



Cornell University University Assembly

Cornell University Assembly

Minutes of the November 24, 2020 Meeting

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. L. Kenney called the meeting to order at 4:32pm
- b. *Member's Present:* V. Aymer, U. Chukwukere, H. Depew, N. Danev, C. Duell, J. Feit, B. Fortenberry, T. Fox, A. Hong, C. Huang, L. Kenney, C. Levine, J. Pea, B. Sherr, L. Smith, C. Van Loan, P. Thompson, J. Withers.
- c. *Member's Absent:* R. Howarth.
- d. *Also Present:* C. Benedict.

II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

- a. B. Sherr motioned to have a roll call vote for all votes during the meeting.
 - i. L. Kenney seconded the motion.
 - ii. B. Sherr believed that all votes should be public. He wanted to motion for roll call in the beginning rather than recording the names at the end so that individuals would be aware when voting.
 - iii. L. Kenney asked for clarification on whether this would apply to all votes including procedural.
 - iv. B. Sherr said that it would apply to everything outside of organizational votes, but he would be open to amendments. He stated that the shift to online could potentially be easier.
 - v. L. Kenney proposed that someone keep track of names through the checkmarks in Zoom for procedural votes and perform roll call voting for resolutions.
 - vi. B. Sherr agreed and stated he that aimed to have names recorded with votes so individuals are held accountable.
 - vii. J. Feit agreed with holding representatives accountable through posting their votes on the website for the public to see.
 - viii. B. Fortenberry agreed with the idea that the public should see their representative's votes. He advocated for a way to record these votes and names without going one-by-one in the interest of time.
 - ix. L. Kenney noted that roll-call voting and vote accountability is something she advocated for last year so she understands the importance. She also agreed with B. Fortenberry that they should not have a roll call vote on every motion or procedure in the interest of time.



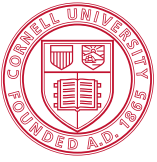
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- x. B. Sherr clarified that the Office of the Assemblies can see the list of people voting and he is advocating for the recording and publishing of that information.
 - xi. H. Depew asked if it would be possible to record something from the chat to record in the minutes or take screenshots of participants. She agreed with L. Kenney that there is a faster way to hold individuals accountable without a roll call vote.
 - xii. L. Kenney recommended that members call for a vote to add this to the agenda.
 - xiii. J. Feit motioned to vote on the late addition to the agenda.
 - 1. C. Duell seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 14-0-1.
 - b. B. Sherr motioned to allow C. Benedict to finish his presentation of Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell's (NAISAC) resolution after "Big Red Rights" and before going into voting procedure on Resolution 2.
 - i. B. Sherr stated that it was informally implied before that C. Benedict would be given more time to finish their presentation NAISAC's demands.
 - 1. J. Feit seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 16-0-0.
 - c. B. Sherr motioned for the University Assembly to recognize the passing of the Transgender Day of Remembrance by reading the names of the 37 murdered due to anti-trans violence in the US during 2020. He stated that this would be read and recorded in the minutes before discussion before Resolution 4 as it will not have a formal vote in the meeting.
 - i. L. Kenney seconded the motion.
 - ii. The motion was **passed** with 16-0-1.
- III. Business of the Day
- a. Approval of the Minutes (Aug. 5, 2020 and Nov. 10, 2020)
 - i. J. Feit motioned to approve the Aug. 5th minutes and table the Nov. 10th minutes due to L. Kenney's name being recorded as both yes and abstained in a motion and to add in the CJC discussion that C. Van Loan had asked certain individuals to give their opinion.
 - 1. N. Danev seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 14-0-1.
 - b. Presentation by Amy Layton regarding "Big Red Writes"
 - i. See Appendix B for the "Big Red Writes" slide.
 - ii. A. Layton presents on the program "Big Red Writes."



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- iii. L. Kenney thanked A. Layton for her presentation. L. Kenney said that she is on the planning committee and was excited to hear others interested in connecting people during the pandemic when there is increased isolation.
 - iv. H. Depew also thanked A. Layton. She stated that through the priorities poll they found one main issue recorded was mental health and she felt as though Big Red Writes is a good program that also addresses these topical concerns She asked A. Layton for any materials to share so she can bring present the program in the Employee Assembly meeting.
 - v. A. Layton said that they had received a lot of feedback that retirees and students were struggling.
 - vi. L. Kenney stated that she wanted to bring it to the UA's attention and proposed that they could send information about the program to the community or attach it to the meeting minutes. She opens the floor for ideas to help further the initiative.
 - vii. B. Sherr moved to have the presentation slides move into the minutes for today's meeting.
 - 1. J. Pea seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion passed with 15-0-1.
 - viii. L. Kenney thanked A. Layton and said that maybe they could peruse future avenues of sharing even if it is directly to constituent groups.
- c. Resolution 2: Support for Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell's Demands
- i. Sponsored by Colin Benedict and Uchenna Chukwukere.
 - ii. C. Benedict presented the resolution.
 - iii. L. Kenney opened the floor for questions.
 - iv. T. Fox asked about the logistics of teaching a required course for all freshmen.
 - v. C. Benedict thanked T. Fox for the question and stated that similar indigenous studies courses have been implemented in other universities successfully and they would draw from said plans. He recognized that this would be a highly collaborative and extensive effort, however, he also believed students in Cornell should have a basic understanding of indigenous peoples and land and how to navigate those relationships.
 - vi. J. Feit supported the necessity of these courses for Cornell students. He also reaffirmed that it would not be one course, but several from which students may choose.
 - vii. C. Benedict said that once staffing and the infrastructure of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (AIISP) develops then this goal will



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be more achievable. He stated that he was aiming to have this requirement for student's first year at Cornell, however, he is opened to changing it to be at any time within their enrollment. He also stated that because these courses are mostly intersectional there should be less of an issue about adding it to student's courses.

- viii. L. Kenney thanked C. Levine for recognizing that two indigenous individuals joined the English department yesterday.
- ix. C. Levine clarified that one is not themselves indigenous but studies the intersection between Ingenious and Asian studies, while the other comes from ingenious heritage.
- x. L. Kenney thanked C. Levine.
- xi. L. Kenney opened the floor for motions.
- xii. B. Sherr asked if there would be any opposition to enter a vote.
- xiii. B. Sherr motioned to vote on Resolution 2.
 - 1. J. Withers seconded the motion.
 - 2. B. Fortenberry said that he believes some clauses may be challenging to include due to the amount of information concentrated in one resolution.
 - 3. B. Sherr recalled his motion to vote.
 - 4. J. Feit seconded the motion.
 - 5. The motion was recalled with no opposition.
- xiv. C. Benedict stated that he is unsure how to answer the question as all the clauses are necessary.
- xv. B. Fortenberry said that the resolution contains many items that might need better clarity due to the gravity of their nature such as the definition of academic spaces.
- xvi. C. Benedict said that they are expecting to have push back from the administration, however they would like to see the University Assembly support the current resolution. He said that while they are open to negotiation, they would like to have a strong front when entering talks with the university.
- xvii. L. Kenney reminded the body of time constraints.
- xviii. J, Pea said that there is a lot of value is the message and not necessarily the feasibility. He also said that is was their responsibility to communicate with these campus leaders to work out the next steps with the administration.
- xix. B. Sherr asserted that they are not voting on the feasibility but rather aiding in getting NAISAC to the negotiation floor.



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- xx. B. Sherr motioned that the chat be included in the minutes and to allow members to issue their support or opposition in the chat. He motions to table the vote until after Resolution 3.
 - 1. L. Kenney stated that the chat is already recorded in the minutes
 - 2. J. Withers seconded the motion
 - 3. The resolution is tabled with 18-1-0
- d. Resolution 3: Bylaw Changes to Require Roll Call Voting
 - i. Sponsored by Bennett Sherr
 - ii. B. Sherr restated that individuals should put their opinions in the chat as a place for a community forum.
 - iii. B. Sherr stated that this resolution acknowledges the want for transparency within the voting process in order to hold their representatives responsible. He said that they need to improve and sustain the communication and engagement of students with shared governance in line with the charter. He understands that rollcall voting might be difficult in terms of time so he would be open to amendments such as a list published with every vote.
 - iv. L. Kenney asked K. Jordan and G. Giambattista if it would be possible to retain names through the 'yes' and 'no' feature within Zoom.
 - v. K. Jordan stated that currently, the office records the votes through screenshots, however with how quickly the assembly votes they are not able to capture individual votes. She offered to look into the matter.
 - vi. L. Kenney stated that a possibility that they could explore is increasing the waiting time to capture the vote.
 - vii. K. Jordan affirmed.
 - viii. C. Van Loan suggested that they vote through the chat so it is recorded through the transcription.
 - ix. L. Kenney stated that it would be up to B. Sherr to change that language.
 - x. P. Thompson thanked C. Van Loan for the recommendation. P. Thompson stated that this would get a lot more buy-in if it did not propose another logistical step. She recommends that one could look through the video to gather the member's votes.
 - xi. B. Sherr said he would be open to voting on the basis of the chat. He stated that his intention was to have this proposal persist through to future sessions. B. Sherr proposed that this resolution that pertains to Zoom would be posted on Friday and voted on in the next session under the understanding that they would revisit this issue for in-person sessions when the time arises.



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- xii. G. Giambattista stated that the Office of Assemblies closes the next day due to the holidays.
- xiii. L. Kenney stated that both of these avenues make sense and one must keep in mind the work needed to go through and record for each vote on behalf of the Office of Assemblies.
- xiv. J. Feit believed that this is an important resolution and B. Sherr is accurate to point out low voter turnout as evidence of declined faith in shared governance.
- xv. B. Sherr motioned for Resolution 3 to be tabled with the acknowledgment that further discussion and amendments will be made to make the resolution more logistically sound.
 - 1. P. Thompson seconded the motion.
 - 2. The resolution is **tabled** with 18-0-0.
- e. Resolution 2 tabled vote
 - i. L Kenney apologized that there was not open forum discussion as she was not aware of this addition and due to time constraints. She thanked individuals for writing in the chat.
 - ii. B. Sherr motions to affirm Resolution.
 - 1. P. Thompson seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 18-0-0.
- f. Discussion of an additional meeting (December 1, 2020)
 - i. B. Fortenberry motioned to vote for a Dec. 1st meeting.
 - 1. P. Thompson seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 16-0-1.
- g. Executive Session
 - i. B. Fortenberry motions to enter an Executive Session
 - 1. N. Danev seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passes** with 15-0-1.
 - ii. L. Kenney said there they discussed changes happening in the OJA office once B. Krause leaves her position.
 - iii. B. Fortenberry motion to extends the motion to 6:20 PM.
 - 1. B. Sherr seconded the motion.
 - 2. The motion **passed** with 12-0-0.
- h. Resolution 4: Acknowledging the Passing of Transgender Day of Remembrance, Upholding the University Assembly's Commitment to Representing Trans and Genderqueer Members of the Campus Community, and Establishing the LGBTQIA+ Intermediary to the University Assembly.
 - i. B. Sherr motioned to table Resolution 4 to December 1st.



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1. P. Thompson seconded the motion.
 2. L. Kenney clarified that they previously voted on considering reading the names so they would need a formal motion to read the names.
 3. B. Sherr rescinded the motion to vote.
- ii. B. Sherr motioned to read the names of those who died due to trans-violence this year and apply them in the minutes.
1. L. Kenney seconds the motion.
 2. The motion **passed** with 13-0-0.
 3. L. Kenney read the names as follows: Dustin Parker, 25; Neulisa Luciano Ruiz; Yampi Méndez Arocho, 19; Monika Diamond, 34; Lexi, 33; Scott or Scottlynn Devore, 51; Johanna Metzger; Penélope Días Ramírez, 31; Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos, 32; Layla Pelaez Sánchez, 21; Nina Pop, 28; Helle Joe O' Regan, 20; Jayne Thompson, 33; Tony McDade; Selena Reyes-Hernandez, 37; Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells; Riah Milton, 25; Brian "Egypt" Powers, 43; Brayla Stone, 17; Merci Mack, 22; Shaki Peters, 32; Bree Black, 27; Summer Taylor; Marilyn Cazares; Dior H Ova; Queasha D Hardy, 22; Aja Raquell Rhone-Spears; Kee Sam; Lea Rayshon Daye, 28; Aerrion Burnett; Mia Green, 29; Michelle Michellyn Ramos Vargas, 30s; Felycya Harris, 33; Brooklyn Deshuna, 20; Sara Blackwood; Angel Unique, 25; and Yunieski Carey Herrera, 29.
 4. L. Kenney thanked B. Sherr for bringing this resolution to the U.A. and she hopes that although this is the first time, this will not be the last time that they acknowledge trans violence and read the names who are killed due to said violence.
- iii. B. Sherr motioned to table Resolution 4 to December 1st
1. P. Thompson seconded the motion.
 2. L. Kenney commented that there is a clarity in the wording whether this is required of chairs in the future and therefore a bylaw and charter change or whether it is recommended to the body as a whole.
 3. The motion **passed** with 14-0-0
- i. Resolution 5: In Recognition and Appreciation of Cornell University Students
- i. Sponsored by Hei Hei Depew and the Executive Board.
 - ii. H. Depew stated that this was a formal response and acknowledgment of student's efforts to follow campus guidelines during COVID-19.

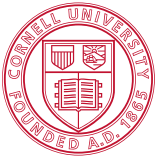


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1. This resolution was unanimously approved by the Employee Assembly and was shared with multiple publications.
 - iii. H. Depew motioned to table this motion for a vote next week.
 1. B. Fortenberry seconded the motion.
 2. The motion is passed and the resolution is tabled with 14-0-0
- IV. Committee Reports
- a. B. Sherr motioned to suspend formal committee updates until the next meeting for the exception of the CJC in the interest of time.
 - i. C. Duell seconded the motion.
 - ii. N. Danev stated that the GSPA would like to share some information, however, he can post them in the chat in the interest of time.
 - iii. The motion passed with 12-0-1.
 - b. Codes and Judicial Committee
 - i. B. Fortenberry encouraged individuals to read the CJC Recommendation final document. He stated that at the top are in support of or resolved by the CJC and the bottom outlines reoccurring themes. He stated that the first four bulleted are supported by the CJC and the lower items are not necessarily supported or recommended but were reoccurring throughout the public comments. B. Fortenberry stated that they will be receiving an edited version the next day from M. Wessel to be discussed in the next meeting. He recommends people to look at the documents attached to the agenda and they will have an edited version on December 1st to review and formulate the final document of recommendations on the 8th.
 - ii. L. Kenney thanked B. Fortenberry and asked if M. Wessel will send the updated draft to the CJC as well as to the UA.
 - iii. B. Fortenberry said that he was unsure, but he would forward the document to L. Kenney to distribute.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kassandra Jordan
Clerk of the Assembly



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APPENDIX A Chat Transcript

00:28:02 Pilar Villablanca Thompson: Sorry I was late as I just wrapped up another meeting.

00:34:48 Robert Platt: How about excluding procedural motions and just main motions?

00:35:16 UA - Jacob Feit: I'd agree, I think we should move this to later in the meeting out of respect for our guests

00:43:58 Gina Giambattista:
<https://cornell.app.box.com/file/745121462386?s=3ttby2f3pctfcdp8fnh20smcphk2z23v>

00:44:35 UA - Charles Van Loan: I have a hard commitment at 6 and will have to leave this meeting at that time even if it is formally extended.

01:08:15 UA - Caroline Levine: Just wanted to let everyone know that just yesterday two amazing indigenous studies faculty accepted offers to join the English Department: Jodi Byrd, citizen of the Chicksaw Nation; and Juliana Hu Pegues who studies Asian American and Native American intersections.

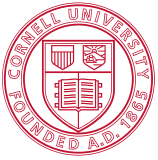
01:21:34 UA - Bennett Sherr: If all members who are here on behalf of NAISAC could please message into the general chat to provide your support, We will vote directly after

01:22:53 UA Chair - Logan Kenney (she, her): I apologize to anyone who feels unable to have time on the floor. I was not informed prior to the meeting regarding the community discussion. However, the chat function is recorded in our minutes and taken seriously by the UA voting members

01:25:33 Wayva Lyons: I am the recruiter and student support specialist for the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program. I agree with Colin that all of these things do need to happen at Cornell. Basic knowledge about Indigenous people is dismal in the greater public and even among Cornell students. I think the demands are thoughtful and comprehensive in that they take into account not only the needs of Cornell students but also the needs of Indigenous communities across the country.

01:27:19 Robert Platt: The AIIP is currently with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. It is not clear to me whether the negotiations should be with the Cornell University administration or whether it might be more appropriate to take this up with SUNY and the New York State Board of Regents. If the goal is to provide the Cayuga Nation with tuition-free higher-education, that opportunity probably could be addressed SUNY-wide, including the other university units as well as the community college campuses.

01:28:32 Della Keahna Uran: I've been so proud of the conversations we have had within and beyond our community since the demands were released. We recently met with AIISP Director Dr. Kurt Jordan who walked us through his ideas of the process of making each point a reality. One thing that is consistently brought up is how our demands are not "easy" — it is my hope and understanding that if this work was easy it would already be done. I am thankful for the support,



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demonstrating that even though this will not be easy it will be worth it and there are people willing to put in the work to make it happen.

01:29:45 Uche Chukwukere: ^^^^

01:31:04 Shaawano Uran: I support the NAISAC resolution. The far-reaching demands are necessary given the issues of Indigenous dispossession have been largely ignored since the founding of Cornell, so of course redress requires large moves from several angles at once. It seems that the real matter here is simply does the UA support redress, since most of the moves proposed lie outside the purview of the UA. The entirety of our experiences at Cornell, be they as faculty, staff, or students, have been subsidized by Indigenous dispossession through the Morrill Land Grant Act—which is specific to Cornell. This is really a matter of how we hold ourselves accountable as Cornellians to the history of the university's founding, and that will of course require efforts from all sectors of Cornell.

01:32:20 Colin Benedict: In response to Robert's comment, the AIISP as it's been called for years now is not specifically tied to any one college at Cornell, and there have been discussions about which college it should be apart of. Based on this, the negotiations would be with University administration. As far as the free tuition for indigenous students from communities displaced from the Morrill Act, that would probably be a collaborative effort between the communities effected, the Cornell University administration, and the SUNY system where it applies to Cornell's colleges and schools.

01:33:58 Colin Benedict: Correction: the AIISP is officially affiliated with CALS. However there have been discussions on shifting it to another college in the past

01:35:11 Colin Benedict: Thank you for your support!

01:35:17 UA - Bennett Sherr: In past meetings we have allowed for guests to simply raise there hand to participate in the debate, But due to time constraints I guess that was not in todays protocol

01:38:45 UA - Jeff Pea (he/him): You can manually add people into a breakout room

01:44:18 JCC - Marisa O'Gara: For thursday I believe

01:51:26 Eirene Kim: I would definitely have taken it where the AC was offered as well. I have to hop off for a client meeting! Good to see everyone! Sorry I was just a fly on the walll trying to get an assignment done.

02:02:36 UA- Catherine Huang: Thank you Bennett <3

02:07:27 UA - Pilar Villablanca Thompson: I have to head out. Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

02:09:28 UA- Catherine Huang: I do have to leave promptly when our time expires as I have to take a semifinal tonight :(so if we do extend time I won't be able to stay

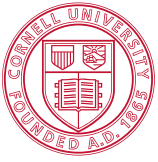
02:09:53 Gina Giambattista: Best wishes on your semi-final, Cat!

02:09:57 UA - Jeff Pea (he/him): Good luck on your semi-final Cat!



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- 02:10:08 UA - Nikola Danev: The GPSA has passed a resolution that came from a petition from 110 graduate students related to the code changes. The link is here:
<https://assembly.cornell.edu/resolutions/gpsa-r6-proposed-changes-student-code-conduct>
- 02:10:09 UA - Bennett Sherr: Good luck Cat! You've got this!
- 02:10:14 UA - Nikola Danev: Good luck Cat
- 02:10:43 UA- Catherine Huang: Thank you everyone :) Very quick updates from the SA - we'll be voting on three new resolutions at our next meeting that were tabled from our last meeting, they can be found on our SA agenda from last week.
- 02:11:05 UA Chair - Logan Kenney (she, her): Thank you, everyone. I am sorry we had to skip updates!
- 02:11:12 UA - Bennett Sherr: I will just add, CWC voted to approve our meeting schedule during the organizational meeting; however, there are questions on whether we had quorum or not so I am still waiting on a reply back about that from the OoA
- 02:12:01 UA Chair - Logan Kenney (she, her): Nik, would you or David please send that resolution to the UA list-serv?
- 02:12:05 Barbara Krause: It is Madelyn who will get the current version to you.
Brandon misspoke.
- 02:12:22 UA- Catherine Huang: Thank you Brandon for these updates! Have a great evening everyone!
- 02:12:22 UA - Nikola Danev: Yes, Logan if that's in order I can do that
- 02:12:27 Robert Platt: How will this be shared with the UA and the public?
- 02:13:46 UA - Brandon Fortenberry (He/Him):have a great break all!
- 02:13:51 Robert Platt: Thanks
- 02:13:53 Gina Giambattista: Happy Thanksgiving all!
- 02:13:59 UA - Bennett Sherr: By Y'all!



APPENDIX B
“Big Red Writes” Slide

Goals

- *Build relationships across generations and/or Cornell constituencies*
- *Exposure to new experiences, skills, languages, and cultures*
- *Reduce feelings of isolation caused by COVID-19*
- *Help children develop writing/storytelling skills and improve literacy*
- *Forge lifelong friendships*

