



Cornell University Student Assembly

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Minutes of the Thursday, October 13, 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]; T. Celestin [0]; N. Chovanec [0]; D. Cox [0]; V. Devatha [0]; E. Dzodzomenyo [0]; R. Herz [1]; A. Iglesias [0]; M. Indimine [0]; A. Issur [0]; N. Jaisinghani [0]; M. Kasher [1]; J. Kim [0]; L. Lipschultz [0]; H. MacDiarmid [0]; D. Liu [0.25]; T. Magloire [0]; M. McBride [0]; J. Montejo [0]; R. Musto [0]; W. Rong [0]; J. Selig [0]; M. Valadez [0]; A. Viswanathan [0]; Y. Wang [1]
- *Not Present at the Roll Call:* D. Li (Excused) [0]; H. Reichel [0.5]; E. Vargas (Excused) [0.5];

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the October 6th, 2016 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone

- Samari Gilbert '17 stated that Cornell Mortar Board would be accepting applications for fall leadership award until October 31st. This award would grant a student organization \$1,000 to fulfill a campus project. The application's details could be found on their website.

IV. Announcements and reports

- VP McBride said that the Codes and Judicial Committee was considering a recommendation from the Judicial Administrator's Office to amend the Code of Conduct to include serious offenses on transcripts. If any community members had concerns they could reach out to him.
- President Berger stated that on October 20th the President's Sustainability Council would discuss their newest report with the Assembly, on November 10th the Assembly would be hosting a forum on the housing master plan, and on December 1st the assembly would host a forum on affordability.

V. Initiatives

- Rep. Cox and Seamus Murphy '17, President of the Cornell Veterans Association, discussed the Ivy League Veterans Council and veteran care at Cornell. The Council hoped to promote a strong connection on campus and across the Ivy League. They discussed the education around campus, on how to treat veterans. The sponsors stated that given the small number of veterans in attendance at Cornell and across the Ivy League, they were beginning to educate veterans transitioning from service to college about applying to Ivy League universities, and hoped to raise the number of veterans on Cornell's campus from twenty-two to thirty. The sponsors were working to increase the proportion of veterans through more applicants, through

accommodations in financial aid, and by building a veteran's resource center. Additionally, they were hoping to include one additional question asking about military service on Career Services hiring portal.

- M. Kasher asked about the veteran gender makeup.
- S. Murphy stated that there was a single female veteran on campus in the previous year, and how a similar gender gap existed in the military. He was in favor of increasing female veteran presence on campus.

VI. Forum on Campus Safety & Undergraduate Curriculum with President Rawlings & VP Lombardi

- President Rawlings raised two main matters to the Assembly. First, he hoped the Cornell faculty would undertake a thorough review of the curriculum, similar to the college of Arts and Sciences. Second, he wanted to promote the safety around campus given the two recent stabbings on and around Cornell's main campus.
- M. McBride stated that last year surveys suggested students in the College of Arts and Sciences preferred having fewer curriculum requirements.
- President Rawlings believed that distribution requirements were a faculty matter, but was happy to hear student input.
- A community member asked about curriculum and grading standards across campus.
- J. Montejo asked about Cornell's policy regarding trigger warnings.
- President Rawlings stated that there was no formal policy in place, and that pedagogical decisions were up to faculty. He stated that Cornell firmly believes in freedom of speech. He believed that for more difficult subject areas, some type of warning should be issued, yet it was up to the faculty to teach as they saw fit.
- J. Selig asked about curriculum changes in the College of Engineering, especially given the large number of college requirements.
- R. Herz similarly asked about TAs in the College of Engineering, and policies relating to unexpected absences of teachers.
- President Rawlings believed that the Engineering College was one of the best in the nation because it allowed students to take classes in other Colleges. He hoped this would continue. Additionally, President Rawlings said that classes with teacher absences over a long duration should not be occurring, and hoped to look into the issue.
- T. Celestin asked the President what he thought about adding a diversity requirement.
- President Rawlings stated that his goal was not to direct the faculty curriculum.
- A. Iglesias asked about sheltering policy, and what role students could play in helping assure a safe campus.
- President Rawlings stated that students have a large role to play in campus safety, especially at night.
- VP Lombardi additionally stated that with a large campus, a broad shelter in place policy was important, as asking for more students to shelter in place was better than too few.
- D. Barbaria asked what questions students should be asking of Cornell.
- President Rawlings believed college should be about job preparation. Nevertheless, he favored a strong liberal arts education, and wanted to hear if students were worried about studying less practical subjects.
- R. Wang asked about the differing levels of rigor between colleges, and if there was a way to standardize grading.
- President Rawlings stated that he favored employers knowing Cornell as a difficult school. He believed that although different classes offered different levels of difficulty, this was a challenge

which every school has to work on balancing.

- Y. Bhandari asked about student's safety concerns around campus.
- President Rawlings said uniform police patrols had increased, and in the future the college would use body cameras on officers.

VII. Business of the Day

- Resolution 11: Changing and Ad-Hoc Committee with Investigating Student Assembly Membership
 - The sponsors discussed being open to student engagement. They believed a committee would be a better entity to create recommendations after a forum.
 - G. Kaufman stated that Resolution 12 should be added to Resolution 11. He also believed Resolution 11 could be changed to have six non-Assembly members, with two of those spots remaining reserved for students who have never run in an election or served on a committee.
 - R. Herz believed that Resolution 12 should be discussed in detail before the consideration of Resolution 11.
 - There was a motion to table Resolution 11.
 - By a vote of 5-15-0 the motion failed.
 - There was a motion to amend the resolution to strike lines 50-54, and to add, "Four community members. Two members who have not run in an election or applied to a committee."
 - By a vote of 18-0-3 Resolution 11 was amended.
 - There was a motion to amend resolution to insert Resolution 11 between lines 25 and 26 of Resolution 12.
 - The motion was withdrawn.
- There was a motion to adjourn.

J. Berger adjourned the meeting at 6:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies