



## Cornell University Student Assembly

### Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting  
4:45pm via Zoom

#### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. C. Huang called the meeting to order at 4:48 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
  - i. *Members Present:* L. Abd Elmagid, D. Anadkat, M. Baker J. Bansah, K. Bentley, U. Chukwukere, L. Contreras, A. Gleiberman, S. Kapoor, A. Miramontes Serrano, E. Moy, E. Perez, T. Reuning, K. Santacruz, M. Shardow, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, N. Watson, S. Woldai, V. Xu, Y. Yuan, R. Zohar, L. Zumpano, S. Zverev, C. Huang
  - ii. *Members Absent:* K. Butler, C. Castillo, A. Lampert, J. Noriega

#### II. Announcements

- a. C. Huang announced that on 10/30, the Cornell Asian Pacific Student Union is hosting Justin H. Min, a Cornell alum and actor on Netflix's The Umbrella Academy, and encouraged members to attend.
- b. Y. Yuan asked if there would be a post-election debrief after the national elections on 11/3 hosted by the SA. Y. Yuan stated that international students are concerned about potential changes in immigration policies with different presidencies.
  - i. C. Huang stated that there is not any planned debriefs from the SA; however, the Dean of Students Office has been planning a couple of post-election debriefs and encouraged Y. Yuan to share any ideas about what the SA could do.
- c. L. Abd Elmagid reminded members who may have to miss meetings, are late, or have to leave early from meetings to email her.
- d. R. Zohar stated that people have made her aware that Zoom recordings of the SA Meetings on the Office of Assemblies website have not been posted yet.
  - i. W. Treat stated that all the audio recordings of the meetings for this semester have been uploaded to website.
- e. A. Miramontes Serrano announced that she will be meeting with the Head of the Dining department and asked members to send her any comments of complaints they would like her to bring up.

#### III. Open Microphone

- a. There were no speakers for open microphone.

#### IV. Presentation

- a. C. Benedict asked for the agenda to be amended to put his presentation before the two resolutions associated with it.
  - i. Motion to amend the agenda – amended 25-0-1

## V. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 22, 2020
  - i. Motion to approve the October 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes – approved 22-0-4

## VI. New Business

- a. Statement for Antonio Tsialas
  - i. C. Huang stated that 10/24/2020 was the one-year anniversary of the death Antonio Tsialas, who was a freshman at Cornell University. It's been determined that his death was related to unsanctioned fraternity events, and since then there have been a range of reforms to Greek life system. This statement would express this and that the SA support his family. During this time, the family is still in the grieving process and they're also in the middle of a lawsuit against Cornell University. She expressed the importance of the SA showing support for the family and for transparency surrounding his case.
  - ii. L. Zumpano asked if the statement included any references to Greek life.
    1. C. Huang encouraged members to read the statement and that there is a brief part that mentioned his death was determined to be in relation with unsanctioned fraternity events.
  - iii. C. Huang also stated that a fundraiser has been started by the club soccer team Antonio Tsialas was a part of. She encouraged members to look for information on social media and that she will send more information about how to support the fundraiser after the meeting.
  - iv. Motion to vote – approved 24-0-2
- b. SA R9: Demanding Cornell Absolve All Relations with the Ithaca Police Department
  - i. Abstract: The purpose of this resolution is to call for Cornell University to absolve all ties with the Ithaca Police Department.
  - ii. U. Chukwukere explained this resolution stemmed from events that occurred on October 11 where a peaceful protest by Cornell Abolitionist Revolutionary Society (CARS) held downtown and outside the Ithaca Police Department became violent as police officers escalated the situation by violently arresting protestors and purposefully misgendering protesters. Police brutality have been at an all-time high in the United States and policing is rooted in racism and slavery. U. Chukwukere stated that this resolution is basically calling for Cornell to sever any ties with the police department because policing is inherently oppressive to black and indigenous people of color, people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, people who are immigrants, and people who are within marginalized communities.
  - iii. T. Reuning clarified that the events of October originally began further downtown and a Blue Lives Matter Protester went up to a CARS protestor and threatened them with a knife. It was caught on video of the Blue Lives Matter protestor telling people to go die and threatening them. The police became involved and arrested the man who was threatened. Because of this unfair arrest, CARS protestors then went to the Ithaca Police Department. The police then arrested one of the leaders, who is an openly trans woman and activist in the community. The chief of police repeatedly misgendered, despite knowing exactly who this protestor is, which is an act of violence.

Those arrested were also never read their Miranda rights. Police also threw pepper spray at protestors, some of those whom were minors in the local community.

- iv. S. Woldai stated that she was present at the 10/11 protest but had left right before the police began pepper spraying. She expressed the genuine fear she had this protest and felt extremely scared of the police. S. Woldai explained that she and other protestors were sitting peaceful outside the Ithaca Police Department asking for the release of the students. The police were standing on top of the building mocking protestors. S. Woldai expressed her disgust at Cornell for not having acknowledged the protest and expressed her support for this resolution.
- v. Y. Yuan asked what the current relationship between Cornell and the Ithaca Police Department is.
  1. U. Chukwukere explained that Cornell interacts with the IPD in two different ways. One is that CUPD is deputized by the IPD. Another is that if there is any backup needed, Cornell will automatically call IPD and vice versa.
- vi. D. Anadkat stated he had read a few articles on this protest, and some articles depict the event differently than what members are saying. One article stated that protestors were on the premise and banging on doors. D. Anadkat asked if there was any hard evidence to bring in front of the assembly before it is debated and what to do in situations when backup is needed from IPD.
  1. U. Chukwukere answered that S. Woldai's account of the protest is hard evidence and found D. Anadkat's dismissal of her account disrespectful. The Cornell Sun also does not report things correctly all of the time. There are several members of both SA and CARS that were at the protest and have video evidence of the event. U. Chukwukere also explained there are situations where bringing in an armed police officer only escalates issues and there will be more presentations and resolutions on this matter in coming weeks.
  2. S. Woldai stated she believed it was not necessary for her to go into extreme details about what happened, as it was disgusting the treatment of the protestors by the IPD. The banging was the rhythm of the chants and protestors were peaceful. S. Woldai stated she believed her account would have been evidence enough, but video recordings have been dropped in the chat.
- vii. C. Huang stated that anything put in the Zoom chat is not part of the public record, and during in-person meeting, these side conversations would not occur.
- viii. M. Adeghe stated she found D. Anadkat's questions incredibly disrespectful, as it is discrediting people's living experiences. M. Adeghe stated the Cornell Sun is a newspaper and reports on what they believe is true, not the truth.
- ix. T. Reuning added that protestors should not have to be peaceful on order to not be subject of violence by the police. Banging on walls does not excuse militarized police and enacting violence against citizens they are supposed to protect or the purposeful misgendering of a trans woman by the Chief of Police. He stated that the police were violating people's rights and the job of

the police is be able to deescalate situations and this event shows they are incapable of that.

- x. D. Anadkat stated this is a very sensitive matter and was not trying to discredit any member's accounts or that his research overrides their experiences. D. Anadkat explained prior to the meeting his understanding of the event was much different and wanted to base his judgements on multiple perspectives.
- xi. C. Tempelman asked if it would be possible to change the word "absolve" to "dissolve" in the resolution in line 69.
  1. Motion to amend Resolution #9 – amended 20-2-4
- xii. C. Huang had a Point of Order referring to D. Anadkat's comment about people being aggressive to his initial questions. C. Huang stated that members should not be using coded kind of language and that members should avoid ad hominem attacks.
- xiii. L. Smith wanted to speak as Director of the Local Relations for the Office of Student Government Relations. He stated that this is not the first incident of officers not living up to the code and what they pledge to do. He asked if was possible to place a little more on the administration and to task the Office of Student Government Relations to work with the Office of Community Relations to look into law enforcement relationships that the university has.
  1. T. Reuning stated that this is would be a separate resolution and has been spoken about among RAs. It is a good time to consider no longer relying on CUPD for incidents like drinking on campus or mental health crises.
- xiv. E. Moy agreed with the ideas behind the resolution that structural institutional violence is prevalent in the police department and needs to be addressed by the university. However, he expressed concern about the response from the university administration and efficacy of the resolution when abolishing the ties with the Ithaca Police Department without having a solution in place.
  1. T. Reuning stated dissolving ties with IPD does not abolish the CUPD. He explained that IPD is not supporting the overall health of the Cornell community and it evident IPD is racist and transphobic.
- xv. S. Zverev expressed support for cutting ties with IPD but asked if the SA will look into resolutions into the funding and instating professionals that are able to back up the CUPD.
  1. E. Perez explained that it is not necessarily the job of the SA to explain to the police department how to reform itself.
  2. T. Reuning stated there is work being done on campus, and if interested, to reach out to these groups on how to represent their interests. He stated that there is not enough room in this resolution and there need to be significant research rather than just tacking this on to the resolution.
  3. C. Huang believed that the heart of S. Zverev's question is addressed in line 72. The intent of that line is that Cornell will apply pressure on the Tompkins County community to work on reforms. The point of

this resolution is the SA withdrawing their support of IPD, and hopefully instigate greater change.

- xvi. Y. Yuan expressed concern that the resolution would not help dissolve the relationship between Cornell and IPD. Police are typically dispatched first to secure the scene before EMTs or paramedics are present. He believed the protocols for these situations would reduce CUPD present.
  - 1. T. Reuning stated that the notion that there is need for police for mental health situations is incorrect, as it usually escalates the situations and respectfully disagreed with Y. Yuan.
- xvii. S. Zverev asked if there will be a gap in Cornell's ability to respond to events on campus without solutions in place or if there are any filler groups ready if this resolution is passed.
  - 1. C. Huang stated that CUPD would still be around to address campus issues.
  - 2. M. Adeghe stated it is not the SA or abolitionists to always have the solution and Cornell should be responsible for coming up with something better.
- xviii. Y. Yuan asked about losing backup from the IPD in situations like mass casualty incidents and stated the SA should consider situations where an authority presence is needed on campus.
  - 1. U. Chukwukere stated that this is a hypothetical.
  - 2. T. Reuning explained that in reality if in these situations if the IPD would be the most helpful resource and IPD has been committing acts of violence against Cornell students like at the 10/11 protest and Cornell has done nothing about it.
  - 3. C. Huang stated that the Cornell EMS already has a mass casualty incident unit in place, and they have been practicing large scale emergency response for years.
- xix. C. Tempelman expressed interesting in learning how cutting ties with IPD would place more pressure for police reform efforts.
  - 1. C. Huang cited the example that occurred this summer at the University of Minnesota after George Floyd was murdered at the hands of the police department. There, the student body president called for the university to sever the ties with local police department and the university actually did. This brought great national attention to that specific police department and changes to the Minneapolis Police Department. She stated that Cornell has influence in the

community and should be using its power and leverage to push for change.

- xx. U. Chukwukere asked to amend the resolution to add S. Woldai's name, as she is a co-sponsor and was accidentally left off.
  - 1. Motion to amend Resolution #9 – amended 25-0-1.
- xxi. U. Chukwukere asked to amend the resolution to add an accent to the 'a' in T. Reuning's name.
  - 1. Motion to amend Resolution #9 – amended 25-0-1.
- xxii. Motion to roll-call vote – approved 19-0-7.
- xxiii. Motion to approve Resolution #9 – approved 17-8-1
  - 1. L. Abd Elmagid – yes.
  - 2. D. Anadkat – no.
  - 3. M. Baker – no.
  - 4. J. Bansah – yes.
  - 5. K. Bentley – yes.
  - 6. C. Castillo – no.
  - 7. U. Chukwukere – yes.
  - 8. L. Contreras – yes.
  - 9. A. Gleiberman – no.
  - 10. S. Kapoor – yes.
  - 11. A. Miramontes Serrano – yes.
  - 12. E. Moy – no.
  - 13. E. Perez – yes.
  - 14. T. Reuning – yes.
  - 15. K. Santacruz – yes.
  - 16. M. Shardow – yes.
  - 17. L. Smith – yes.
  - 18. C. Tempelman – no.
  - 19. V. Valencia – yes.
  - 20. S. Woldai – yes.
  - 21. Y. Yuan – no.
  - 22. R. Zohar – yes.
  - 23. L. Zumpano – no.
  - 24. S. Zverev – yes.
  - 25. C. Huang – yes.
- c. C. Huang stated that the chat should not be used for additional discussion as it is not part of the public record.
- d. M. Shardow pointed out that she believes it is important to maintain civility in both the chat and in conversation in order to foster a discussion that people can share their thoughts.
- e. M. Adeghe stated she does not believe in respectability politics and is a supporter of cancel culture. She also asked it was possible to make the chat part of the public record as it is good place for people's comments to be shared.
  - i. C. Huang stated the Zoom chats are not public record and put into the minutes, in the future there may be some kind of action to access that. As of right now, it is not part of the public record.

- ii. G. Giambattista answered that these comments do not occur when the discussion is in person. The discussion is moderated by the chair or the President of the Assembly.

## VII. Presentation

- a. Cornell: A History of Indigenous Dispossession and Genocide by Former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion Colin Benedict '21
  - i. The main objectives of this presentation is to give a brief historical overview of the Gayogohó:nq' (Cayuga) Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, introduce the historical context by which the Cayuga Nation was displaced, provide an overview of how the Cornell endowment is tied to the displacement of Indigenous peoples in 15 states, and the NAISAC demands.
  - ii. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, also referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy in history books but this term is slur given by French colonizers, means people of the longhouse and makes up the six indigenous nations that historically occupied and still to this day occupy what it currently known as New York State. Their constitution influenced many in existence today, including the United States and the Articles of Confederation. The Cayuga Clan historically occupied and to this day occupy the land that is the Ithaca area, as well as throughout the Finger Lakes region. Clans are determined by the citizen's mother and are matrilineal societies, which also influenced the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Clan mothers dictate who serves as chiefs from each nation, this is still in existence today. The Sullivan-Clinton Campaigns during the Revolutionary Period after destructive raids completed by American loyalists, Seneca and Onondaga crippled the American Continental Army. In response to these raids, Washington ordered 4,469 men under General Sullivan and General Clinton to destroy the ability of the Six Nations to wage war on the Americans, despite the Confederacy having a neutral status. Infrastructure that had been in place for years was destroyed and fields were burned, leading to lots of loss of life. In the post-Revolutionary War period, the lands across New York states were parceled off and given to war veterans, as the U.S didn't have any financial means to compensate them for their service. The Treaty of Canandaigua was signed in November 1794 which was a treaty between the Sachems of the Confederacy Nation and the United States that affirmed the Cayuga Nation's right to 64,000 acres of sovereign land. However, this land was not return to the Cayuga. Cornell University was selected as the land grant institution for New York for The Morrill Land Grand Act of 1862 and received almost a million acres of land to go towards funding. Because New York State didn't have any available lands within its border, because it all had been parceled off to Revolutionary War veterans, Cornell was issued script which was basically an IOU or receipt for almost a million acres of land. This means that the Cayuga nation were not the only victims of the growth of Cornell University. By 1914, the sale of Morill Land Grants Act land brought in approximately \$5.7 million, which in 2020 is approximately \$148 million. Cornell University profited the most of any other institution of higher education in the United States. Resolution #7

explains the demands created by NAISAC. The first demand is to transition the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program into a department within the next four years. More demands include increased funding to the AIISP for the recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty, increased funding for AIISP for the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students, the hiring of an Indigenous therapist by Cornell Health, the University will include a land acknowledgement of the Gayogohó:nq' (Cayuga) people before all Ithaca based University affiliated events, the University will put out a statement acknowledging the land and resources received from the Morrill Land Grant Act, the University will return all the lands in the Ithaca area not immediately used for educational purposes, the University will mandate that all students take an introductory Indigenous Studies course during the first year, the University will rename Morrill Hall, and the Ad-Hoc Committee on Native American Affairs shall be reinstated to oversee the approval of these demands. These demands have been sponsored by several student organizations on campus and the petition that has been circulating the past two weeks have gathered over 850 signatures.

#### **VIII. New Business (continued)**

- a. SA R7: Support for Native American and Indigenous Student at Cornell's Demands
  - i. Abstract: This resolution calls for the Student Assembly to support the demands of Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISAC).
  - ii. A. Gleiberman expressed concern over line 123 focused on demand 8 that mandates an introductory Indigenous studies class for first year students. She stated her freshmen year was extremely busy and was unsure if another class would have fit into her schedule.
    1. C. Benedict explained that this class is extremely important for education and to address the levels of ignorance that are present on campus. The NAISAC is hoping to institute some sort of education



program that might not be a class or might not have to occur during first semester or first year.

2. T. Reuning stated that it would be the university's job to implement the demands and it would be their responsibility to shift the requirements to make the course a priority.
- iii. Motion to roll-call vote – approved 12-4-2
- iv. Motion to approve Resolution #7 – approved 18-0-1
  1. J. Bansah – yes.
  2. A. Miramontes Serrano – yes.
  3. C. Tempelman – yes.
  4. K. Bentley – yes.
  5. K. Santacruz - yes
  6. L. Abd Elmagid – yes.
  7. L. Smith – yes.
  8. L. Contreras – yes
  9. E. Perez – yes.
  10. M. Baker – yes.
  11. R. Zohar – yes.
  12. S. Woldai – yes.
  13. T. Reuning -yes.
  14. U. Chukwukere – yes.
  15. V. Valencia – yes.
  16. Y. Yuan – yes.
  17. A. Gleiberman – yes.
  18. N. Watson – yes.
- b. SA R8: Cayuga Land Acknowledgement
  - i. Abstract: This resolution calls for the Student Assembly to amend the Standing Rules to include a land acknowledgment of the Cayuga Nation, on whose territory the University occupies. This land acknowledgement will be issued before all SA-affiliated events.
  - ii. Motion to roll-call vote - approved
  - iii. Motion to approve Resolution #8 – approved 19-0-1
    1. A. Miramontes Serrano – yes.
    2. C. Tempelman – yes
    3. K. Bentley – yes.
    4. K. Santacruz -yes.
    5. L. Abd Elmagid – yes.
    6. S. Zverev – yes.
    7. L. Smith – yes.
    8. L. Contreras – yes.
    9. E. Perez – yes.
    10. M. Baker – yes.
    11. R. Zohar -yes.
    12. S. Woldai – yes.
    13. T. Reuning – yes.
    14. U. Chukwukere – yes.
    15. V. Valencia – yes.
    16. Y. Yuan – yes.

17. A. Gleiberman – yes.
18. V. Xu – yes.
19. N. Watson – yes.

**IX. Adjournment**

- a. C. Huang adjourned the meeting at 6:51pm (EST).

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ciara Shanaban*

Clerk of the Student Assembly