



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, April 7th, 2016 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 4:49pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach [4.5] D. Barbaria [0]; J. Batista [2]; N. Billington [0.5]; J. Chessin [1.5]; W. Choi [0.5]; V. Devatha [4.5]; R. Dunbar [3.5]; M. Ghandour [5.5]; C. Hodges [0]; M. Indimine [1]; S. Karnavat [5]; M. Kasher [0]; G. Kaufman [0]; J. Kim [1]; D. Li [4.5]; D. Liu [1.5]; M. McBride [0]; V. Michel [4]; P. Russell [2.5]; J. Selig [4]; M. Stefanko [6]; S. Tayal [5.5]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* J. Breuer (Excused) [1]; S. Chadhaury (Excused) [4]; S. Gilbert (Unexcused) [1.5]; E. Johnston (Unexcused) [2.5];

II. Open Microphone

- Nate Rogers, a third year PHD student in mechanical engineering stated he was running for the Graduate Student trustee position. He served as the Vice Chair on the Graduate Student Assembly. Furthermore, he was a member on the Alcohol and Other Drugs Committee where he helped promote hazing prevention, and was on the organizing committee for Cornell's Bear Walk. He proclaimed he was running for reasons of supporting affordability of housing, financial aid policies, and other issues relating to the Board of Trustee's transparency.
 - G. Kaufman asked if he would vote alone against all other trustees.
 - Nate stated that he would vote independently if the vote was for something he strongly believed in.
 - C. Hodges asked about the unionization of graduate students.
 - Nate stated he was not particularly against unionization, but with logistical matters such as negotiating stipends and benefits, a union would add an extra level of consulting.

III. TCAT Representative - Potential Service Changes

- Gary Cobiz (grc22) worked for Cornell Transportation. With TCAT potentially experiencing service cuts due to limited bus drivers, he looked to promote student attendance at TCAT public hearings. He also was actively serving on the TCAT Citizens Advisory Committee for four years (which offers free bus passes to members), and stated for interested students that the committee met the second Monday of every month.
 - G. Kaufman asked about the shortage of TCAT drivers.
 - Gary Cobiz personally believed that the issue centered on drivers having to travel long distances to come to work.

IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes of the March 17th and March 24th meetings were approved by unanimous consent.

V. Announcements and Reports

- University Assembly – Representative Kaufman stated the JA Search Committee selected Michelle Horvath as the new Judicial Administrator. Additionally, the UA was considering a Campus Code of Conduct changes, creating an hour for no questions asked protesting from 12pm-1pm on Ho Plaza, adding additional undergraduate students to the UHRB, and giving all students the ability to appeal temporary suspensions and restraining orders (non-contact directives) issued by the JA’s Office.
- Initiative’s Proposal – Representative Russell expressed discontent over projects that the Student Assembly let fall by their wayside. To combat this problem, he proposed the creation of a book which would outline all the representative’s initiatives they hoped to work on over the year, explaining the problems and giving general information around issues which needed support or someone to follow up with.
 - M. Battaglia asked if P. Russell had worked with the Executive Board, which he believed previously had attempted to address issues around resolution duplication.
 - P. Russell said that he had discussed his idea, and that there was no such similar document to his proposed one.
 - J. Batista stated the Annual Report and the initiative would have different goals. She saw this initiative as a helpful way to teach new members about projects.
 - M. Kasher asked about the use of a website for this document, or if it would be made public.
 - P. Russell proposed a public document, and wished to look further into online integration.

VI. New Business

- Resolution 51: Usage of the ’15-’16 Student Assembly Infrastructure Fund (M. Kasher, R. Dunbar, Nicolette Swanberry ’18, Luba Valkova ’16, Samuel Baer ’17)
 - The sponsors of the Student Assembly Infrastructure Fund Committee discussed changes to their attendance policy, allowing for a greater number of members. Additionally, they hoped to restructure the current membership requirements, and to better define the voting process in their Charter.
 - Last year the committee approved four proposals. This year the committee received 54 proposals, from which, after deliberating through multiple rounds, they arriving at nine final projects. There first two projects - placing vending machines in Sibley Hall, and placing garbage cans on North campus, were free and being implemented with funding from other resources.
 - The sponsors then introduced the remaining projects from most too least expensive. The first major project was installing Gothic Standard Light Posts on the slope. The total cost would be \$80,000, with the Infrastructure Fund paying \$30,000, and the University covering \$50,000. Second, the fund would use \$20,000 to help support a larger fund of \$500,000 for renovating the Swartz Center, including its plaza. This project would begin construction the summer of 2017, after gaining additional student input through the Campus Planning Committee. Furthermore, the Green Dragon Café would receive \$15,000 to renovate tables and walls with more outlets. The sponsors decided to grant \$5,000 to place Dyson hand dryers in either WSH or PSB. For \$1,000 the committee hoped to put condom dispensers in Noyes, RPCC, and WSH. For

\$1000, the sponsors hoped to place coat hangers in certain bathrooms around campus, and finally \$250 would go towards funding waste bin signage. The total cost was estimated around \$70,000 leaving \$30,000 rollover.

- Spending \$5,400 on light therapy lamps was a consideration by the sponsors, but they decided to pass on the proposal mainly because Gannett's refusal to price match.
- M. Stefanko wanted to hear more about the logic for spending \$30,000 on slope lighting. He thought that lighting the slope, especially as a safety issue, should be the job of the University, not the Assembly's funds. He suggested that therapy lamps be replaced as a funding project.
- Angelica Frances clarified that placing therapy lamps inside libraries was discussed as intently as the main projects and could easily be implemented as an alternative.
- R. Dunbar stated that if the committee did not grant funding for slope lighting, Cornell would wait three and a half years to begin the project. The committee chose to spend \$30,000 because it would compel the University to begin construction this summer, benefiting all students.
- P. Biedenweg stated that his proposed project, granting the University's libraries funding for projectors and cameras, should be considered if the sponsors were willing to look at light therapy lamps. Both projects were not infrastructure, yet they lacked other means of attaining fruition through other funds.
- M. Kasher suggested that the camera and projector project be proposed again, and agreed that a separate funding source was necessary for these types of projects.
- M. McBride believed there would be liability issues with light therapy lamps.
- M. Ferrer, the submitter of the lamp proposal, thanked the sponsors for their diligent research. He stated that the lamps were beneficial especially due to their health benefits in winter.
- The sponsors replied that one of the lights came with a seven-year warranty, and the other two proposed lamps with a lifetime warranty.
- M. Battaglia stated that he worked on researching lighting last year for the North side of the Slope on top of Baker tower. The light on top of Baker tower provided around 5 lux, and the human eye could see in light as low as one lumen. Further, he stated that hand dryers were more unsanitary than paper, and on the condom dispenser project he expressed that the WSH already contained one inside the men's restroom.
- Alexander Iglesias stated that as a first year student he had trouble walking on the slope at night, and knew other students who viewed it as a safety concern.
- Brian Murphy '16 communicated that he submitted the Swartz Center proposal. Because of funding from the SAFC, he stated more student input occurred, and additionally he explained the original donors were funding the majority of the renovation.
- M. Kasher voiced that the sponsors had looked to only get the most current, hygienic hand dryers. They hoped to put condoms inside dorms, but instead needed to place them in areas with equal access, and hoped to eventually locate highly trafficked but discrete areas.
- There was a motion to Table.
- By unanimous consent Resolution 51 was **tabled**.

VII. Open Forum: Restructuring the Student Assembly

- M. Ghandour stated that the purpose of the forum related to the campus organization First in Class approaching the Assembly regarding the creation of a new first generation college student representative. The assembly would create this seat next fall, and hoped to raise questions to the community about other ways the Assembly could better represent the student body.
 - Noelani Gabriel asked how many seats made up the assembly and what each seat represented.
 - J. Batista explained that the Student Assembly would have 28 elected representatives beginning next fall in addition to ex-officio members from the Residential Student Congress, the GPSA, the UA, and the Tri-Council.
 - Jonathan Goldstein '17, the President of the Cornell Union for Disability Awareness, stated self-reported disabled students made up 5-8% of students on campus. He believed many of these students had difficulty running in elections, and was in favor of promoting a better way for students with disabilities to get involved with student governance.
 - S. Tayal believed there was a need for more identity-based positions. He wanted to see seats created for identities with large, underrepresented communities, which were real *identities*, not beliefs.
 - B. Bacharach stated that the problem came down to who ran for the Assembly. He believed that the Assembly needed to work on promoting elections and diversity.
 - M. Battaglia asked about the logistics of picking identity groups.
 - J. Chessin believed that class-year seats would be a good addition to the Assembly.
 - Kianna Marie from the Residential Advisory Council wanted to see fewer representatives but better representation. She believed specific minority representation would not be the best approach because a specific minority member would have just as much trouble supporting another minority group as any other member of the Assembly.
 - Seamus Murphy '17 stated that veterans did not get enough support on campus, especially given Cornell's background and history relating to military service, and he saw the lack of a resource center or any other support networks as discouraging.
 - Samari Gilbert expressed her desire to instate term limits.
 - Mark LaPointe '16 believed that due to the number of clubs, religious groups, and students on campus it would be difficult to represent all people. He believed that fewer positions with more candidates made the Student Assembly more robust.
 - Nate Rogers stated that like the GPSA, he wanted to see fewer but better resolutions from the Student Assembly.
 - Rafael believed more positions might not be the best way to increase representation, but instead he wanted the Assembly to create more channels to reach out, including through the Assembly's website.
 - Julia Montejo '17 stood behind a class type structure for the Assembly. Additionally, she stated running for the minority position last month was difficult given the number of candidates, while most college based positions ran uncontested. Given this fact, she suggested college seats may have to be reduced in the future.
 - Daniel Engelson '18, incoming class president for the Class of 2018, as well as elected member of the Assembly, discussed bridging gaps between the Student Assembly and Class Councils. He favored the president of each class becoming a voting member of the Assembly.
 - R. Dunbar stated that competition created a better election system. As well, he believed pitting identities against each other hurt rather than helped to community.

- M. Stefanko believed the Student Assembly was broken. Given this, he was in favor of trying new ways of electing seats. Given the fact that a majority of issues affecting students on campus affected minority groups he favored increasing representation to solve more issues.
- Traciann Celestin '19 stated that the number of people running for representative positions did not represent the number of students with such identities. She believed there were other reasons why the Assembly was attracting only certain types of candidates, and was in favor of providing more election information to all students.
- G. Kaufman was additionally in favor of class representatives.
- Noelani Gabriel stated that it was not conducive to compare fields of study to minority positions.

- There was a motion to adjourn.

J. Batista adjourned the meeting at 7:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies