



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, February 9th, 2017 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 Roll Call:* J. Berger [0]; N. Chovanec [0.5]; D. Cox [0]; E. Dzodzomenyo [0]; A. Iglesias [1]; M. Indimine [0]; A. Issur [2.5]; J. Kim [1]; D. Li [0]; L. Lipschutz [1.5]; D. Liu [1.5]; T. Magloire [0]; M. McBride [1]; R. Musto [2]; H. Reichel [0.5]; M. Valadez [0]; A. Viswanathan [0]; Y. Wang [2];
- *Not Present at Roll Call:* T. Celestin (Unexcused) [1.25]; V. Devatha (Unexcused) [2.5]; R. Herz (Unexcused) [2]; N. Jaisinghani (Excused) [1.75]; M. Kasher (Excused) [2.5]; C. Lee (Unexcused) [1.5]; H. MacDiarmid (Unexcused) [4]; J. Montejo (Unexcused) [0.25]; W. Rong (Unexcused) [1]; J. Selig (Unexcused) [3];

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the February 2nd, 2017 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Open Microphone

- Daniel Engleson followed up with the Assembly by stating that the Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board denied Anything Goes their room reservation for two nights, only granting them one. He requested that the Student Assembly work to reverse the decision and make sure that the Board follow consistent procedure.
- D. Barbaria asked for the name of the Student Union Board's advisor.
- Daniel Engleson stated the advisor was Joseph Scaffido.
- H. MacDiarmid stated that he believed it was the role of the Assembly to rectify the situation as best as possible.

IV. Announcements and Reports

- Rep. Iglesias encouraged anyone representing Human Ecology students to attend a student forum in Martha Van Rensselaer next Wednesday at 4:30. Additionally he stated that the Health and Wellness committee held its first meeting and would be working on increasing the number of fitness centers around campus.
- VP Li wanted to thank the members who attended the Appropriation Committee's By-Line funding educational session. She invited all members to the next session, which would be held next Thursday at 7:30pm in Klarman Auditorium.
- Rep. Reichel updated the Assembly on the closure of Synapsis Café. Weill Hall would soon be reappropriating the space for academic purposes. In response, the committee would be working on expanding East Campus dining options. On another note, H. Reichel stated that the committee would begin advertising the use of meal swipes over fall break next week. She also invited all community members to join the committee on Valentine's Day for a 4:30

dinner at Martha's Café for free food and as a way of meeting the new dining director.

- Rep. Chovanec advertised the Janet McKinley '74 Family Grant, open to Sophomores pursuing original summer projects which would leave an impact on Cornell students. More information could be found at www.commitment.cornell.edu/janet-mckinley-74-family-grant.

V. Presentation from SCL

- Tyler Alicea (TRA37), an intern for Student and Campus Life, asked what Cornell could do to provide students with better off-campus housing information. He wanted to know what kinds of information should be publicized and if students would use a peer rating service for landlords and managers.
- R. Musto stated that there was a gap of knowledge for freshman on how to proceed with the housing process over the next few months. He suggested that information sessions would be helpful around north campus, and believed that peer grading would be a great way to disseminate information.
- H. MacDiarmid discussed the benefits of a central website for housing information, especially regarding rental prices, issues with noise, the location, landlords, and building maintenance.
- T. Alicea stated Cornell had access to information regarding building codes and the dates for the latest renovation. He believed that the website could rate based on safety and landlord responsiveness, but saw pricing as more difficult to accurately reflect.
- H. MacDiarmid believed that surveys would not be an effective way of reaching students, but rather the use of a central website could get students to share information about their living situations.
- N. Chovanec was also in favor of a rate-your-landlord website. He saw a database as a step in the right direction but not the sole solution.
- R. Wang saw Cornell's role as a data collector, saving Cornell students the time wasted in calling housing managers for price information.
- H. Reichel believed that more on-campus housing would be the best solution to increase leverage over landlords.

VI. New Business

- There was a motion to move Resolution 25 to the top of the agenda.
 - By unanimous consent the motion was **approved**.
 - Resolution 25: Expanding Ideological Diversity among Faculty Members.
 - There was a motion to move Resolution 25 to Business of the Day.
 - By unanimous consent the motion was **approved**.
 - M. McBride summarized that this resolution asked the Faculty Senate to investigate the issue of diversity of thought among professors. The sponsors believed that at this time very few viewpoints are allowed inside classes, and by expanding ideological assumptions Cornell would help students to foster argumentative viewpoints.
 - There was a motion to add Aaron Mallenbaum '17, Olivia Corn '17, Diana Li '17, Paul Russell '19, and Irvin McCullough '20 as sponsors.
 - By unanimous consent the motion was **approved**.
 - J. Montejo requested that the resolutions language be held to a strict standard and that the sponsors would move forward requesting diversity of thought to alternative ideologies that do not simply fall left or right.
 - There was a motion to strike lines 14 through 17 and the words "especially that of philosophical diversity" on line 30.
 - A. Iglesias stated that he did not see political donations as a credible source for verifying the faculty's diversity of thought. He also believed that faculty could separate
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- their political views from the classroom.
- Olivia Corn stated that the conservative viewpoint was discredited in the Cornell community, and that she faced issues in classes where she was required to quiet her own viewpoints.
 - J. Montejo believed that leaving these lines in the resolution reflected the true intent of the sponsors.
 - By a vote of 2-14-3 the amendment **failed**.
 - There was a motion to amend the end of line 12 to add “especially conservative perspectives and philosophies.”
 - R. Wang believed that the intent of this resolution was political, and that therefore the wording should be straightforward.
 - The sponsors agreed that conservative views were underrepresented on campus. They proclaimed that no government professors label themselves as republican.
 - By a vote of 14-4-1 the resolution was **amended**.
 - P. Russell stated that growing up around ideological diversity helped to shape his beliefs. He also believed this resolution could hold Cornell to a strict standard of hiring politically diverse faculty without interfering with hiring faculty from diverse apolitical backgrounds.
 - Samir believed that this resolution should have gone through the Diversity Committee instead of the Academic Policy Committee.
 - The sponsors saw this resolution as a way of addressing the possibility that certain prospective students would not apply to the departments of government and history because of a lack of conservative views.
 - A community member believed this resolution simplified the idea of diversity as diversity could also be based on such things as life experiences and specialties. She added that conservative viewpoints were not new ideas that need to be expressed given the current national political climate.
 - A community member was unsure how this resolution could bring more conservative faculty to campus, as it is illegal under federal law to ask about political belief during the hiring process.
 - J. Kim saw this resolution as valuable, as it only looked into the fact that Cornell faculty are more liberal compared to the American public.
 - R. Musto believed that it was important to be challenged ideologically, especially in college. He also believed that the resolution encouraged all voices on campus, which followed the Cornell motto of “Any Person, Any Study.”
 - G. Kaufman encouraged the sponsors to discuss this issue at the University Assembly.
 - There was a motion to amend line 39 to read, “Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly specifically requests that the Faculty Senate increase the number of faculty members who identify with traditionally underrepresented racial, ethnic, gender identity, and disability status backgrounds who also identify as conservative.”
 - By a majority vote the motion **failed**.
 - There was a motion to strike from line 37 and 38 “investigate practical steps toward attaining increased faculty ideological diversity,” and replace the language with, “to accumulate data on ideological diversity to potentially identify key areas where faculty diversity may be needed to improve academic pursuits of students and the university as a whole, to later be used in a more extensive and comprehensive task force if deemed necessary to improve academic discourse.”
 - N. Jaisinghani believed this amendment could give the Assembly more data on how ideological diversity impacted students.
 - T. Celestin stated that this amendment would take resources away from Cornell administrators who searched for new faculty with more important facets of diversity.
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- A. Issur was against the amendment because it did not seem reasonable to assume a task force could find the data requested in the amendment.
 - There was a motion to vote on the amendment.
 - By a vote of 9-8-4 the resolution was amended.
 - There was a motion to recommit the resolution to the Diversity Committee.
 - By a majority vote the motion failed.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question by roll call.
 - By a vote of 10-11-1 the motion failed.
- J. Berger, No; T. Celestin, No; N. Covanec, No; D. Cox, Yes; V. Devatha, Absent; E. Dzodzomenyo, Yes; R. Herz, Absent; A. Iglesias, Abstain; M. Indimine, No; A. Issur, No; N. Jaisinghani, Yes; M. Kasher, Absent; J. Kim, Yes; C. Lee, Absent; D. Li, Yes; L. Lipschutz, Yes; D. Liu, No; H. MacDiarmid, Yes; T. Magloire, No; M. McBride, Yes; J. Montejo, No; R. Musto, Yes; H. Reichel, No; W. Rong, Absent; J. Selig, Absent; M. Valadez, No; A. Viswanathan, Yes; R. Wang, No.

J. Berger adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 6:50pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies