



Cornell University
University Assembly

U.A. Resolution #9

**Resolution to re-name “Goldwin Smith Hall” in order to foster
an increasingly inclusive campus environment**

[12/8/2020]

1 **Sponsored by: Jacob J. Feit, Chair, Campus Infrastructure Committee, Undergraduate**
2 **Student Representative; Bennett Sherr, Chair of Campus Welfare Committee,**
3 **Undergraduate Student Representative**
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5 **Whereas,** Ezra Cornell sought to found “an institution where any person can find instruction in
6 any study.”
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8 **Whereas,** Cornell University strives to embody “its founding commitment to diversity and
9 inclusion.”
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11 **Whereas,** Cornell University President, Martha E. Pollack, expressed her commitment to
12 fostering a community of increased inclusion following repeated examples of national
13 and local injustice rooted in a lacking awareness of the historical wrongs still active and
14 destructive in modern societal structures and institutions.
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16 **Whereas,** Goldwin Smith, a former Cornell University professor of English and Constitutional
17 History is the namesake of Goldwin Smith Hall, the formally recognized home of Cornell
18 University’s College of Arts and Sciences.
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20 **Whereas,** Goldwin Smith’s ideology directly contradicts both the founding and current
21 University vision, evidenced in his proclamation: “a University which, in advance of
22 public opinion, offers itself as the corpus vile for public experiments will certainly forfeit
23 public confidence.”
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25 **Whereas,** Goldwin Smith possessed a deeply-rooted faith in white-supremacist imperialism,
26 evidenced by his belief that British imperialism in India was the “nobelist [act] the world
27 had ever seen” in “attempt[ing] to make conquest the servant of civilization.”
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29 **Whereas,** Goldwin Smith was then-recognized as “the most vicious anti-Semite in the English-
30 speaking world,” personified by his beliefs that Jewish people were “parasites” whose
31 “preoccupation with money making” made the Jewish people the “enemies of society.”
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33 **Whereas,** Goldwin Smith “declared himself an uncompromising opponent of female suffrage,”
34 justified on the “American women, he had observed [sic]” who had “violated every
35 tradition and law of nature [by] straying beyond the proper feminine sphere to enter male
36 professions, adopt[ing] male clothing... and had even taken up bike riding.”

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Whereas, Goldwin Smith reportedly confided in Cornell University co-founder and Founding President, A.D. White, that Cornell University’s decision to admit women to the University’s prominence and reputation to “sink at once from the rank of a University to that of an Oberlin or a High School,” diminishing all hopes of Cornell’s “future greatness” for [in his view] the institution would be lost.”

Whereas, Goldwin Smith abandoned his position of professor at Cornell University due, in large part, to the University’s decision to admit female students.

Whereas, the resources of Cornell University, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Goldwin Smith Hall must be structured to facilitate the intellectual, professional, and emotional growth of all students, faculty, and employees, regardless of gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation in order to live up to the ideals of Cornell University’s founding.

Whereas, a university that values diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect should not honor individuals who promote(d) an ideology of exclusion, racial/religious-supremacy, and sexism.

Whereas, the intellectual and personal growth of students, faculty, employees, and community members is unattainable and stifled in an environment that honors bigotry, sexism, and anti-semitism.

Be it therefore resolved, Cornell University must disavow bigotry, sexism, and all forms of intolerance in order to live up to goals of inclusivity in order to foster an effective learning community.

Be it further resolved, in order to facilitate such a community, Cornell University must remove the name “Goldwin Smith” from the currently named “Goldwin Smith Hall,” located at 232 East Ave, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Be it finally resolved, the formally recognized “home” of the Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences must be named for an influential scholar of the humanities who demonstrated a great love for, and dedication to, the Cornell community and who advocated for causes of identity-based justice and equity.

No signature block is present until the resolution has been disposed of by the Assembly (Passed, Failed, Withdrawn, etc.) Then a block with the certifying member (customarily Chair/Vice-Chair) verifying the authenticity and vote tally of the resolution.