

Cornell University University Assembly

Cornell University Assembly

Minutes of the November 15th, 2022 Meeting

4:45 - 6:15 pm

Room 401, Physical Sciences Building | Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair D. Cady called the meeting to order at 4:50 in Room 401 of the Physical Sciences Building.
- b. *Members Present:* G. Akkan, M. Benda, R. Bensel, D. Cady, K. Cram, A. Haenlin-Mott, P. Hanley, M. Heeney, D. Hiner, D. Howell, Y. Hua, A. Juan, J. Kruser, M. McEntee, B. Milles, V. Valencia, S. Williams
- c. *Members Absent:* O. Akujuo, E. DeRosa, I. Hewson, J. Sun,
- d. *Also Present:* M. Pollack, J. Malina, T. Chen, E. Kalweit, J. Withers, A. Breitstein

II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohono (Cayuga Nation)

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

III. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

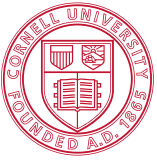
- a. D. Cady called for late additions to the agenda.

IV. Approval of the November 1st, 2022, Minutes

- a. R. Bensel motioned to postpone the approval of the minutes from the November 1st meeting, M. Heeney seconded.

V. Open Forum

- a. Meeting with President Martha Pollack and Vice President Joel Malina
 - i. D. Cady introduced M. Pollack and J. Malina to the Assembly.
 1. M. Pollack stated that there have been numerous advances in academic distinction on campus. She also stated that the University has made strides to improve environmental sustainability on campus.
 2. M. Pollack stated that the University now has a multi-faceted plan for renovating McGraw Hall and that Atkinson Hall is currently under construction, which will house the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability. She also stated that the University makes significant contributions to TCAT operating expenses to improve public transportation on campus to subsidize the cost of the university-wide Omnibus pass. She stated that the TCAT's operation changes are due to the general trend of a labor shortage.



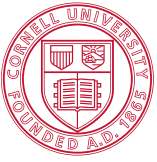
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3. M. Pollack stated that the University has adopted the Okanagan Charter to secure the University's commitment to advancing the recommendations of the Student Mental Health Review.
 4. M. Pollack stated that the capacity for the University to pursue all its efforts is due to the successful fundraising received from alumni.
 5. M. Pollack stated that the University is dedicated to improving the cost of first-generation students to attend the University. She also stated that the University has a goal of fundraising \$500 million to help provide financial aid to students and control the costs of admission.
 6. She also stated that the University has instituted a universal unlimited meal plan required for all first-year students to assuage food insecurity and the Cornell Academic Materials Program (CAMP), in which students pay a flat rate of \$225 for their textbooks each semester.
 7. M. Pollack stated that the University is considering and monitoring the *North Carolina* and *Harvard* cases, which she stated will dramatically impact university admissions.
- ii. R. Bense asked J. Malina about Ann Coulter's presentation on November 9th, which was disrupted by an organized student demonstration that has since garnered 300,000 hits online. He asked what kinds of punishment J. Malina believes will discourage this kind of behavior in the future.
1. M. Pollack stated that the police handled the situation as best they could, and that community pressure is necessary for the situation to be changed.
- iii. D. Cady stated that there has been a lot of conversation within the Assembly on student organizations, particularly Greek organizations, regarding sexual assault. He asked M. Pollack for context of her statement on the issue.
1. M. Pollack stated that she was horrified by the behavior of the students in question and that she had put a series of regulations that seemed not to fix this kind of behavior. She stated that she believe community discussion is necessary to eradicate this kind of behavior from the University.
 2. J. Malina stated that the university community should become active in halting this kind of behavior.
 3. S. Williams stated that she believe the structure of the Council, a student organization, needs more oversight. M. Pollack stated that there is an office of university administrators in charge of Greek life.



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4. A. Juan stated that as a member of Greek life, this is an issue that is hard to address. He stated that he believes there are benefits to being in a fraternity and that there has not been an occurrence of a member being kicked out of a fraternity for sexual assault.
 5. M. Pollack asked whether the benefits of the fraternity system outweigh its downsides.
 6. D. Hiner stated that the punishment of the whole fraternity for the actions of a few students is contradictory to the idea that these organizations should come forward with the truth in the future because of a lack of trust.
 7. A. Juan stated that the removal of Greek life from Cornell should not be considered because of its importance to the culture of Cornell, that there are processes in place for the removal of a member from a fraternity, and that asked whether the fraternity itself should be punished for the actions of one or a few members.
 8. M. Pollack stated that the more important issue to look at is the rates of sexual assault are higher among fraternities.
 9. A. Juan stated that Cornell is just one university and there are numerous other universities facing the same struggles.
 10. D. Cady stated that Cornell is in a unique position as a leader of universities. M. Pollack stated that the eradication of Greek life would have a massive national impact.
- iv. B. Milles stated that she has brought the issue of mental health to the Faculty Senate and that many faculty members have asked her to come forward about the exacerbation of administrative tasks on staff, faculty, and employees. She asked how the Cornell community can participate in a positive change in mental wellness at the university.
1. M. Pollack stated that it is helpful for her to know how the bodies of the Cornell community are feeling about post-pandemic mental wellness and that there are programs being initiated with the goal of preventing the need for therapy. She also stated that the Assembly's position as possessing great influence among their constituents can be used as a vehicle for further discussion on the issue.
- v. D. Cady asked about updates on the resolutions passed by the Assemblies on the Natatorium Project.
1. M. Pollack stated that the administration hears the Assemblies in their efforts to put in a new pool, but that a pool would require the construction of a new building and that this requires a resource of



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funding that the University currently does not have. She also stated that the administration is focused on improving people-focused issues such as salary.

- vi. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that the work that has gone into the employee survey sent out by Human Resources has increased interest in what the office plans to do with the data they have collected.
 - 1. M. Pollack emphasized the importance of the data collected by the survey and that the administration's awareness of the primary concerns of employees will allow the administration to better understand where they should prioritize their resources.

VI. Business of the Day

- a. D. Cady thanked the Assembly for their focus and interest in President Pollack's visit and encouraged the Assembly members to continue the conversations brought up during the visit.
- b. Should meetings end at 6:00 or 6:15 pm?
 - i. D. Cady introduced the question of whether meetings should end at 6pm or 6:15pm. He stated that the day's agenda reflected a 4:45-6:15pm meeting time while the the minutes from August 30, 2022 read 4:45-6:00pm.
 - ii. D. Howell stated that she did not have any additional comments and that she is rather seeking clarification on the meeting end-time.
 - iii. A. Juan stated that he remembered assigning the meeting time as 4:45-6:00pm.
 - iv. P. Hanley motioned the issue of whether meetings should end at 6:00 or 6:15pm to a vote, R. Bensel seconded.
 - 1. In a vote of 14-2-1, the Assembly voted to allow meetings to continue to take place from 4:45-6:15pm.

VII. Assembly Reports

- a. Student Assembly
 - i. V. Valencia stated that the Assembly acknowledged the crime alerts that occurred last weekend and released a statement and passed a resolution supporting the basic needs coalition. She also stated that the Assembly elected a new University Assembly representative, Shelby Williams. She also stated that over the past few semesters, the Assembly worked on the Office of Ethics bylaws.



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1. S. Williams introduced herself to the Assembly, stating that she is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences studying government.
- b. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
 - i. P. Hanley stated that President Pollack attended their last meeting, that they currently have a few elections, and that they are working on a pilot program with Big Red Barn bringing together graduate students for dinners as a method of community building. He also stated that they are bringing together applied economics, microbiology, and nutrition as their next dinner.
- c. Employee Assembly
 - i. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that Cassie Josephs from Employee Experience will attend their November 16th meeting and that she will present on a new guide on diversity issues of Ithaca. She also stated that the Assembly's Priorities Poll has not yet closed and that they are beginning to analyze the results they have. She also stated that there are a few openings in the Assembly and that J. Withers's position has been filled. She also stated that the President's Address to Staff will take place on February 8th and that the EA Appreciations award will be presented at that address.
- d. Faculty Senate
 - i. B. Milles stated that the Senate met on November 9th and that President Pollack attended that meeting. She also stated that an issue of interest is the pilot project for faculty navigating Student Disability Services and that she is worried about individuals who cannot report their struggles.
 1. A. Haenlin-Mott asked whether B. Milles would be willing to expand on the accommodations concern.
 - a. B. Milles stated that the number of requests and the lack of information presented with a request poses issues for faculty in offering students accommodations.
 2. M. Heeney stated that there is a lot of confusion since a lot of rooms have been equipped for Zoom options, which has restricted the ability of students who cannot attend class to participate.
 - a. D. Cady stated that the Assembly could draft a resolution on the issue.
 - b. J. Kruser stated that he is unaware of CIT taking down technology in rooms and that since each college has its own IT department that dictate what kind of technology is within each room, it is possible that college IT departments disequipped the rooms mentioned by M. Heeney.



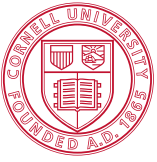
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VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee
 - i. Nothing to report
- b. Codes and Judicial Committee
 - i. R. Bensel stated that the Assembly's passing of the motion to request a meeting with President Pollack has resulted in the scheduling of said meeting on November 29th and that the delay in meeting with the President is odd. He also stated that the Committee met on November 14th and drafted a few ideas for revamping the Committee. He also stated that while he does not expect to have a full proposal (5:56 pm) completed by the end of the semester, but that they intend to work on this throughout the semester. He stated that one issue that is pertinent to the Assembly is the question of whether trustees can veto the bylaws of the Assembly. He also stated that the Committee needs additional members, as they only have five members as of now.
 1. A. Haenlin-Mott asked whether the committee meets via Zoom or in-person. R. Bensel stated that the Committee is in-person, but that a Zoom option could possibly be coordinated with a laptop.
 2. D. Cady asked what constituencies are underrepresented in the Committee. R. Bensel stated that there is one position occupied by the Student Assembly, the Employee Assembly has no members, and the Graduate and Professional School Assembly and Faculty Senate are both short one position. D. Cady stated that they will send out an email to constituency leaders on the expectations for serving on the committee.
- c. Campus Welfare Committee
 - i. A. Juan stated that the Committee has doubled in size but was unable to meet last week. He stated the Committee's new meeting time will likely be Mondays from 1:30 to 2:30 and that the Committee hopes to continue working on their Public Safety Forum resolution.
- d. Campus Committee on Infrastructure, Technology, and the Environment
 - i. D. Hiner stated that he intends to meet within the next few weeks and hopes to plan a standard meeting time on off-weeks.

IX. Liaison Reports

- a. Nothing to report



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X. Adjournment

- a. D. Cady stated that he hopes the Assembly members will continue to keep in mind the issues brought up by President Pollack and encouraged the Assembly to draft resolutions on these issues for their committees and constituencies.
- b. R. Bensei motioned to adjourn the meeting, P. Hanley seconded.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

PJ Brown

Clerk of the Assembly