



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, March 2nd, 2017 Meeting

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

I. Call to Order

- J. Berger called the meeting to order at 4:47pm.
- *Present at Roll Call:* J. Berger [0]; T. Celestin [1.25]; D. Cox [0]; V. Devatha [2.5]; E. Dzodzomenyo [0]; R. Herz [2]; A. Iglesias [1]; M. Indimine [0]; A. Issur [2.5]; J. Kim [2]; D. Li [0]; L. Lipschutz [1.5]; D. Liu [1.5]; H. MacDiarmid [4]; M. McBride [1]; J. Montejo [0.25]; R. Musto [2]; E. Reppy [0]; W. Rong [1]; M. Valadez [0.5]; A. Viswanathan [0]; Y. Wang [2];
- *Not Present at Roll Call:* N. Chovanec [0.5]; N. Jaisinghani (Excused) [1.75]; C. Lee [3]; T. Magloire (Unexcused) [1]; H. Reichel [0.5]; J. Selig (Excused) [3];

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the February 23rd, 2017 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

III. Oath of Office

- Eleanor Reppy '17 took the Oath of Office to fill the position of Women's Representative.

IV. Announcements and Reports

- VP for Finance Li notified the Assembly that the Appropriations Committee requested the attendance of the Willard Straight Hall Student Union Board at their last meeting to discuss room reservation procedure. She stated that the Board failed to attend, and as a response the Appropriations Committee passed a motion declaring that the Board would lose ten percent of their next By-Line funding allocation if they did not attend the next Committee meeting.
- President Berger notified the Assembly that the University Assembly voted to remove Mitch McBride as Chair of the Cornell Judicial Committee.
- Rep. Valadez spoke about two initiatives begin worked on. These were granting fee waivers and creating a student resource center for first generation students. She asked that interested students and representatives seeking more information speak with her.

V. Initiatives

- Restructuring Committee Update - President Berger stated that after several meetings with the Restructuring Committee they considered molding the current structure more than completely rebuilding a new Student Assembly. She stated that the Committee considered created Executive Committee specific elections in the Spring, where the positions of President, Executive Vice President, External Affairs, Internal Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion, and Finance could be decided. For the fall elections, the Committee determined that more election information, through office hours with current representatives, and help with resident hall poster policy and reimbursements would be useful.
 - Rep. Celestin believed more information on the roles of Executive positions would also
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- be useful.
- Ex-Officio Kaufman saw a smaller Executive Committee as helpful. He also believed that a directly elected Executive Committee would not make members more accountable to the Assembly, as their positions would be more permanent.
- President Berger, speaking for the Restructuring Committee, believed open elections could serve as a way of keeping members accountable to the entire student body.
- Rep. Iglesias believed that the VP for Finance should be internally elected, as the role required a great deal of institutional knowledge, and Assembly members knew who knew these details more clearly than the student body at large.
- Rep. Wang favored the current system of drop-down elections, and believed if a new system was introduced which did not offer alternative positions to members running for the Executive Board, many qualified candidates may recuse themselves from running. He also believed the VP for Finance should not need one year of service on the Appropriations Committee as a qualification, and thought the VP of Internal and External Operations should be internally elected.
- Rep. Li believed the VP for Finance should be internally elected.
- Rep. Viswanathan believed Office Hours should be a standard practice for all members throughout the year, not only to help teach others about running in elections.
- Ex-Officio Park asked who the Executive Committee would represent.
- President Berger clarified Ex-Officio Park's point by stating that current Executive Committee members could represent a constituency that they poorly serve when balancing their Executive duties. Therefore, under the new proposed rules, the Executive Board members would be elected at large, and represent all undergraduates.

VI. New Business

- Resolution 30: Affirming Cornell's Stance on Supporting the Rights of Transgender Individuals
 - The sponsors introduced the resolution.
 - There was a motion to amend line 30 to strike "the students are" and replace it with "all community members of".
 - By unanimous consent the resolution was amended.
 - There was a motion to amend line 33 to read "that Cornell University *should* publicly condemn..."
 - By unanimous consent the resolution was amended.
 - By unanimous consent the resolution was moved to Business of the Day.
 - A. Iglesias was disappointed that this resolution was introduced with grammatical errors, and believed that this, along with its passage through the Executive Committee as opposed to another more appropriate committee, illustrated that the Assembly was not acting in a thorough manner.
 - There was a motion to Call the Question by roll call vote.
 - By a vote of 26-0-0, with two community votes in support, Resolution 30 was approved.
- J. Berger, Yes; T. Celestin, Yes; N. Covanec, Absent; D. Cox, Yes; V. Devatha, Yes; E. Dzodzomenyo, Yes; R. Herz, Yes; A. Iglesias, Yes; M. Indimine, Yes; A. Issur, Yes; N. Jaisinghani, Yes; J. Kim, Yes; C. Lee, Absent; D. Li, Yes; L. Lipschutz, Yes; D. Liu, Yes; H. MacDiarmid, Yes; T. Magloire, Yes; M. McBride, Yes; J. Montejo, Yes; R. Musto, Yes; H. Reichel, Absent; E. Reppy, Yes; W. Rong, Yes; J. Selig, Absent; M. Valadez, Yes; A. Viswanathan, Yes; R. Wang, Yes.
- Resolution 31: Audit of Cornell University Administration Finances

- The sponsors outlined that this resolution called for an audit of the University's administration's finances, as a way of better understanding costs and determining if areas can be cut to increase student financial aid.
 - Ex-Officio Kaufman believed that there were issues of leaking this information, of representatives miscomprehending the audit, of focusing on details instead of addressing known problems, and of requesting information from the administration, when the Assembly had oversight only over the Dean of Students.
 - Rep. McBride believed the audit would be manageable because it only focused on Cornell's administration, not the entire university.
 - Rep. Celestin requested the sponsors give justification for utilizing resources for the audit.
 - Rep. Wang clarified that data on Cornell's administrative budget already existed, and could be compiled without an extensive investigation.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By a majority vote of the Assembly Resolution 31 was **tabled**.
- There was a motion to move back into the Restructuring Committee Update.
 - By unanimous consent the motion was **approved**.
 - Rep. Berger said that they were attempting to detail the problems of the current Assembly's structure.
 - Rep. Kim believed that promotion was an important factor, and wanted the Assembly's website and member's contact information advertised more.
 - Ex-Officio Kaufman said the Assembly struggled to support its main purpose of allocating the Student Activity Fee.
 - Rep. Reppy additionally stated that members should focus on outreach to organizations which received By-Line funding to learn about potential funding opportunities.
 - Rep. Viswanathan proclaimed that representatives were not being held accountable with engagement.
 - Rep. Devatha asked how outreach events should be organized.
 - Rep. Viswanathan stated that hosting and attending events with multiple constituencies would be an effective way to teach members about larger issues.
 - Rep. Dzodzomenyo believed that increasing the number of identity representatives would give those members a better opportunity to outline and focus on specific issues.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies