

# Cornell University University Assembly

## Cornell University's University Assembly

Agenda of the March 8th, 2022 Meeting

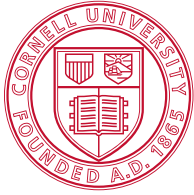
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

401 Physical Sciences Building | Zoom

- I. Call to Order
  - a. Roll Call
  - b. Land Acknowledgment of the Gayogohono (Cayuga Nation)
  - c. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda
- II. Business of the Day
  - a. Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS) - Christina Liang, Director
  - b. [UA R5: Support for Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the 'Do the Greatest Good' Capital Campaign](#)
- III. Assembly Reports
  - a. Student Assembly
  - b. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
  - c. Employee Assembly
  - d. Faculty Senate
- IV. Committee Reports
  - a. Executive Committee
  - b. Codes and Judicial Committee
  - c. Campus Welfare Committee
  - d. Campus Committee on Infrastructure, Technology and the Environment
- V. Liaison Reports
- VI. Adjournment

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*If you are in need of special accommodations in order to fully participate, please contact Student Disability Services at (607) 254-4545 or the Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or [assembly@cornell.edu](mailto:assembly@cornell.edu) prior to the meeting.*



## U.A. Resolution #5

### Support for Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the ‘Do the Greatest Good’ Capital Campaign

*February 22, 2022*

**Sponsored by:** Debra Howell, UA/EA, Chair, Campus Welfare Committee; Kyle Karnuta, GPSA; Roberto Bertoia, Faculty Senate; Melia Matthews, GPSA; Preston Hanley, UA; Duncan Cady, UA

**Whereas,** the University Assembly endorses the [Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the ‘Do the Greatest Good’ Capital Campaign](#), included here as an Addendum to this resolution, and

**Whereas,** the F.S. Proposed Resolution outlines specific background on the current situation and that context which remains unsatisfactory, and

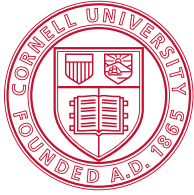
**Whereas,** the needs of the Cornell community for universal access to free, indoor recreation, sporting event facilities, and exercise facilities are not being satisfied, and

**Whereas,** some faculty, staff, students, are no longer able to participate in aquatic fitness at Cornell.

**Whereas,** the University Assembly is charged in Section 3.1 of the Charter to examine matters which involved the interests or concern the welfare of a substantial segment of the campus community.

**Be it therefore resolved,** the University Assembly aligns its support with the F.S. Proposed Resolution imploring the administration to include and prioritize a new natatorium to the list of fundraisings items donors may directly contribute to in Cornell University’s ‘Do the Greatest Good’ capital campaign for the benefit of the University and the community the University serves.

**Be it further resolved** that a new natatorium should be of sufficient size and quality to meet the current and future needs of the Cornell community. To help ensure this, the planning needs to involve Cornell leaders with knowledge and expertise in this area including the Directors of Athletics, Aquatics, Cornell Wellness, Physical Education, Recreational

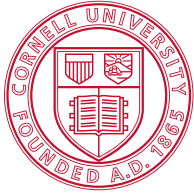


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Services, and Head Varsity Swimming Coaches.

**Be it finally resolved** that the president of Cornell University support the faculty, students and staff communities and constituencies represented through the University Assembly by advocating for the inclusion and prioritization of a new natatorium in the “Do the Greatest Good” capital campaign. A copy of this resolution shall be shared with the Provost and the Vice President for Alumni Affairs.

**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.**



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## Appendix A: Background

### Background

This resolution arises from the imminent need for Cornell University to develop plans, fundraise, and construct a new natatorium. This resolution seeks to support the F.S. Proposed Resolution, sponsored by Faculty Senate senators Ashleigh Newman, Yuval Grossman, and at least 11 other faculty senators.

The Campus Welfare Committee (hereby, the Committee) is charged with ensuring that diversity and inclusion, family support, and health services for the Cornell student body, faculty, and staff is prioritized in both conversation and action. The F.S. Proposed Resolution advocates for the construction of a new natatorium to benefit the mental and physical health of the entire Cornell community. As such, the Committee is compelled to support the F.S. Proposed Resolution.

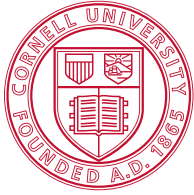
As outlined in the F.S. Proposed Resolution, swimming and access to water-based exercise have proven benefits for mental health. These benefits include increasing self-esteem among college students, combatting Seasonal Affective Disorder (common in climates similar to Cornell's), and potentially alleviating mental health concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indoor swimming facilities play a key role in providing access to free, indoor recreation and exercise options for students seeking to exercise their mental and physical well-being.

Unimpeded access to swimming facilities (meaning indoor swimming facilities, given Cornell's climate during most of the academic year) is also an equity concern. As outlined in THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, people of color make up the majority of enrolled students in beginning swimming classes offered at Cornell. Citing the Resolution, "students who have completed this course out of necessity report undergoing a transformative experience starting with reluctance, fear, and dread to one of immense pride and accomplishment when they learn how to swim and pass Cornell's swim test."

Additionally, the Committee has been made aware that, due to a limitation of access to the pools made in part to extend the lifespan of the existing pools, women's open swimming hours have been cut. Women's swim hours have historically provided a safe space for women to access swimming facilities, to network, and to build community at Cornell. The elimination of this program has been met with disappointment from the female aquatic community at Cornell.

As a result of decreased pool hours, unexpected pool closures, and an overall reduction in pool availability, the aquatic community and culture is being pushed out of Cornell. Specifically, many faculty, staff, and retirees are now swimming off campus (YMCA, Island Fitness, Borg Warner). In addition, the Cornell Varsity swimming and diving teams had to hold all home fall meets at Ithaca College, and the Cornell water polo team is only able to obtain one hour of practice time per week at Ithaca College. In an effort to attract and retain both academic and athletic talent, the offerings must improve.

In alignment with THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, the Committee recommends incorporating the construction of a natatorium at Cornell within the scope of the "Do the Greatest Good" campaign. To quote THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, "a modern natatorium is an eight-lane, 50-meter by 25-yard pool that is at minimum 9 feet deep, with 14-foot depth in the diving well (for 3-meter springboard diving)."



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## Appendix B: Faculty Senate Proposed Solution; Updated 2/21/22 to reflect changes in the F.S. Resolution

### **Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the ‘To Do the Greatest Good’ Capital Campaign**

#### **Faculty Senator Co-sponsors:**

Ashleigh Newman  
Yuval Grossman  
Carrie Adler  
Doug Antczak  
Alexandra Blackman  
Elizabeth Bunting  
Thomas Bjorkman  
Abigail Cohn  
Laura Goodman  
Kelly Hume  
Steven Jackson  
Carolyn McDaniel  
Thomas Overton  
Itziar Rodriguez de Rivera  
Tracy Stokol  
Joe Wakshlag  
David Zax

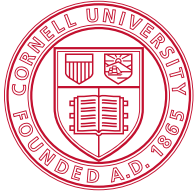
#### **Committee Sponsor:**

Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education

#### **Background:**

This resolution arises from the imminent need for Cornell University to develop plans, fundraise, and construct a new natatorium.

Many Cornell community members utilize the aquatic facilities on Cornell’s campus including students, faculty (both current and Emeritus), and staff. It is estimated that over 600 students use Cornell’s pools from the following groups: varsity swimming and diving teams, physical education classes (beginner, intermediate, and conditioning swimming; diving, scuba diving, lifeguarding, synchronized swimming, and kayaking), swimming and water polo club teams, physical therapy, inner tube water polo intramural, naval reserve officer training corps (ROTC), and autonomous underwater vehicle club. In addition, in fiscal year 2018-2019, 1,875 students and 742 faculty, staff, and retirees swam during open swim offerings resulting in 23,987 total



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swims (43% of which were students, 57% non-students).<sup>1</sup> Cornell recreation services also offers Aqua Fit and Zumba classes.

Swimming and other water-based exercise have proven benefits for both physical and mental health, including an increase in self-esteem in college students.<sup>2</sup> In particular, swimming during the winter has been shown to improve general well-being.<sup>3</sup> This is relevant for the Cornell community, as many suffer from the winter blues and Seasonal Affective Disorder due to Ithaca's long, cloudy winters.<sup>4</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in an increase in depression symptoms<sup>5</sup>, bringing to the forefront the need to prioritize preventative measures that benefit mental health.<sup>6</sup>

While Cornell has three pools on campus [two in Teagle Hall (1951) and one in Helen Newman Hall (1963)], they are 71 and 59 years old, respectively, and no longer meet industry standards for a modern facility. Two are six-lane, 25-yard pools, and the third is a "learn to swim" four-lane, 20-yard pool, all with insufficient surrounding deck space. A modern natatorium is an eight-lane, 50-meter by 25 yard pool that is at minimum 9 feet deep, with 14 foot depth in the diving well (for 3-meter springboard diving). The main pool in Teagle Hall is the sole facility that can be used for swimming and diving competition, as Helen Newman lacks diving boards and swimming starting blocks, with undersized swimming lanes that are too narrow and shallow. Even at Teagle, the varied depth is not ideal for water polo play, and swimming and diving cannot occur concurrently, as the diving well is integrated into the 25-yard main pool footprint. The smaller pool in Teagle Hall is used for physical therapy, physical education classes, and aspects of varsity use (e.g., cooling down for meets), but cannot be used for competition, water polo play, or the underwater vehicle club, due to the truncated length and/or insufficient depth.

While Cornell's current aquatic facilities have long been out-of-date and inferior to our Ivy League and many non-Ivy League peers (see Appendix 1), in recent years, there has been increased closures of the pools, including those of longer duration, due to unsafe water quality conditions and failed regular maintenance. A 2019 study of the pools concluded the pools do not meet current New York state standards for swimming pool turnover rates, contributing to the

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 Summary on Cornell pool use.

<sup>2</sup> [Health Benefits of Water-based Exercise](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Howley, EK. [4 Reasons Why Swimming is Great for Mental Health](#). *U.S. Masters Swimming*. January 6, 2021.

Zhang, Hui, Luo Shi. [Empirical Analysis of the Influence of Swimming Training on Mental Health and Positive Emotions of College Students](#). *Revista Argentina de Clinica Psicologica*; Buenos Aires. Vol 29, Issue 1, 2020: 242.

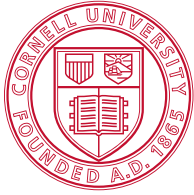
Muhamad, TA et al. [Effects of Swimming on Self-Esteem among Female College Students](#). *Asian Social Science*. Vol. 9 No. 16; 2013:74-80.

<sup>3</sup> Huttunen P, et al. 2004. [Winter swimming improves general well-being](#). *Int J Circumpolar Health*, 63:2, 140-144.

<sup>4</sup> Cornell Health. Beating the Winter Blues: [A Guide on Getting Through Winter at Cornell](#). October 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Ettman, CK et al. [Prevalence of Depression Symptoms in US Adults Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). *JAMA Network Open*. September 2, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Lieber, M. [What regular swimming does for the body and mind](#). CNN health. July 16, 2021.



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poor water quality.<sup>7</sup> Decreased pool usage was recommended as one way to prolong the life of these facilities. As a result of this recommendation and the frequent, unexpected pool closures, there has been progressively reduced pool availability for all the stakeholders detailed above. This has been the source of increasing frustration for Cornell pool users, as publicized in the Cornell Daily Sun.<sup>8</sup> In 2020, \$750,000 was invested in all three pools for new sand filters, repair of some plumbing, as well as structural shoring. The decision was made to use the less expensive wooden beams, instead of steel, because the steel would last longer than the lifespan of the pools they were supporting. These improvements are expected to extend the life of the pool by approximately five years but are in no way a permanent solution to the aged facilities' problems. In addition, Teagle Hall needs a new roof, which is estimated to cost between ten and twelve million dollars and would require all occupants to vacate for at least a ten-month period, which comes with it additional relocation costs. A better investment of the University's money would be to put this towards the construction of a new natatorium. Cornell Facilities Management warns that the pools may fail at any time despite these recent palliative measures. No other college or university in Appendix 1 is without a functioning pool.

One consequence of no pool on campus would mean the termination of the beginning swimming class (PE 1100), in which people of color represented 89.7% of enrolled students from 2018 – 2020.<sup>9</sup> Students who have completed this course out of necessity report undergoing a transformative experience starting with reluctance, fear, and dread to one of immense pride and accomplishment when they learn how to swim and pass Cornell's swim test (see Appendix 2).<sup>10</sup> By having this requirement, Cornell University makes a statement that swimming is an important life skill that will help break the cycle of parents who do not know how to swim and therefore do not encourage their children to learn to swim.<sup>11</sup> In the United States, an average of 3,957 unintentional drowning deaths occurred each year from 2010-2019.<sup>12</sup> Drowning death rates for American Indian or Alaska Native and non-Hispanic Black persons are higher than that of White persons<sup>13</sup>, likely due to generational inequities in access. Implementing community-level interventions such as basic swimming instruction are encouraged as means to reduce racial disparities in drowning rates. Therefore, providing Cornell students access to pools and swimming instruction is a matter of diversity, equity, and inclusion importance, as well.

Even if all three existing pools were fully operational, they no longer meet the ever-expanding needs of the Cornell community. Due to the limited number of lanes and inability to have

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<sup>7</sup> Helen Newman and Teagle Halls Pool Study. 2019. Counsilman-Hunsaker Aquatics for Life.

<sup>8</sup> Kempff, Brendan. [Cornell's Pool Problem Needs a Fresh Solution](#). Cornell Daily Sun. September 23, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Cornell University PE 1100 enrollment data. Fall 2018 – Spring 2020.

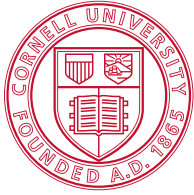
<sup>10</sup> Jain, A. [A Changing Perspective of the Swim Test](#). Retracting a Former Column. Cornell Daily Sun. March 29, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> [History of the Cornell Swim Test](#).

<sup>12</sup> [Drowning facts](#), Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>13</sup> Clemens T, et al. [Persistent Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Fatal Unintentional Drowning Rates Among Persons Aged ≤29 years – United States, 1999-2019](#). MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2021;70:869-874.





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multiple groups in a pool at one time, the pools are used up to 15.75 hours per day (6:00 am – 11:15 pm) to accommodate all stakeholders. Whereas at Ithaca College, for example, their 50-meter pool can accommodate eighteen, 25-yard, lanes of swimming, *as well as* diving at the same time. This maximizes the number of occupants in the facility at one time, allowing for increased availability and at more ideal times of day.

In addition to the inadequate swimming pools, the programmatic changes over the life of the facilities no longer provide sufficient and equitable use for visitors. When Teagle Hall was originally constructed, it was built as a male-only athletic facility and the modifications for female and transgender and gender non-conforming persons are inequitable and insufficient. In 2018, the University Assembly passed U.A. Resolution #12: Increasing Access to Gender Neutral Bathrooms on Campus<sup>14</sup> to expand inclusion and comfort. The Student Assembly similarly passed S.A. Resolution #21: Availability of Accessible Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Locker Rooms on Campus.<sup>15</sup> Although the current facilities have been either modified or are being prioritized to meet this resolution, they will not be equitable in their distribution to all parties due to design and structural limitations to the buildings. A new facility designed with these programmatic requirements would be the most cost efficient and effective way to address this University priority.

In April 2020, Cornell University published its Mental Health Review Final Report. It was stated that Cornell has a “culture of competition [that] may take on an unhealthy cycle of expectation and behavior that can reach traumatizing levels for students, faculty, and staff.”<sup>16</sup> In examining and exploring the ways to improve the mental health of the Cornell community, the report was broken down into four sections: A) foster a healthy educational environment; B) promote social connectedness, and resilience; C) increasing help-seeking behavior, and identifying people in need of care; and D) provide mental and medical health services. In Section B under Opportunities, it reads, “It is important to note that when asked for their recommendations, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students consistently prioritized the need for access to free physical fitness opportunities to cope with stress and build resilience. With Ithaca’s climate, students want free and convenient indoor fitness options.” The report acknowledged “the challenge that this presents given both financial and facility constraints.” Recommendation B.2.2 under Wellbeing reads, “Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign.” It is important to note that pool access is free to all Cornell students, unlike other fitness centers on campus that require a paid Cornell Fitness Center membership. Ideas such as “virtual fitness classes” and the use of “virtual and augmented

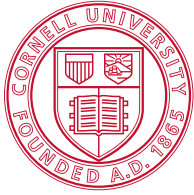
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<sup>14</sup> Cornell University, University Assembly, U.A. Resolution # 12: Increasing Access to Gender Neutral Bathrooms on Campus, March 2018.  
[https://assembly.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/ua\\_resolution\\_12\\_gender\\_neutral\\_bathrooms\\_amended\\_as\\_of\\_04.10.18.pdf](https://assembly.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/ua_resolution_12_gender_neutral_bathrooms_amended_as_of_04.10.18.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Cornell University, Student Assembly, S.A. Resolution #21: Availability of Accessible Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Locker Rooms on Campus. <https://archive.assembly.cucloud.net/SA/20111103R21.html>

<sup>16</sup> Cornell University Mental Health Review Final Report. April 2020.





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reality” were proposed in the report as alternatives to fitness centers on campus. There is no virtual equivalent for aquatic activities, and these suggestions simply fail to meet the mental health needs of Cornell’s students, as well as faculty and staff.

In an email to the Cornell community on October 18, 2021, President Martha Pollack announced Cornell University’s new capital campaign project, “To Do the Greatest Good.” The campaign’s official website lays out the goal of raising at least \$5 billion over the next five years through the connections of at least 200,000 Cornellians.<sup>17</sup> This campaign provides the rare opportunity to reach major donors across all of Cornell and finally raise the funds necessary to make this long overdue project a reality. A modern natatorium on par with our peers both in Ithaca and beyond, would do an enormous amount of good for Cornell and the broader Ithaca community benefitting physical and mental well-being. The fact that this need is not even listed as a university priority is disgraceful. The process of project approval, architectural planning, demolition, and construction is likely to take 7-10 years. If this process began today, this timeline is well beyond the estimated 5-year remaining lifespan of the pools. Our aged, failing facilities cannot wait.

The thought of a Cornell University with no functioning pool is unfathomable and unacceptable.

### **The Resolution:**

*Whereas*, participation in physical, cultural, and social activities outside of one’s primary studies or work provides individuals with a sense of belonging at Cornell and enriches their overall well-being.

*Whereas*, the pools in Teagle Hall and Helen Newman Hall (further referred to as “the pools”) serve a large and diverse population of Cornell community members including students, faculty, and staff in endeavors including varsity athletics, physical education classes, aquatic-based physical therapy, clubs – both academic and athletic, open lap swimming, ROTC training, and group fitness classes.

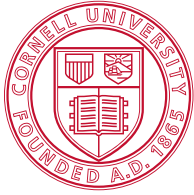
*Whereas*, the pools no longer meet the needs of the Cornell community as detailed above, and have a finite lifespan, which are estimated to end at any time between now and 2025.

*Whereas*, approving, planning, fundraising, and building a new natatorium can take up to ten years. Cornell University faces the certain reality of having no operational pool on its campus.

*Whereas*, Cornell University has long valued swimming as an important life skill to prevent fatal unintentional drowning, as demonstrated by over 100 years of a graduation requirement for all

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<sup>17</sup> <https://greatestgood.cornell.edu/>



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undergraduate students to swim 75 yards or pass two semesters of beginning swimming (PE 1100).

*Whereas*, providing an inviting, modern, safe, and accessible environment for aquatic activities provides Cornell students, faculty, and staff the ability to exercise year-round, which is a proven positive contributor to mental health.

*Whereas*, recommendation B.2.2 of the Cornell University Mental Health Review Final Report reads, "Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign."

*Whereas*, we recognize there are many needs of the University, it would be in the University's best interest to serve those that are of the most imminent need to its community.

*Be it resolved*, that the Faculty Senate implore the administration to include and prioritize a new natatorium to the list of fundraisings items donors may directly contribute to in Cornell University's 'To Do the Greatest Good' capital campaign.

*Be it further resolved*, that a new natatorium should be of sufficient size and quality to meet the current and future needs of the Cornell community. To help ensure this, the planning needs to involve Cornell leaders with knowledge and expertise in this area including the Directors of Athletics, Aquatics, Physical Education, Recreational Services, and Head Varsity Swimming Coaches.

### **Faculty Co-Sponsors**

Jessica McCart  
Allison Miller  
Susan Fubini  
Paul Nadasdy