



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, March 23rd, 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 [0.25]; N. Chovanec [1.5]; D. Cox [1]; V. Devatha [2.5]; E. Dzodzomenyo [0.25]; R. Herz [2.5]; A. Iglesias [1]; M. Indimine [0]; A. Issur [2.5]; N. Jaisinghani [1.75]; J. Kim [2.25]; D. Li [0]; M. McBride [1]; J. Montejo [0.25]; R. Musto [2]; H. Reichel [0.5]; W. Rong [2.25]; M. Valadez [0.5]; A. Viswanathan [0]; R. Wang [2];
- *Not Present at Roll Call:* T. Celestin (Unexcused) [3.25]; C. Lee (Excused) [1.5]; L. Lipschutz (Excused) [2.75]; D. Liu (Excused) [1.5]; T. Magloire (Unexcused) [1.75]; E. Reppy (Unexcused) [2.25]; J. Selig (Excused) [3];

II. Oath of Office

- Joseph Anderson took the Oath of Office.

III. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the March 16th meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

IV. Diversity Requirement Report

- Paul Russell, Matt Indimine, and Mayra Valadez presented on behalf of the Policy Research and Planning Committee. They were looking at policies and resolutions that had been started, but had not come to fruition. To help they created a document as a resource for new students to use to jump-start ideas. They were also looking at diversity training, as well as the possibility of creating a diversity certificate program that faculty and students could choose to complete. They wanted to incentivize the training, such as making it a mandatory thing for student group presidents and treasurers.
- Regarding a university-wide diversity requirement, the sponsors sent out a survey asking whether students had taken a course that made them think more about diversity. Some students did not believe they had taken such a class.
- A. Iglesias hoped that the sponsors would reach out to each College, and also consider that some faculty already taught diversity courses and may not require additional training.
- M. Indimine stated that the subject of diversity was being approached at the individual College level, and that they were aware that it might be redundant to require another training course for some faculty.
- D. Barbaria asked if the committee would send out reports on their initiatives.
- H. Reichel asked how diversity was being defined in the sponsors' research.
- M. Indimine stated that reports could be published, but the main focus so far was on the diversity requirement.
- M. Valadez stated that the Committee was focused on issues of race, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, political ideology, disability, and other marginalized forms of identities.

- A. Viswanathan asked if the sponsors were looking to create more courses focused on diversity.
- R. Wang believed that the requirement should not be too specific in defining diversity, as diversity means many things to different people.
- M. Indimine stated that the sponsors were not looking to create new classes.
- J. Montejo worried that some professors designated as teachers of diversity should, but would not take diversity training.
- G. Kaufman asked how the sponsors planned to approach each College.
- M. Indimine stated that individual students were working with their College Deans. He also wanted as many professors as possible to take diversity training.

V. Academic Calendar Committee

- Members of the Academic Calendar Committee spoke about new models for Cornell's academic calendar. They recently concluded a large survey asking undergraduates, graduates, faculty, staff, and other groups which frameworks they preferred out of two new fall calendars and four new spring calendars. They now had a final framework, and wanted additional feedback from the Student Assembly.
- R. Wang asked how the responses of faculty and undergraduates were weighted.
- The sponsors believed their final framework compromised by prioritizing student academics without having faculty give up too much.
- A community member asked about the sample size of the survey.
- The sponsors clarified that seven-thousand people participated, with at least two-thousand undergraduates.
- The final framework kept move-in day on Friday, because this did not require overtime cost for staff members and helped parents not miss a substantial amount of work. It also pushed into the winter break, but students would rarely have exams on December 21st.
- V. Devatha asked about the exam schedule.
- The sponsors stated that they wanted students to have the same number of days to study for finals; Slope Day would be on a Saturday, they would extend Senior Days to be a week longer, and continue to hold commencement on Memorial Day. Summer would be extended to twelve weeks, making students eligible for twelve-week internships.
- D. Li asked the sponsors to be cognizant about Slope Day because weekend concerts were often more expensive.
- The sponsors stated that their priority was academics, and that these changes would not go into effect for a year. They recommended that conversations continue about how to implement these changes once they were finalized.
- M. Valadez stated that with a longer Senior Days students with food insecurity would have a difficult time eating.
- The sponsors stated they would have more activities for Senior Day and more food options open, possibly including dining halls.

VI. Announcements and Reports

- J. Berger announced that the restructuring committee met Tuesday. They wanted to get feedback from the student body regarding whether the Assembly's Executive Board should be internally or externally elected.
- D. Li stated that the Appropriations Committee did not hold its regular meeting this week, but instead the SAFC appealed to the Committee's Appeal Board. Concern was raised over

- if the SAFC Commissioners had violated Section 2.1.1, which covered funding eligibility. The Appeal Board did not find that the SAFC Commissioners had erred in their actions.
- Ex-Officio Kaufman attended the appeals process. He recommended that the Student Assembly review and update their funding guidelines.
 - A. Iglesias declared that Gannett Health Services would now officially be Cornell Health.
 - H. Reichel said that she, along with E. Dzodzomenyo and Y. Bhandari, met with the Board of Trustees to discuss removing material costs for design majors. Studio courses required students to pay for their own materials and an investigation suggested that if a student paid a larger amount for their materials they received better grades.
 - M. Valadez stated that the Summer Experience Grant, to fund internships for students who need financial help, was now open until April 19th.
 - A. Viswanathan updated the Assembly about the Infrastructure Fund Commission. They were working to repurpose rooms in MVR and to build between Olin and Uris libraries.
 - Election Committee Chair Austin McLaughlin said that the spring special election deadline was March 24th. Voting would be from April 11th to April 15th.

VII. Business of the Day

- Resolution 32: Improving Access to Concentrations and Minors in the College of Business.
 - V. Devatha said that currently students in the College of Business could not concentrate or minor across schools. This resolution sought to address this problem.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**.
 - By a vote of 21-0-1 Resolution 32 was **adopted**.
- Resolution 35: Addressing the Collegiate Readership Program Surplus.
 - The sponsors stated that this resolution addressed the \$54,000 surplus from the Readership Program. The charter declared that extra money should go to the Special Projects Fund.
 - There was a motion to **Call the Question**.
 - By a vote of 21-0-0 Resolution 35 was **adopted**.
- Resolution 33: Prescribing Conflict-Free University Contracts
 - The sponsors aimed to eliminate Cornell's investments in companies using conflict minerals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This would be a protective measure in case the American government decided to suspend its Conflict Mineral Rule.
 - A. Iglesias believed that the resolution should be amended from the academic to the fiscal year.
 - There was a motion to strike from line 56 "AY 2017-2018;" to be replaced with "FY 2018-2019;"
 - By a vote of 19-0-2 the resolution was **amended**.
 - R. Wang asked how the sponsors planned to review Cornell's investments.
 - The review would only request a list of vendors that have products using these minerals from Cornell Information Technologies.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By unanimous consent Resolution 33 was **tabled**.
- Resolution 8: Requesting the Restoration of the Economics Department's CPT Policy
 - A. Issur stated that this resolution recommended that the Economics Department restore independent studies, granting students Curricular Practice Training. The CPT was terminated in the spring of 2016. In the fall of 2016 the department gave three reasons for this decision: that it was unfair to domestic students, they were unsure if it was legal, and that it was not of educational value. At that time, the Assembly spoke to the Chair of the

- Economics Department who stated that the CPT would be reinstated.
- D. Li wanted the resolution passed immediately, as the Department Chair told the Assembly that he would implement these changes, and the Assembly needed to show its disapproval in his inaction.
 - A. Issur was meeting with the Vice Provost of International Affairs on Tuesday, and wanted to wait to pass the resolution.
 - Ex-Officio Kaufman believed it was important to withhold a formal disapproval until an administrator gave an explanation.
 - There was a motion to table the resolution.
 - By a vote of 14-2-2 Resolution 8 was **tabled**.

J. Berger adjourned the meeting at 6:45pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter F. Biedenweg

Assembly Clerk, Office of the Assemblies