

Cornell University University Assembly

Cornell University Assembly

Minutes of the November 1, 2022 Meeting

4:45 PM – 6:00 PM

Room 401, Physical Sciences Building | Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair D. Cady called the meeting to order at 4:53 in Room 401 of the Physical Sciences Building.
- b. *Members Present:* G. Akkan, M. Benda, R. Bensel, D. Cady, K. Cram, A. Haenlin-Mott, I. Hewson, D. Hiner, D. Howell, Y. Hua, A. Juan, J. Kruser, M. McEntee, B. Milles
- c. *Members Absent:* O. Akujuo, E. De Rosa, J. Sun
- d. *Also Present:* E. Kalweit, J. Withers

II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogoho:nq (Cayuga Nation)

- a. D. Cady stated the UA's acknowledgment of the Cayuga Nation.

III. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

- a. D. Cady asked the Assembly if there were any late additions to the agenda.
- b. D. Cady stated that he would add the introduction of J. Withers to the agenda.

IV. Approval of the October 18, 2022, Minutes

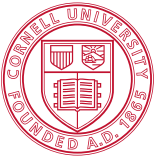
- a. R. Bensel moved to approve the minutes, A. Juan seconded, and the motion was approved by unanimous consent

V. Introduction of Jessica Withers as Director of the Assemblies

- a. J. Withers stated that she has previously served on the Assembly for two years and will begin her position by attending the forthcoming meetings of the Assemblies.

VI. Open Forum

- a. Feedback/discussion on work-life balance and post-COVID expectations
 - i. B. Milles expressed an interest in discussing work-life balance and post-COVID expectations and that she had received a concern from her fellow faculty members about exhaustion post-COVID. She stated that she believes the work-life survey distributed by human resources has caused a more critical thought process among students, faculty, and staff on an escalation of administrative tasks post-COVID. She asked whether the Assembly



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would want to discuss this issue with President Pollack and what the Assembly should do.

- ii. R. Bensel stated that there was a questionnaire from human resources six or seven years ago in which criticism was covered up by the administration. He stated an interest in disseminating the results of the current survey and working with the University Assembly given the application of the university to students, faculty, and staff as opposed to just faculty. He also expressed interest in having a session of the Assembly in which they discuss the results of the survey, but that it may be premature to have a conversation with President Pollack.
- iii. D. Cady expressed interest in the Assembly's thoughts over how they could craft questions to President Pollack on the issue and opened the floor for further comments.
- iv. G. Akkan stated that this is an important problem for Cornell and relates to the productivity of everyone. She also stated that if questions should be asked of President Pollack, they should be structured.
- v. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that employees are just as impacted by this issue as anyone, as this has caused great resignation among employees. She also stated that the Employee Assembly pushed the Priorities Poll and stressed the importance of the issue to employees.
- vi. M. Benda stated that she would like to have a conversation with President Pollack, but that she would prefer a structured and more balanced conversation to identify sources of stress for students, faculty, and staff. D. Cady asked whether M. Benda had any ideas for how this could be formatted. M. Benda replied that she did not.
- vii. A. Juan stated that these issues are not unique to Cornell and that from the undergraduate perspective, there is a culture of overwork, though he stated that faculty should not reduce their coursework. He also stated that administration decisions like expanding the student population are also causing stress to employees.
- viii. D. Cady stated that Cornell is attempting to promote health across campus with the Okanagan Charter and that while Vice President Ryan Lombardi has been an avid promoter of the issue, the exact details have not yet been released and that the role of the Assembly is not yet defined. He stated that anyone who has ideas on how the Assembly can ask President Pollack about this issue should present them before their meeting with President Pollack.

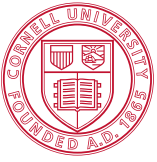


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- ix. A. Juan stated that the Charter is hopefully a choice by the University to consider what goals it is currently fulfilling and what they are not and that it would be wise for the Assembly to do the same.
- x. B. Milles stated that she brought up the issue because work-life is a shared responsibility and concern. She also stated her concern about accommodations for students and the idea of the University Assembly.
- xi. D. Hiner stated that as the chair of the CITE committee if there is a technology aspect to accessibility, he would be happy to be involved in any way he can. He also stated that the Assembly should not wait for data to come out to discuss well-being and that there seems to be a consensus that the Cornell population is overworked.
- xii. R. Bensel stated that if the results are openly discussed Assembly debate will have more credibility.
- xiii. G. Akkan stated that the survey can help in identifying the most common issues and strategies to approve them. D. Cady seconded her point.
- xiv. D. Hiner stated that he would be interested to learn more about student opinion in order to gauge overall campus climate.
- xv. G. Akkan asked whether the Assembly could send out their own survey to gauge campus climate.
- xvi. D. Hiner stated the administration tries not to overwhelm any Cornell population with surveys, and stated that feedback from the surveys may not provide the UA with the desired results.
- xvii. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that the Assembly needs to make sure that they are prepared to take action to make changes if a survey is sent out.
- xviii. B. Milles stated that there is a lack of clarity in guidelines and recommendations because they are shifting with changes in the health situation, which causes uncertainty over what to do.
- xix. A. Juan stated that data can be found by searching Institutional Research and Planning, where mentioned survey data is archived.

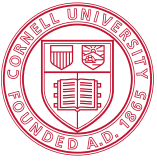
VII. Business of the Day

- a. Reminder: questions for President Pollack due by November 8th to dc932@cornell.edu
 - i. D. Cady stated that questions for President Pollack's visit on November 14th are due to dc932@cornell.edu by November 8th so that the Executive Committee can review these questions, as well as incorporate the points discussed at this meeting, at their next meeting.
- b. UA Resolution 1: Updating the Charter of the Office of the University Ombuds



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- i. D. Cady stated that the University Assembly has two standards, one in which a resolution is presented, read, and can be voted on at any time during one meeting. He stated that the other standard, used more last year, stated that a resolution would be presented and read at one meeting and voted upon at the next meeting. He stated that the standard that made the most sense was for this resolution to be voted on today because B. Lewenstein has been very clear in his presentation of the Charter and because the Resolution is based directly on his conversation with the Assembly at the last meeting. He also opened the floor for debate.
- ii. R. Bensel stated that there is a motion to suspend the rules by unanimous consent that can be used to vote on resolutions on the day they are presented, and that unanimous consent should be used for best practice. D. Cady stated he would approve unanimous consent for best practice as suggested by R. Bensel.
- iii. D. Cady expressed his support for suspending the rules and allow voting on the resolution by unanimous consent.
- iv. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that she had questions over the distinctions between Resolution 1 and Resolution 6, which was rejected by the President and was therefore not ready to vote. D. Cady stated that the two resolutions were over two separate issues and that he did not presently plan to discuss Resolution 6.
- v. D. Cady asked for other comments or questions on Resolution 1. No further questions or comments were presented. D. Cady asked D. Howell whether she had anything to share since she asked to be included as a sponsor of the Resolution. D. Howell stated that she did not have anything to add about the Charter and that she felt it would be important for a University Assembly member to be included as a sponsor.
- vi. J. Kruser stated that it would be good to have a way to track changes between the original charter and the new charter. D. Howell stated that in the agenda, one of the links is to a document that includes changes made to the resolution.
- vii. M. McEntee stated that it was interesting to have the Charter's history and that the Ombuds office did a good job at making verbiage more gender-neutral and altering content.
- viii. D. Cady expressed interest in someone calling a question to end debate to move to a vote on the Resolution.
- ix. A. Juan stated that everything in the Charter was very clear and moved to call a question, seconded by G. Akkan.



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1. In a vote of 13-0-1, the Assembly moved to end debate and moved to approve Resolution 1.
2. In a vote of 13-0-1, the Assembly approved Resolution 1.
- c. Vote: Should we make the November 29th meeting Zoom-only to accommodate a request from our speaker?
 - i. D. Cady asked D. Howell to share information about the mental health review.
 - ii. D. Howell stated that Laura Santacrose, the Associate Director of the Skorton Center, would like to engage the assemblies for input on an upcoming Mental Health Review.
 1. “If possible, it would be preferable for the session to take place via Zoom and have everyone be able to participate via zoom-this would allow everyone to have access to the chat feature to participate and for us to be able to capture people’s thoughts, suggestions, and ideas. We have found that hybrid sessions (with some people in-person and others online) are not conducive to this process.”
 - iii. A. Juan stated his only issue with a Zoom-only meeting was its original correlation with the President’s visit.
 - iv. B. Milles stated that her opposition to the Zoom-only meeting from the last meeting was assuaged by D. Howell’s explanation. G. Akkan seconded her thoughts.
 - v. A. Haenlin-Mott asked what the distinction was between what the Skorton Center aimed to accomplish as opposed to the Okanagan Charter. A. Juan stated that the two are similar, but not the same and that the Skorton Center is a branch of what the Charter aims to accomplish.
 - vi. D. Cady moved to end debate and into a vote on the issue.
 1. In a vote of 13-0-1, the Assembly moved to make the November 29th meeting Zoom-only to accommodate a request from their speaker.
- d. UA Resolution 6: Alterations to Codes and Judicial Committee Name and Function
 - i. D. Howell stated that the Codes and Judicial Committee intends to introduce the resolution and a motion on it.
 - ii. R. Bensel stated that upon the adoption of the Student Code of Conduct, the Codes and Judicial Committee was charged with changing its role under the Assembly’s bylaws to accommodate a change in function. He stated that Resolution 6 was drafted to make those changes and was adopted by 12-0-2 and sent to the President. He stated the President rejected the Resolution and the Committee has since met to discuss the history of the Resolution



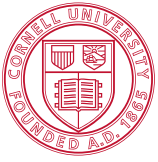
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and its rejection. He also stated that the Committee does not have enough information from the President's rejection and the Committee's role and that some substantive questions were applicable to the Assembly as a whole. He stated that the Committee aims to talk about these issues with the President in conversation on its role in the Assembly. He also stated that since the Committee authorized the Resolution unanimously, he expressed interest in the Assembly making a request for the Committee this conversation with the President to address ambiguity in how to make changes to the Resolution.

- iii. D. Cady asked if there were questions about R. Bensel's remarks. He also stated that any step toward clarity would be beneficial to the Committee and asked about what specifically
- iv. A. Juan read the motion submitted by R. Bensel, "The University Assembly requests that Richard Bensel and Keir Weyble meet with President Pollack to discuss the letter in which she rejected UA Resolution 6 last Spring."
- v. D. Cady called for a motion to move to a vote on R. Bensel's motion.
 1. In a vote of 13-0-1, the Assembly approved R. Bensel's motion to have R. Bensel meet with R. Bensel that he and K. Weyble meet with President Pollack to discuss the letter in which she rejected Resolution 6 last spring.

VIII. Assembly Reports

- a. Student Assembly
 - i. D. Cady stated that the Assembly will hold an election for the new University Assembly representative given the stepping down of G. Dong. He also stated that the Assembly passed a resolution that urged financial aid to better prepare and inform international students of the 14% tax withholding they are subject to. He also stated that the Assembly's Student Activity Infrastructure Financial Review Committee granted Manual, a men's mental health organization, \$10,000 to improve men's mental health.
- b. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
 - i. K. Cram stated that the Assembly sent three delegates to the Ivy Plus Summit in New York City. She also stated that they will be electing both a new Vice President of Appropriations and Finance Chair this December and that the Assembly is working on staffing Committees.
- c. Employee Assembly



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- i. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that the Assembly meets November 2nd and that they have been working on a preliminary review of the Priorities Poll. She also stated that they are preparing for both the President's attendance of their November 16th meeting and that the President's Address to Staff has been pushed to February. She also stated that the Assembly has had a meet-and-greet with Christine Lovely, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.
- d. Faculty Senate
 - i. B. Milles stated that the Faculty Senate will meet again on November 9th. R. Bensel stated that the Senate held a faculty forum on designations of non-tenure track faculty members as "Research Scientists," whether designations of positions outside the tenure system are increasing at Cornell, and whether they undercut some important protections for tenured faculty members.

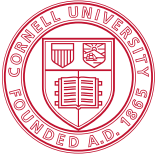
IX. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee
 - i. Noting to report
- b. Codes and Judicial Committee
 - i. R. Bensel stated the committee met last night
- c. Campus Welfare Committee
 - i. A. Juan stated that the Committee met to start work on a resolution for the details of the public safety forum and discussed a university-wide Narcan training to prevent overdose. A. Juan asked for clarification on a statement in the bylaws that there is always one elected and one non-elected Assembly representatives on the committee. He stated that the Graduate and Professional School Assembly brought two elected representatives and that the bylaws do not exclusively prohibit two elected representatives. D. Cady stated that given precedent, he deferred to the bylaw requiring one voting representative and one non-voting representative on the Committee, but that A. Juan should bring up the issue in a future meeting.
- d. Campus Committee on Infrastructure, Technology, and the Environment
 - i. Nothing to report

X. Liaison Reports

- a. Nothing to report

XI. Adjournment



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- a. A. Juan moved to adjourn the meeting and D. Hiner seconded.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:07pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

PJ Brown

Clerk of the Assembly