



Cornell University

Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, April 28th, 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 4:50pm
- *Present at the Roll Call:* D. Barbaria [0]; J. Batista (Unexcused) [4]; N. Billington [0.5]; J. Breuer [1]; S. Chadhaury (Unexcused) [4.5]; J. Chessin [1.5]; V. Devatha [4.5]; M. Ghandour (Unexcused) [5.5]; S. Gilbert [2]; M. Indimine [1]; S. Karnavat [5]; M. Kasher [0]; G. Kaufman [0]; J. Kim [1.5]; D. Li [4.5]; D. Liu [2.5]; M. McBride [0]; V. Michel [5]; P. Russell [2.5]; J. Selig [4]; S. Tayal [5.5]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* B. Bacharach (Unexcused) [5.5]; W. Choi (Unexcused) [2.5]; R. Dunbar (Excused) [4.5]; C. Hodges (Unexcused) [0]; E. Johnston (Unexcused) [2.5]; M. Stefanko (Unexcused) [7];

II. Open Microphone

- A community member announced that the International Student Union would host an International Film Festival at Theta Delta Chi Friday April 29th at 7:00pm.
- Pamela Chueh '17 discussed RAW EXPO, an event being held on April 29th at 5:00pm in Rand Hall. The project worked to destigmatize design and was open to all colleges.

III. Initiatives

- Ezra Box
 - S. Tayal and S. Karnavat presented Ezra Box, a new company and website funded by Cornell. The purpose of the organization was to provide students with storage spaces around campus. Individuals could choose to host spaces, or rent a space over the summer. The sponsors stated that the website – Ezrabox.com - would be working by early next week.
 - J. Chessin asked how many students the website could host.
 - S. Tayal answered 2,500 students.
 - J. Battista asked how the new organization looked to compete with Student Agency's Big Red Shipping and Storage.
 - S. Tayal stated that Ezra's Box was focused on a larger scale, providing less personal service for a larger number of students. The cost of storage would be close to 300% cheaper than their competitor.
 - M. Indimine asked how the Assembly could support the initiative.
 - The sponsors stated that outreach was a big concern. They were hoping the Student Assembly would promote their initiative as well as give feedback.
 - A community member asked about liabilities concerning the hosting process.
 - S. Tayal stated the initiative would be limited to the Cornell community. Hosting required a background check, where the sponsors would inform applicants on

best storage practices, also looking into their security. The sponsors were looking to create an insurance plan later into the process, but at this time there was none.

- V. Devatha further asked about the differentiation between competition.
- S. Tayal stated that they were setting a price ceiling of \$12-18 for a small unit, which kept prices 250-300% cheaper than Big Red Shipping and Storage.

IV. President Rawlings & Vice President Lombardi

- President Rawlings introduced himself and expressed that he was glad to be back at Cornell. He iterated that he held no long term plans for the University, but was rather making sure that the university continued forward. He reiterated that he had limited knowledge of Cornell's current state of affairs.
 - J. Batista introduced herself and the Assembly. She was glad President Rawlings was willing to engage the student body.
 - M. Battaglia asked if President Rawlings had any short-term plans to address campus issues, and if there were ways Cornell's governing bodies could support his vision.
 - President Rawlings supported the Student Assembly's goals of representing all student needs, and said he would continue to hear student's concerns through recommendations and not demands.
 - J. Breuer asked about crisis managing, and revamping Cornell Health. His suitemate had taken his own life in the first weeks of J. Breuer's first semester, and he believed that Cornell's institutional support was an area always needing additional support.
 - President Rawlings spoke about how Cornell dealt with these issues believing there was always more to be learned. He saw the issue as partially a resource center question, and where to hire more staff or faculty.
 - J. Montejo asked for President Rawling's views on the new DACA financial aid policy, and also if Cornell had a plan if the DACA policy were to change on the federal level.
 - President Rawlings stated that when he was president in 1995 undocumented and international students received no financial support. He was glad the program had come into fruition.
 - VP Lombardi stated the Financial Aid Office was creating a contingent plan in case DACA were eliminated.
 - M. McBride asked about the state of need-aware international financial aid.
 - S. Tayal informed President Rawlings on the new need-aware policy for international students. He believed the policy limited diversity on campus.
 - President Rawlings expressed that Cornell had limited resources. He wanted to have a top faculty, top services, as well as a wide array of students from low, and international backgrounds, and he believed the university could not meet every need. He knew Cornell was well off compared to many other peer universities, but because the University not in a perfect situation, and he expressed that long term goals needed to be balanced and prioritized with short term situational problems.
 - S. Chaudhary informed President Rawlings that the demands of the minority community were to create a diversity requirement across all colleges. The community additionally wished to increase funding for the creation of new resource centers, along with expansions to existing resource centers. S. Chaudhary believed these investments would help make Cornell a more diverse and supportive community.

- President Rawlings stated that all Vice Presidents across the campus had demands and needs. He saw Resource centers as a good, reasonable requests, but wanted to find ways of addressing minority community's concerns without the use of university funding. His goal was to do more with less.
- Elizabeth '18 discussed Provost Kotlikoff's previous views on carbon neutrality by 2035, and asked the new President for his own opinion.
- President Kotlikoff said he was in support of carbon neutrality, and wanted to start the project during his interim presidency.
- Y. Bhandari asked about President Rawling's experiences working at the Association of American Universities, where he previously served as President for since 2011. She asked if he looked to transfer over ideas and insight from that job to Cornell.
- President Rawlings said that in his previous job he oversaw 61 different universities, and focused in the last nine months primarily on university protests. He saw a wave of protests across the nation, which were causing problems for university staff and administrators. Sexual assault surveys also raised questions around how University Presidents dealt with creating safer campuses. President Rawlings looked to focus on revamping the math and science departments, and believed instruction needed an increased number of engaging introductory courses.
- N. Billington asked President Rawling's for his opinion on the housing master plan.
- President Rawlings said that when he served as President in 1995, housing was the largest issue he faced. Under his leadership, North campus was revamped and West Campus was constructed to keep students engaged with campus life. He believed these projects provided beneficial living spaces for students. President Rawlings saw housing as just as important to students as classroom environments, and he was committed to combining living arrangements with academics.

V. Business of the Day

- Resolution 53: Updating the Charter (J. Berger, M. Henderson, P. Biedenweg)
 - J. Berger discussed amendments for internal elections voting, changing the reelection policy for representatives who resigned due to absences, as well as attendance policy changes.
 - P. Biedenweg spoke about the attendance policy changes. He introduced language calling for a maximum of three absences, but with allowances for absences due to multiple reasons including religious holidays, academic conflicts, and illness. The ultimate decision would still be at the discretion of the Executive Board to decide what constituted a valid absence.
 - J. Breuer stated that earlier he held strong views in favor of transparency and allowing the student body to hold representatives accountable to attending Assembly meetings. Since joining the Assembly, however, he understood now how much more important engaging the community outside of weekly meetings was, and therefore favored the less strict absence policy.
 - G. Kaufman also believed the absence policy created reasonable expectations for members of the Assembly. He believed it would decrease attendance, but did not oppose the amendment.
 - M. Ghandour asked about the logistics regarding the Executive Board's decisions on the attendance policy.

- J. Berger believed further definitions for attendance could be added into the Standing Rules.
 - M. McBride believed the attendance policy was good, but wondered about the efficiency regarding the Executive Board deciding over every absence.
 - C. Hodges raised potential issues regarding job and graduate school interviews. He believed the Assembly should try to clarify the language as much as possible if it allowed students to receive excused absences for interviews.
 - P. Biedenweg agreed with C. Hodges sentiments and requested an amendment with stricter language.
 - M. Battaglia favored the changes to the reelection policy for representatives who resigned due to absences.
 - There was a motion to amend the resolution to include all proposed language.
 - By a vote of 19-0-0 Resolution 53 was **amended**.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By a vote of 20-0-0 Resolution 53 was **tabled**.
- Resolution 54: Updating the Bylaws (J. Berger, M. Henderson)
 - M. Henderson was in favor of including an amendment at a further date that would allow the Elections Committee to close their meetings when discussing confidential information.
 - M. McBride discussed how regarding the FARC Chair he believed only an SA member should be elected, because they could approve funding alone, and because specific cases were confidential. For SAIFC he believed an SA election should be held, then if necessary, non-Assembly members could be voted on.
 - M. Battaglia wondered why the language allowed a faculty or staff member to serve as Chair of the Elections Committee.
 - J. Berger believed that a student would be the first choice for the Chair, but in case a student who became a faculty or staff member wanted to chair the committee, she saw no reason to oppose the idea.
 - G. Kaufman believed that it was bad practice for the Assembly to open committee chair applications to the student body only to pick a representative as chair. He believed the Director of Elections should always be a student. Finally, G. Kaufman favored an attendance policy for the Director of Elections, Parliamentarian and Clerk.
 - M. Kasher was open to consider a non-Assembly member as SAIFC chair.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By unanimous consent Resolution 54 was **tabled**.
- Resolution 55: Updating the Special Rules (J. Berger, M. Henderson)
 - There was a motion to amend the resolution to include all proposed language.
 - By a vote of 17-3-0 the motion was **adopted**.
 - M. Battaglia asked how sustaining ad-hoc committees over multiple years would occur and the voting would be considered.
 - J. Berger answered that the votes would be by the Executive Committee.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By a vote of 20-0-0 Resolution 55 was **tabled**.
- There was a motion to adjourn.

J. Batista adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter F. Biedenweg
Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies