

Cornell University University Assembly

Cornell University Assembly

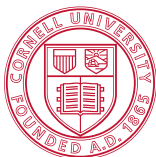
Agenda of the April 6, 2021 Meeting

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

- I. Call to order - 4:30pm
- II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda – 4:32pm to 4:35pm
- III. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogoḥó:no (Cayuga Nation)
- IV. New Business
 - a. Approval of the Minutes ([3/16](#))
 - b. [Resolution 16: Calling on Cornell to End All Ties With Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)
 - c. [Resolution 18: Calling On Cornell to Establish Itself As A Sanctuary Campus](#)
 - d. [Resolution 17: Encouraging the Board of Trustees to Revoke Governor Andrew Cuomo's Ex-Officio Membership](#)
 - e. [Resolution 19: Advocating for a Tree-per-Graduate Program at Cornell University](#)
- V. Committee Updates
 - a. Executive Committee
 - b. Campus Infrastructure Committee
 - c. Campus Welfare Committee
 - d. Codes and Judicial Committee
- VI. Constituent Group Updates
 - a. Student Assembly
 - b. Graduate & Professional Student Assembly
 - c. Employee Assembly
 - d. Faculty Senate
- VII. Open Floor Discussion
- VIII. Adjournment at 6pm

If you are in need of special accommodations, contact Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or Student Disability Services at (607) 254-4545 prior to the meeting.



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Minutes of the March 16th, 2021 Meeting
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

- I. Call to Order
 - a. L. Kenney called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.
 - a. *Members Present:* V. Aymer, U. Chukwukere, H. Depew, N. Danev, D. Dunham, J. Feit, B. Fortenberry, T. Fox, A. Hong, R. Howarth, L. Kenney, C. Levine, J. Pea, B. Sherr, L. Smith, P. Thompson, J. Withers.
 - b. *Members Absent:* C. Huang, C. Van Loan
 - c. *Also Present:* M. Hoy, Gina Giambattista.
- II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda – 4:32pm to 4:35pm.
- III. J. Feit moved to add Res.15 “Amending the University Assembly Bylaws’ Title of the Standing ‘Campus Infrastructure Committee’ (CIC)”
 - i. B. Sherr seconded the motion.
 - ii. L. Kenney noted the resolution “Calling for the Repurposing of 120 Mary Ann Wood Drive, Ithaca, New York for use as a Veterans’ Support Center” would be changed to from Resolution 15 to 16.
 - iii. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
- IV. Business of the Day
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes (Mar. 2, 2021)
 - i. R. Howarth motioned to table the minutes.
 1. B. Sherr seconded the motion.
 2. The minutes were **tabled**, and the motion passed with unanimous consent.
 - b. Reciting the Land Acknowledgement
 - i. L. Kenney recited the Land Acknowledgement.
- V. New Business
 - a. Resolution 14: Calling on the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (TIAA) to divest funds from all fossil fuel holdings and agribusiness practices associated with deforestation and human rights abuses
 - i. C. Levine reported that TIAA is one of two retirement funds that faculty and staff at Cornell are allowed to participate in. It is one of the biggest investors of fossil fuels, including coal. They are the direct owner of two fracked gas plants. TIAA is a non-profit that protects retirement accounts, and it is against their basic principles as teachers and educators to invest money into fossil fuels. When talking to TIAA about this matter, they stated



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that there was a lack of clients coming forward with this concern. C. Levine stated that the first step is to inform other people and start to put pressure on TIAA as a campus. The SUNY system has already put out statements on this matter.

- ii. R. Howarth thanked C. Levine and stated his support.
- iii. T. Fox said that they agreed with the goals but asked why they left Fidelity out of this Resolution.
- iv. C. Levine said that Fidelity is the next target, but TIAA doesn't have an option to have a fossil-free fund.
- v. L. Kenney stated their support. They stated that this passed in the CIC before coming to the UA.
- vi. R. Howarth moved to vote on this resolution.
 - 1. B. Sherr seconded this motion.
 - 2. The resolution **passed** with 14-0-1.
- b. Resolution 15: Amending the University Assembly Bylaws to allow for the Continuation of Ad Hoc Committees and Subcommittees
 - i. L. Kenney stated that this also passed in the CIC.
 - ii. J. Feit asked for the resolution to be moved to a later time.
 - iii. B. Sherr asked where to move the resolution.
 - iv. R. Howarth stated that this is a long-standing and understood issue. They offered to talk about this resolution.
 - v. L. Kenney agreed, however stated that they wanted to respect J. Feit's position as the only sponsor.
 - vi. J. Feit agreed that they should move forward without him.
 - vii. R. Howarth stated that changing the name it acknowledges the breadth of the committee outside of infrastructure. This was recommended last year but was waylaid during COVID-19 changes.
 - viii. N. Danev stated that they could not open the link
 - ix. L. Kenney said this resolution can only be voted on in the next meeting as it is a bylaw change.
 - x. D. Dunham motioned to table the resolution until the next meeting.
 - 1. J. Pea seconded the motion.
 - 2. The resolution was **tabled** with unanimous consent.
 - xi. U. Chukwukere took over the chair-ship.
- c. Resolution 16: Calling for the Repurposing of 120 Mary Ann Wood Drive, Ithaca, New York for use as a Veterans' Support Center
 - i. L. Kenney presented the resolution. This resolution ensures veterans are adequately supported and addresses Cornell's lack of counselors with



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specialized knowledge in military service-related experiences. This resolution also serves to support the transition from military to civilian life. L. Kenney and M. Hoy believe that tabling is the correct move so further communication with Cornell University Veteran's Association (CUVA), Cornell Law Veteran's Association (CLVA), Johnson's Association of Veterans, and other veterans or veteran groups can be consulted. L. Kenney plans to add this resolution to her Board of Trustees report and further garner UA input.

- ii. L. Kenney acknowledged a private message about a house already dedicated to veterans. She stated that this building physically will house veterans but doesn't offer any services otherwise.
- iii. M. Hoy stated CUVA has been working with the administration to secure a house on West Campus. It is a physical space to build a sense of community among veterans and also serves to help reach out into the community.
- iv. L. Kenney stated that the big difference is one house is currently slated as a home for veterans and the proposal seeks to establish a foundational space for veterans to congregate on campus and receive additional services.
- v. H. Depew stated that there is a Veteran's Employee Assembly Representative who is on the Veteran's Colleague Network Group that they might want to reach out to if not already.
- vi. T. Fox asked what the staffing looks like in this space.
- vii. L. Kenney stated that it would be an open space for individuals to come in to speak and perhaps for veteran-focused CAPS counselors to visit.
- viii. N. Danev stated their support of this resolution. They also proposed to create similar spaces that are dedicated to talking about one topic, such as veteran's affairs, for other groups.
- ix. B. Sherr offered to bring forward another resolution from the CWC addressing the need for veteran specialist in the CAPS department.
- x. G. Giambattista, as a community member, inquired if they are looking into asking for a resource allocation in the new residence space.
- xi. M. Hoy recognized R. Platt's comment. They state Barton Hall is for ROTC and undergraduates are not able to utilize that space currently.
- xii. L. Kenney moved to table the resolution to the next meeting with the understanding that sponsors will be conducting more research.
 1. J. Withers seconded the motion.
 2. The motion passed and the resolution was **tabled** with 15-0-1.
- xiii. L. Kenney thanked those involved.
- xiv. L. Kenney reclaimed chairship.

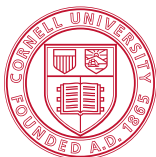
VI. Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee
 - i. The Executive Committee had no updates.
- b. Campus Infrastructure Committee



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- i. J. Feit stated that they had their first meeting. The committee discussed Resolutions 14 and 15, introduced today.
 - c. Campus Welfare Committee
 - i. B. Sherr stated that they formally established the ad-hoc naming committee. The staff of the committee is first staffed with interested members in the CWC and then they will then bring in community members from groups across campus.
 - ii. L. Kenney asked about the reach-out process.
 - iii. B. Sherr stated that it will be up to the committee members. They stated that they serve as the tiebreaker but it will be left to the committee members.
 - iv. L. Kenney thanked B. Sherr for offering to create a resolution with regards to a veteran-specific CAPS counselor.
 - d. Codes and Judicial Committee
 - i. B. Fortenberry stated that they did not have quorum but have shifted the meeting timeframe accordingly. They are working to ensure there is no lapse in coverage in the UHRB. They are also working on the transition between the current and new code through the potential construction of two cohorts—one for the old code and one focused on the new.
 - ii. L. Kenney commended B. Fortenberry for their forward-thinking and facilitation of the transition between codes.
 - iii. B. Fortenberry thanked L. Kenney, committee members, and G. Giambattista.
 - e. L. Kenney stated that there are several resignations in committees that need to be filled.
 - f. P. Thompson said that they would reach out to groups individually, but there is a UA spot in the CJC.
 - g. L. Kenney reiterated the importance of staffing committees.
- VII. Constituent Group Updates
 - a. Student Assembly
 - i. L. Smith said that they appropriated some funds into the Student Access Fund. They looked at election rules and are looking to get voter turn-up higher.
 - ii. J. Feit asked if the election schedule is already published and how they will disseminate the election deadlines.
 - iii. G. Giambattista said that elections will be online, but there should be many emails to disseminate the information. They welcome any suggestions.
 - iv. L. Smith acknowledged the impact that Cornell Votes will have on elections.
 - b. Graduate & Professional Student Assembly
 - i. D. Dunham stated that the GPSA donated to the Access Fund per the internal budget of last semester and is assessing other needed areas of funding. There were also a number of students expressing that TA's are feeling overwhelmed due to the reduction of TA-ships available and lack of external funding. The Student Advocacy Committee introduced a resolution calling on the University to release data on the current state of TA-ships to



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inform funding of TAs. Additionally, representatives from PhDs at CornellTech have come forward with concerns about paying the full Student Activity Fee as most by-line funding goes to entities from which they don't benefit.

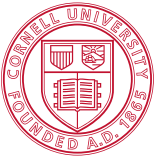
- c. Employee Assembly
 - i. H. Depew stated that they just had an employee staff forum to hear senior leadership reflections on the past year. They were able to ask questions about matters regarding the staff. Recent data suggested the demographics that feel like the least belong are the LGBTQ and disabled community. In response, they are presenting the idea of network groups. The Employee Assembly is also meeting with Angela Winfield to discuss the future of inclusive statements.
 - ii. L. Kenney asked if they are open to inviting members of the UA and if there was an opportunity to collaborate and support the EA on these efforts.
- d. Faculty Senate
 - i. G. Giambattista said that there is a meeting tomorrow and the agenda is posted along with the resolutions to be discussed.

VIII. Open Floor Discussion

- a. L. Kenney welcomed N. Danev to the UA.
- b. D. Dunham stated that they had to leave early. But introduced N. Danev as the current Executive Vice President, with an interest in issues regarding international students.
- c. L. Kenney stated that they are speaking to the Board of Trustees on Friday.
- d. P. Thompson said there are vacancies in the CIC, CJC and, CWC.
- e. B. Sherr added that their Undergrad Representative at Large has decided to leave, however, they have candidates interested in the position.
- f. L. Kenney said that if they cannot choose, they are welcome to send the candidates to the UA Executive Committee. They also noted that if you are the head of the constituency, you can designate someone in the executive committee to vote in your place.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kassandra Jordan
Clerk of the Assembly



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APPENDIX A

Chat Transcript

00:25:58 UA - Bennett Sherr (He/Him/His): Can the link to the res be put in the chat for everyone to have access to?

00:26:05 Logan Kenney (she, her):

<https://cornell.box.com/s/5joxcn5p88gin2kq8sf2ur5lg8gbbtuz>

00:28:37 Logan Kenney (she, her): ^^ Resolution

00:29:00 Logan Kenney (she, her): Proposed Title: The Campus Committee on Infrastructure, Technology, and the Environment

00:39:52 UA Jessica Withers (she/her): Yes! I just checked with Debra Howell from the VCNG. Please do, thank!

00:40:55 Robert Platt: There is already space in the West Campus War memorial and in Barton Hall.

00:47:52 Robert Platt: Both spaces are controlled by Military Science Dept.

00:49:02 UA - Jacob Feit: Absolutely

00:51:14 UA - Bennett Sherr (He/Him/His): Thank you for coming Mitch!

00:52:19 Mitchell Hoy: Thank you all SO much!

00:54:54 UA - Jacob Feit: HAHAAHA

00:55:24 UA - Jacob Feit: We love you Bennett, just messing

01:18:57 Gina Giambattista (she/her/hers): Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda

01:18:58 Gina Giambattista (she/her/hers):

<https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/faculty-senate/archives-and-actions/archived-agenda-and-minutes/online-senate-march-17/>



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U.A. Resolution #16

Calling on Cornell to End All Ties With Immigration and Customs Enforcement

[3/30/21]

Sponsored by: Bennett Sherr, Undergraduate Representative; Allison Arteaga '21; Ailen Salazar '21; Melissa Yanez '21; Marco Salgado '22; Stella Linardi '22; Tomás Reuning '21; Valeria Valencia '23; Lucy Contreras '21

ABSTRACT: This resolution is calling on Cornell to absolve all ties with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including but not limited to recruitment, education, training, research, and technological equipment and software.

Whereas, Cornell has historically invited ICE to participate in on-campus recruitment, and;

Whereas, Cornell has invited ICE-affiliated companies such as Palantir and Anduril to on-campus recruitment events, and;

Whereas, Palantir and Anduril, as well as other ICE-affiliated companies assist ICE in tracking, detaining, and deporting migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and;

Whereas, Cornell has multiple contracts with ICE-affiliated companies for education and training services and technological equipment, and;

Whereas, Cornell Tech has been suspected of providing facial recognition software to ICE and ICE-affiliated companies, including a recent collaboration with Palantir and Anduril to build fully-automated “detect-and-shoot” towers at the border, and;



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Whereas, ICE has a long and well-documented history of brutality, including raids, deportations, and family separations at the border, as well as the destruction of families who have lived in our country and communities for decades, and;

Whereas, ICE has consistently posed a threat to individuals' civil liberties, including but not limited to: "the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, the constitutional guarantee of due process, and the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and freedom from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and national origin," and;

Whereas, in 2020, a report conducted by the ACLU, Human Rights Watch, and National Immigrant Justice Center exposed a wide range of human rights abuses occurring in ICE detention centers, including but not limited to: unsanitary living conditions, inadequate or nonexistent medical care, indefinite detainment, and general cruel treatment, and;

Whereas, in September 2020, a whistleblower revealed that ICE had been performing forced and coerced sterilization procedures on immigrants in detention centers, and;

Whereas, Cornell is home to a community of undocumented students as well students from mixed-status families, and;

Whereas, the President of Johns Hopkins University stated, "But if our school is to live up to its stated values of free intellectual inquiry, human rights, human flourishing, and 'knowledge for the world,' it cannot do so while assisting ICE agents," and;

Whereas, Cornell similarly cannot live up to these principles or its motto, "Any Person, Any Study," while aiding and abetting the U.S. government agencies that oppress, persecute, and deport undocumented community members, and;

Whereas, the Cornell University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors has expressed support for efforts to cut ties with ICE, and;



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54

55 **Whereas**, the following organizations expressed their support for the resolution within the
56 Student Assembly bill text:

- 57 1. **Cornell DREAM Team**
- 58 2. **Cornell Anti-Detention Alliance**
- 59 3. **Cornell Abolitionist and Revolutionary Society**
- 60 4. **La Asociación Latina**
- 61 5. **International Student Union**
- 62 6. **Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell**
- 63 7. **Cornell American Civil Liberties Union**
- 64 8. **Arab Student Association at Cornell**
- 65 9. **Contigo Peru**
- 66 10. **Cornell Roosevelt Institute**
- 67 11. **First Generation Student Union**
- 68 12. **CUSLAR: Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations**
- 69 13. **South Asian Council**
- 70 14. **Do Better Cornell**

71

72 **Whereas**, this resolution was passed by the Student Assembly on Thursday, March 25th, 2021.

73

74 **Be it therefore resolved**, the University Assembly calls on the Cornell University to boycott and
75 ban recruitment attempts on the part of companies that do business with ICE and ICE-affiliated
76 companies, and;

77

78 **Be it further resolved**, the University Assembly calls on Cornell University to refuse to
79 participate in research funded by ICE or DHS and other elements of the military-prison-
80 industrial-financial-security complex, and;

81

82 **Be it finally resolved**, the University Assembly calls on Cornell University to abolish all
83 professional, academic, and financial ties with ICE and its affiliates.



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U.A. Resolution #18

Calling on Cornell to Establish Itself as a Sanctuary Campus

[3/30/21]

Sponsored by: Bennett Sherr, Undergraduate Representative; Allison Arteaga '21; Ailen Salazar '21; Melissa Yanez '21; Marco Salgado '22; Stella Linardi '22; Tomás Reuning '21; Valeria Valencia '23; Lucy Contreras '21

ABSTRACT: This resolution is calling on Cornell to establish itself as a sanctuary campus for undocumented students, faculty, and staff.

Whereas, the term “sanctuary campus,” inspired by the sanctuary city movement, refers to any college or university that implements policies to protect students, faculty, and staff who are undocumented immigrants, and;

Whereas, the following are some of the policies that have been proposed or implemented by self-described sanctuary campuses or other immigrant-friendly campuses:

- Barring ICE officers from campus unless they possess a valid judicial warrant.
- Instructing campus police not to cooperate with ICE or CBP against members of the campus community when an official judicial warrant is unavailable;
- Refusing to share information about faculty or students' immigration status with ICE absent a court order, given FERPA rights; and
- Implementing a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on student or faculty immigration status
- Facilitating “undocu-ally” workshops to educate students, faculty, and staff
- Providing confidential legal support to students with immigration law questions and issues, and;



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Whereas, The American Association of University Professors has endorsed the sanctuary campus movement, and;

Whereas, the actions of sanctuary campuses do not conflict with their legal obligations. For example, it is not a federal offense to refuse admission to ICE officers without a warrant, and;

Whereas, other universities and colleges have established themselves as sanctuary campuses, including but not limited to: University of Pennsylvania, Portland State University, Reed College, Wesleyan University, Pitzer College, Santa Fe Community College, Swarthmore College, Drake University, Connecticut College, and;

Whereas, There have been multiple protests at various campuses:

- Connecticut College
- Dartmouth College
- Drexel University
- Florida State University
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Middlebury College
- Mills College
- New Mexico State University
- The New School
- Northeastern University
- Ohio University
- Portland Community College
- Rutgers University
- St. Mary's College
- Stanford University
- Stockton University



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- Texas State University
- Texas Woman's University
- Trinity College
- Tufts University
- University of Denver
- University of Illinois campuses
- University of Michigan
- University of Mississippi
- University of New Mexico
- University of North Texas
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of San Diego
- Vanderbilt University
- Wesleyan University
- Western New Mexico University
- Yale University, and;

Whereas, this issue was brought up in 2016 with a faculty coalition group of approximately 100 faculty members petitioning for Cornell to establish itself as a sanctuary campus. The petition gathered over 2,000 signatures but was not ratified by then sitting university president Hunter Rawlings, and;

Whereas, there have been "ICE Scares" in the past following reported sightings of ICE officers causing unnecessary stress and fear in the community, and;

Whereas, CUPD has disclosed that they have no formal protocol in the event that a student or member of the Cornell community is detained or deported by ICE, and;



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81 **Whereas**, CUPD relies on an *informal* and *undisclosed* system of communication regarding
82 crisis situations involving ICE or CBP, and;

83
84 **Whereas**, Cornell University Administration has referred to members of the undocumented
85 community on campus as “charity cases,” and former Dean of Students Vijay Pendakur asked
86 undocumented student organizers, “What more do you want?” fostering a toxic school
87 environment, and;

88
89 **Whereas**, students have threatened to call ICE on their undocumented peers, and;

90
91 **Whereas**, undocumented students at Cornell have been recorded disclosing their status by fellow
92 students with the intent of exposing the undocumented students to the media and the public,
93 which increases the risk of being exposed, detained, and/or deported by ICE, and;

94
95 **Whereas**, only in 2016, did Cornell finally allow DACA students to be considered for financial
96 aid as domestic students, as opposed to international students; and only recently, in 2020, did
97 Cornell finally allow undocumented students to benefit from the domestic financial aid funding
98 pool instead of the international pool, and;

99
100 **Whereas**, due to the expansion of the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport into the Ithaca
101 Tompkins International Airport, Customs and Border Patrol, which has the ability to detain and
102 deport immigrants, is now stationed less than 3 mile from campus, and;

103
104 **Whereas**, the presence of CBP less than three miles from campus increases the risk of
105 deportation, detainment, and interactions for all undocumented/DACA and international
106 students, faculty, and staff on campus, and;

107



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Whereas, Cornell University is 251 Miles from the Canadian Border, which puts undocumented and international people at a higher risk of interaction with ICE than other Ivy League Universities, and;

Whereas, ICE documents show that, for years, law enforcement in hundreds of jurisdictions nationwide, including major sanctuary cities like Seattle, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, are still feeding information into regional databases that can be viewed by ICE, and;

Whereas, although Ithaca has declared itself as a Sanctuary City, the ongoing threat of deportation and detainment persists in Ithaca, NY, as demonstrated when 1) an on-duty TC Sheriff's Deputy illegally called ICE to report a Mexican man seeking medical attention in 2019, 2) multiple ICE arrests in 1 month produced huge fear in the immigrant community in 2018, and;

Whereas, New York ranks fourth in the nation with 12,271 deportations as of 2020, and;

Whereas, the increased presence of CBP and sustained risk of ICE interactions has contributed to increased levels of fear, anxiety, and worsening mental health amongst undocumented and international populations at Cornell University, and;

Whereas, President Martha Pollack has expressed support for DACA and undocumented students:

“Cornell, since its founding, has been committed to diversity and inclusion, and DACA students are an integral part of our community. They were brought to this country before they had a choice in the matter, have grown up here, and are succeeding here despite significant challenges and obstacles. I believe they deserve a chance to fulfill their dreams (2017),” and;

Whereas, the Cornell University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors has expressed support for efforts to establish a sanctuary campus, and;



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Whereas, the following on campus organizations cosponsored this resolution at the Student Assembly:

1. **Cornell DREAM Team**
2. **Cornell Anti-Detention Alliance**
3. **Cornell Abolitionist and Revolutionary Society**
4. **La Asociación Latina**
5. **International Student Union**
6. **Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell**
7. **Cornell American Civil Liberties Union**
8. **Arab Student Association at Cornell**
9. **Contigo Peru**
10. **Cornell Roosevelt Institute**
11. **First Generation Student Union**
12. **CUSLAR: Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations**
13. **South Asian Council**
14. **Do Better Cornell**, and;

Whereas, this resolution was passed by the Student Assembly on Thursday, March 25th, 2021, and;

Whereas, available data and supporting evidence show that college campuses must do more to support undocumented and international students' health, safety, and wellbeing on campus.

Be it therefore resolved, in order to live up to its motto of "Any Person, Any Study," Cornell must ensure that undocumented students, faculty, and staff feel safe from detainment and deportation, and;



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Be it finally resolved, Cornell University must commit to fostering a safe and nourishing environment for undocumented students by establishing a Sanctuary Campus, including but not limited to:

- Barring ICE officers from campus unless they possess a valid judicial warrant.
- Instructing campus police not to cooperate with ICE or CBP against members of the campus community when an official judicial warrant is unavailable;
- Refusing to share information about faculty or students' immigration status with ICE absent a court order, given FERPA rights; and
- Implementing a "don't ask, don't tell" policy on student or faculty immigration status
- Facilitating "undocu-ally" workshops to educate students, faculty, and staff
- Providing confidential legal support to students with immigration law, questions, and issues
- Establishing an Undocumented Resource Center at Cornell University, overseen by the Associate Director for Student Empowerment and Undocumented/DACA Student Support.



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U.A. Resolution #17

**Encouraging the Board of Trustees to Revoke Governor Andrew
Cuomo's Ex-Officio Membership**

[03/30/2021]

Cosponsors: Bennett Sherr, Undergraduate Representative

Abstract: This resolution calls on the Cornell University Board of Trustees to revoke the Ex-Officio membership of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo in light of recent allegations of sexual harassment and covering up the deaths of nursing home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whereas, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo currently holds Ex-Officio membership on the Cornell University Board of Trustees, and;

Whereas, due to his Ex-Officio membership on the Board of Trustees, Gov. Cuomo also sits on the Committee for University Relations, and;

Whereas, the Committee for University Relations, "shall advise the Board on the University's relationships with federal, state, and local governmental entities, including the State University of New York and with other departments and agencies of the State"¹, and;

Whereas, as of March 27th, 2021, more than seven women have come forward with reputable claims of sexual harassment or inappropriate touching perpetrated by New York Governor Cuomo², and;

Whereas, the women who have accused Gov. Cuomo of sexual harassment and inappropriate touching range from former and current staffers to people met in social gatherings, and³;

¹ Cornell University Bylaws, Page 12.

² <https://abc7ny.com/andrew-cuomo-sexual-harassment-accuser-jessica-bakeman/10413402/>

³ <https://abc7ny.com/andrew-cuomo-sexual-harassment-accuser-jessica-bakeman/10413402/>



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Whereas, the Attorney General of New York Leticia James has appointed former Acting US attorney Joon Kim and discrimination attorney Anne Clark to lead an independent investigation into Gov. Cuomo's workplace conduct⁴, and;

Whereas, leaders within the New York State Assembly's Judiciary Committee have opened an impeachment investigation into the governors conduct⁵, and;

Whereas, on March 25th, 2020, Gov. Cuomo issued a directive to require nursing homes to readmit residents who have tested positive for COVID-19⁶, and;

Whereas, on May 13th, 2020, Gov. Cuomo inserted a provision into the state budget to provide legal immunity to nursing homes, hospitals, and their executive officers for any role they might play in the deaths of COVID-19 patients⁷, and;

Whereas, on February 11th, 2021, Secretary to the Governor Melissa DeRosa privately apologized to New York lawmakers for her role in the undercounting of deaths in nursing homes and assisted living facilities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic out of fear of federal prosecution⁸, and;

Whereas, New York State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker estimates that the Cuomo administration undercounted as much as 50% of the nursing home and assisted living facility deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic⁹, this equaling more than 15,000 people, and;

Whereas, 16 of New York State's 19 House Democrats have called for Cuomo to resign amidst the scandals including Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rep. Jamaal Bowman, Rep. Carolyn

⁴<https://apnews.com/article/new-york-legislature-andrew-cuomo-coronavirus-pandemic-impeachments-6334301bd32f2040fabb235767c62343>

⁵<https://apnews.com/article/new-york-legislature-andrew-cuomo-coronavirus-pandemic-impeachments-6334301bd32f2040fabb235767c62343>

⁶<https://nypost.com/2020/04/20/cuomo-didnt-know-coronavirus-patients-are-being-sent-back-to-nursing-homes/>

⁷<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/nyregion/nursing-homes-coronavirus-new-york.html#click=https://t.co/mDyYlv7Na>

⁸ <https://nypost.com/2021/02/11/cuomo-aide-admits-they-hid-nursing-home-data-from-feds/>

⁹ <https://nypost.com/2021/02/11/cuomo-aide-admits-they-hid-nursing-home-data-from-feds/>



Cornell University University Assembly

Maloney, Rep. Grace Meng, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, Rep. Mondaire Jones, Rep. Jerry Nadler, as well as New York’s Senators Gillibrand and Schumer¹⁰, and;

Whereas, New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins as requested Gov. Cuomo resign¹¹, and;

Whereas, the call for Gov. Cuomo’s resignation is bipartisan, including Republicans like Rep. Claudia Tenney, Rep. Elise Stefanik, Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, and Rep. Lee Zeldin¹², and;

Whereas, Assemblyman Ron Kim detailed personal allegations against Gov. Cuomo, saying the governor called the chair of the New York State Assembly Committee on Aging and threatened Assemblyman Kim’s career if he refused to issue a statement “covering for the state secretary,”¹³ and;

Whereas, no person accused of such conduct should be allowed to have access to private documents provided to the Board of Trustees or be able to influence University policy through the Board of Trustees, nor should any person accused of governmental misconduct be given membership to a committee tasked with University-government relations.

Whereas, Governor Cuomo refuses to step down from office, and;

Whereas, the Cornell University Bylaws are silent on a process through which members of the Board of Trustees can be removed, and;

Whereas, the Cornell University Bylaws may be amended “at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, but only by a concurrent vote of a majority of those present and voting or thirty concurring votes, whichever is greater”¹⁴

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/nyregion/cuomo-resign-congress.html>

¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/07/974621279/new-york-state-senate-leader-calls-for-cuomos-resignation>

¹² <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2021/mar/12/multiple-ny-congressional-members-call-on-cuomo-to/>

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVqhtexuXT8>

¹⁴ Cornell University Bylaws, Page 28.



Cornell University University Assembly

Be it therefore resolved, the Cornell University Assembly requests that the Board of Trustees move to revoke Gov. Cuomo's ex-officio status either through an amendment to the bylaws of Cornell University or other reputable means and until the end of the impeachment process, whenever that may be and regardless of the result thereof, and;

Be it further resolved, for the purpose of fair continuation of duties, the University Assembly recommends that Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul be provided Ex-Officio status to the Board of Trustees for the duration of the impeachment process and not Deputy Mark Weingarten, and;

Be it further resolved, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul shall also replace Gov. Cuomo on the Committee for University Relations, and;

Be it finally resolved, the University Assembly requests that the three gubernatorial appointees to the Board of Trustees recuse themselves from any votes surrounding the status of Gov. Cuomo's membership on any committee or on the body as a whole to prevent a conflict of interests.



Cornell University University Assembly

U.A. Resolution #19

Advocating for a Tree-per-Graduate Program at Cornell University

Sponsored By: Erik Kirakosyan, Voting Member of the Student Assembly Academic Policy Committee; Bennett Sherr, Undergraduate Student Representative; Jacob Feit, Undergraduate Student Representative

Abstract: This resolution calls for Cornell University to begin a Tree-per-Graduate program requiring the University to plant one tree per degree issued.

Whereas, in 2014, the Climate Action Plan Acceleration Working Group concluded that “achieving climate neutrality by 2035 is imperative and feasible”;

Whereas, during the 2018 fiscal year, Cornell University’s Ithaca Campus produced 205,193 metric tons of CO₂-equivalent (MTCO_{2e});

Whereas, Cornell University reduced carbon emissions 36% from its 2008 baseline;

Whereas, Cornell University’s net carbon emissions have not changed since 2016;

Whereas, recommendation 15 of the Climate Action Plan Acceleration Working Group states that “If the university does not actively plant new trees and manage its mature forest stands, the carbon abatement capacity of these lands will diminish over time”;

Whereas, an estimated 3000 acres of land owned by the University are abandoned fields or marginal farmland that could be used to plant native tree species;

Whereas, a study conducted by the South Carolina Forestry Commission found that one acre of land can accommodate between 435 and 726 trees for the purpose of reforestation;

Whereas, Cornell reforestation guidelines already call for reforesting 100 acres of unused crop and pasture land per year;

Whereas, 46 trees will offset one metric ton of CO₂ emission per year;

Whereas, the undergraduate class of 2021 alone represents nearly 4,000 students;



Cornell University University Assembly

34

35 **Whereas,** numerous non-profit organizations allow for donors to plant trees at reduced cost
36 away from Cornell land, trees can be donated for as little as \$1;

37

38 **Whereas,** funding for this program can be provided by corporate sponsorship, alumni donation,
39 or in conjunction with state sustainability grants;

40

41 **Be it resolved,** Cornell University will commit to donating or planting one tree for every
42 diploma awarded;

43

44 **Be it further resolved,** every graduating student will be given a certificate with the location and
45 species of a planted tree, how long the tree will take to mature, and an environmental impact
46 statement;

47

48 **Be it further resolved,** the environmental impact statement shall contain a list of the species
49 native to the trees in the area the gifted tree is planted and how much CO2 is offset by the tree
50 over the course of 10 years;

51

52 **Be it finally resolved,** Cornell University will cooperate and consult with the native nations with
53 connections to the lands where the trees will be planted or donated.