



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, February 2nd, 2016 Meeting

4:45pm-6:30pm in WSH Memorial Room

I. Call to Order

- J. Berger called the meeting to order at 4:45pm.
- *Present at the Roll Call:* J. Berger [0]; N. Chovanec [0.5]; D. Cox [0]; V. Devatha [1.5]; E. Dzodzomenyo [0]; R. Herz [1]; A. Iglesias [1]; M. Indimine [0]; A. Issur [2.5]; M. Kasher [2.5]; J. Kim [1]; D. Li [0]; L. Lipschultz [1.5]; D. Liu [1.5]; T. Magloire [0]; M. McBride [1]; R. Musto [2]; H. Reichel [0.5]; W. Rong [0]; M. Valadez [0]; E. Vargas [1.5]; A. Viswanathan [0]; Y. Wang [2];
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* T. Celestin (Excused) [1]; N. Jaisinghani (Unexcused) [2.75]; H. MacDiarmid (Unexcused) [4]; J. Montejo (Excused) [0]; J. Selig (Unexcused) [2];

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the January 26th, 2016 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone

- Daniel Engelson of the musical theater group, Anything Goes, stated that the Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board had done a poor job of defining the application process for requesting the Cornell Cinema Theater. In previous semesters, Anything Goes went through the Dean of Students to apply for the use of Cornell Cinema, however this year the Student Union Board was unclear about future reservations.
- G. Kaufman stated that throughout 2015 the Assembly had taken issue with the SUB. The Assembly gave broad authority to the SUB previously, but he believed they should be held more accountable.
- Daniel Engelson requested that the SUB follow a fair and balanced application procedure.
- D. Li addressed this need by stating that a meeting would be scheduled for the Appropriation Committee to meet with the SUB.
- G. Kaufman stated that the SUB had previously faced issues with programming and room reservations and it would be beneficial to oversee the motions of the board.
- There was a motion to elect a representative of the Assembly to serve on the Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board as an Ex-Officio member during executive session.
- By a vote of 21-0-0 the motion was adopted.

IV. Announcements and Reports

- VP Li stated that because next year would be a By-Line year, next Wednesday a session would be held to explain the process. She requested that members reach out over email and promote this and future sessions.
- A. Issur stated that certain international Cornell students were advised to not travel even inside of the US. To address concerns raised from this advisory he would soon be setting up a

meeting between affected students the Cornell administration, and requested the help of other representatives.

- VP McBride stated that many members were close to surpassing the maximum number of absences, and that the Executive committee already held four attendance hearings so far.
- M. Valadez stated that a diversity survey was being sent out over email in regards to the creation of a diversity requirement. She requested that members popularize the survey to students around campus to gauge student support.

V. Mid-Year Bias Report Presentation

- Ulysses Smith introduced himself as the Lead Diversity & Inclusion Strategist along with other members of the Bias Assessment and Review Team (BART).
- Ulysses Smith stated the bias reporting system has existed for close to fifteen years, and wanted to summarize the activities of the last semester. The program started as a way for individuals to report incidents when the perpetrator was unknown, but today has evolved into a much larger system. U. Smith emphasized that reporting should only be done for a non-emergency. Anything that falls under 6.4, based on protected statuses, are accepted, including workplace climate concerns, hazing, ethics, criminal activity, and broader community disruptions. In the past, there were many forms which students could use to report biases. Now the system has been centralized. Reports can be filed unanimously, or the student can be involved, however, a reporter may be required to participate due to State and Federal law. The BART team meets once a week and responds to each case. This year there were 136 reports, which can be viewed at Diversity.Cornell.edu.
- A. Iglesias asked where hazing could be reported.
- U. Smith stated that the Campus and Community Engagement hosts a form for hazing, but it can also be reported through a bias report.
- A. Viswanathan asked about anonymity and whether those who reported anonymously were able to see the result of such a report.
- U. Smith stated that you could read the incident summaries online. He stated that many of the online reports were small matters. You could also share your name, and request that your information not be shared.
- D. Cox asked about the upward trend in cases, and if reports continued to increase in the future what could be done.
- U. Smith stated that the goal of BART was to get together and provide administrators with information and/or establish task forces. The data could be broken down by unit or college to help smaller sub-groups promote new initiatives.
- T. Celestin asked how a taskforce would be created. She also asked what issues were being addressed on race and ethnicity.
- U. Smith stated that it would be up to the college or unit to address the bias issue through a taskforce. BART could only encourage a response but not force any initiatives or training. Specifically related to race and ethnicity, the plaintiff often has a roll in what results. Responses are often contingent on the amount of information BART receive. They encouraged students who report incidents to provide as much information as possible, so that broader solutions could be constructed.
- H. MacDiarmid asked how BART specifically goes about collecting data.
- U. Smith said that if any person is named in a report, the team will attempt to communicate with that individual through email and phone calls.
- V. Devatha asked about if the perpetrator was outside the Cornell community.
- U. Smith stated that many cases occur in this light, and that steps could be taken. If it is was a

crime, an individual could be barred from campus, or intervention from law enforcement could occur in if the incident fell under policy 6.4.

- G. Kaufman asked why Cornell has more Title Nine investigations than any other American university. He also wondered when policy 6.4 would be updated.
- U. Smith stated the new 6.4 procedures went into effect in August. He could not comment on pending investigations, and recommended reaching out to Cornell's Title Nine office.
- H. Macdiarmid asked about the rapidness with which action could be taken.
- U. Smith stated that a reporter could expect contact from the team within 72 hours. He summarized that BART wanted to promote a balanced and fair campus environment. In regards to the recent election he stated that the number of bias reports stood at twenty-one.

VI. Initiatives

- Restructuring - President Berger stated the restructuring committee met last semester, but failed to meet this semester because it lacked quorum. She wanted to discuss the timeline for the future of the assembly. She posed the questions, "What kind of proposal should be created?", "Should there be new governing documents?", "Should a report be made?", and "How should the community be involved?"
- J. Berger stated that a proposal worth considering would be changing the Assembly's elections to follow the calendar year. This could make it easier to rely on the advice of past student leaders who would remain on campus from the end of their terms until graduation, and it would benefit freshman who would have more time to understand the functions of the Assembly.
- T. Celestin believed the Assembly should prioritize discussing Assembly positions, and looked to hear feedback on how to best represent the larger Cornell community.
- D. Barbaria stated that it would be challenging to switch to a Calendar year, but logistics should not stop the proposal.
- E. Dzodzomenyo asked about the process of a fall and December election.
- J. Berger said there was a possibility for two elections in the future. There would also be the possibility for one. She recommended the creation of a working group for the summer.
- V. Devatha mentioned that there would be a lot of stress in having to run in two elections, and how a December election would coincide with finals.
- H. Reichel wanted to discuss simple fixes such as the room and how the Assembly takes in feedback.
- J. Berger stated that at this point she was open to discuss all issues, and strongly encouraged all members to attend the next restructuring forum.

J. Berger adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 6:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies