing international students and undocumented students getting aid.
  - United Student Body Chair S. Chadhaury brought up three initiatives. The first was a questionnaire, which the committee appointed liaisons to create. Second they wanted to carry out a survey of each committee to gain input on how the committee's of the Student Assembly were represented. Lastly, the Diversity and Inclusion Fund would be launched the second week of next semester.
  - Health and Wellness Chair Carolina Bieri '16 stated they helped organize the Health Awareness Week. A new initiative, Nature Rx was also launched with the support of Professor Don Rakow. They were also working on installing condom dispensers in dorms and community centers. J. Berger also discussed the prevention of Flu Season, updating bathroom stickers, and cigarette policies.
  - Millie Kastenbaum '16 Chair of City Affairs discussed off campus housing relating to a questionnaire they created. The committee held a Bearwalk dinner,

where 15 Cornell students were matched with 15 local leaders. They had encouraged students to vote, and were allowing 20 families to host dinner for 20 students in January. City Affairs would additionally be bringing common council to campus in some capacity, and will be hosting a Makersfair next semester.

- Staffing Committee tried to get 300 applications for committees. They met twice to discuss the approval of the slate of the Appropriation Committee.

## V. Business of the Day

- Resolution 24: Cost Barriers to Study Abroad
  - P. Titcomb and J. Berger discussed problems, such as program costs, as dilemmas to Cornell Abroad. Currently students pay Cornell \$2,500 during a semester abroad, and an extra \$500 if studying in the UK or Israel. Sublets and plane tickets were additional issues.
  - M. McBride asked if other colleges subsidize their study abroad programs, and where extra money could come from.
  - J. Chessin asked what the fee currently paid for.
  - P. Titcomb stated the fee is for administrative costs on Cornell campus, but he was not clear exactly where the money went.
  - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. Resolution 24 was **approved** by a vote of 23-0-0 with two community votes in the affirmative.
- There was a motion to suspend the agenda and move Resolution 33 to the top of the agenda. The motion was **approved** by unanimous consent.
- Resolution 33: Supporting the Establishment of a Veterans Resource Center
  - Seamus Murphy '16 President of the Cornell Veterans Association introduced Resolution 33, requesting Cornell respond to veteran needs by creating infrastructure and a veterans liaison. S. Murphy believed that veterans were underrepresented at Cornell because many of their needs are not met compared to other peer institutions.
  - There was a motion to amend line 5 to read, "...and a *team room* in order...", line 31 to read, "comparable institutions such as *Brown University* and *Syracuse...*", and line 44 to read, "serve as a *team room*;".
  - The resolution was **amended** by a vote of 21-0-0.
  - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. Resolution 33 was **adopted** by a vote of 22-0-0 with 2 community votes in the affirmative.

- There was a motion to suspend the agenda and move Resolution 26 to the top of the agenda. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.
- Resolution 26: Promoting Justice and Friendship in the Housing Lottery
  - G. Kaufman discussed that a large number of housing issues arose from the Housing Lottery. The current system created a power dynamic where individuals incentivize their friends who have better time slots. Resolution 26 looked to change the lottery system to implement two lotteries - one for house choice, and one for room choice, and would change the order one receives a timeslot to be after students had chosen to block together.
  - E. Liu stated that the Student Residential Life Committee and Student Housing Congress would create a new book if the resolution passed.
  - P. Titcomb wanted clarified what would happen if a block of multiple people if they did not have any rooms in a house left to accommodate them.
  - G. Kaufman talked about blocks being split up (potentially on the same floor) once there were no large rooms left.
  - M. McBride asked if RLC endorsed the resolution.
  - G. Kaufman clarified that the RLC had endorsed them.
  - B. Bacharach asked if the size of rooms would have an impact on the preferences.
  - G. Kaufman discussed the possibility of larger groups having better chances.
  - G. Kaufman reinstated that RSC would implement two separate lotteries, one for a residential community (getting into a specific house), then a second lottery that would give students priority in picking actual rooms.
  - M. Chak asked about those blocks that did not have every member sign the housing contract within 24 hours.
  - G. Kaufman stated that the people who don't sign their contracts are referred to as "Melt". They would be removed from a group, and the block would become smaller, but stay together.
  - V. Michel wanted to clarify if those groups who lost people would have their priority as a larger group changed.
  - G. Kaufman stated he would raise this issue later. A single person slot would have benefits because they can fit into more spaces, but he also wanted to keep larger groups together on the same floor. G. Kaufman summarized that he wanted to give equal probability to groups of all sizes.
  - The Office of Residential and Event Services would be dealing with statistics and the probabilities when creating the new housing lottery system.

- There was a motion to amend the resolution. The motion was amended by a vote of 20-0-0.
- There was a motion to Call the Question. Resolution 26 was adopted by a vote of 20-0-0.
- There was a motion to suspend the agenda and move Resolution 27 to the top of the agenda. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.
- Resolution 27: Ending Bottled Water Sales on Cornell
  - The sponsors discussed working closely with Dining and Café managers to discuss how to remove water bottles from campus. They hoped to phase out bottles through education and by offering better water filling stations. Cornell currently sends 80% of bottles to landfills, which releases 112,000 Kilograms of CO2 per year. The campus in all also spent \$640,000 purchasing water last year.
  - E. Johnston stated that the resolution would be a gradual process. They were also working with the Health and Wellness Committee to provide education on stopping the consumption of soda.
  - M. McBride stated that he would be in favor of a slow phase out, but also wanted a tax-based system on water bottles.
  - R. Dunbar brought up that in the summer of 2015 the University of Vermont released a study showing when water bottles were removed from campus the number of bottles purchased and sugar consumption actually increased.
  - The sponsors brought up that they would emphasize education and that receiving tap water was a legal right.
  - G. Kaufman recommended the sponsors began educating students before they removed water bottles.
  - E. Johnston stated the risks associated with increased soda consumption should not stop a potentially beneficial change.
  - P. Biedenweg asked about the contractual obligations with Pepsico, and if water bottle sales were a part of Cornell's contract.
  - The sponsors mentioned that a contract existed for 90% of beverages, but they could not see the actual contract. They know that it is possible to not have legal obligations to sell water because the HumEc and Engineering schools have banned water bottle sales.
  - M. Battaglia was concerned about providing water at events.
  - E. Johnston mentioned that Slope day was an example of Cornell's effort to reduce water bottle usage.

- Susan McGrattan '17 mentioned that you could bring your own water bottles to Slope Day as long as they were empty.
  - R. Uttamchandani believed a tax would be better for reducing bottle sales.
  - The sponsors believed six months was an appropriate time frame.
  - S. Tayal asked why taxes could not be part of the implementation phase, and if the sponsors would be open to other means, such as selling larger bottles.
  - The sponsors mentioned that they were trying to reach their goal, but would consider ways to keep the campus healthy.
  - D. Li mentioned that as a transfer student she did not receive a Cornell reusable water bottle.
  - The sponsors brought up that they would look into getting transfers bottles.
  - M. Kasher brought up that vitamin infused waters would still be an issue. She also thought a tax might not work, but was in favor of better looking water bottles for students.
  - There was a motion to amend line 52 to read, “...machines *and including a significant tax-based phase-out for at least one year, and a strategic marketing campaign of the tax and the bottle phase-out*”.
  - The resolution was **amended** by a vote of 16-2-2.
  - There was a motion to table the resolution.
  - The motion **failed** by a vote of 6-13-0.
  - P. Russell brought up that it would be important to sell inexpensive, reusable water bottles at cafes.
  - Ex-Officio Welling stated that cultural adjustment would still be a large hurdle.
  - There was a motion to **Call the Question**. Resolution 27 was **adopted** by a vote of 12-8-1 with two community votes in the affirmative.
- Resolution 28: Improving Research Matching for Students and Professors
    - B. Bacharach believed that Cornell was founded as a research university, but oftentimes students do not know where to find these opportunities. The sponsors proposed a recommendation to be sent to administrators in favor of Research Connection, a \$5,000 per year program that would allow students and professors to connect over research positions. The Cornell Undergraduate Research Board was in support of this.
    - J. Selig stated his only sentiment was endorsing certain companies or products. He said the college of Engineering was working on a research website themselves.

- There was a Point of information over whether the Assembly has ever supported a corporation in a resolution.
  - J. Battista stated that the Assembly most likely has not, only through Byline.
  - M. McBride motioned to amend line 26, to read "...consider ResearchConnection *or other vendors* as a potential option..."
  - S. Tayal stated this resolution in its current form was still recommending ResearchConnection. He hoped the Assembly representatives would mention the company but keep it out of the resolution.
  - There was a motion to vote on the amendment. The resolution was amended by a vote of 15-0-1.
  - There was a motion to Call the Question. Resolution 28 was adopted by a vote of 19-0-1 with two community votes in the affirmative.
- There was a motion to table all remaining resolutions. Resolutions 25, 29, and 30 were tabled by unanimous consent.

J. Batista adjourned the meeting at 6:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies