

Cornell University
University Assembly

U.A. Resolution #3

Bylaw Changes to Require Recorded Voting

[11/24/2020]

1 **Sponsored By: Bennett Sherr, Undergraduate Representative**

2 **Abstract:** This resolution proposes adding a subsection to Article II of the Bylaws of the
3 University Assembly that would require recorded votes be taken for all voting matters outside of
4 executive session or organizational meetings.

5 **Whereas,** Article II of the Charter of the Cornell University Assembly states, “The object of the
6 Assembly is to improve and sustain the involvement of the campus community in the governance
7 of campus affairs affecting the broad campus community by establishing open, effective, and
8 efficient channels of communication between and amongst the community and university
9 administration,”

10 **Whereas,** the University Assembly votes on decisions that are within the general interest of the
11 Cornell community,

12 **Whereas,** students have become disinterested in and untrusting of shared governance,

13 **Whereas,** voter turnout in undergraduate elections to the SA and UA during the Fall 2020
14 semester ranged from 16.85% to 29.77%,

15 **Whereas,** with minimal exception, Student Assembly elections have maintained turnout rates
16 lower than 50%,

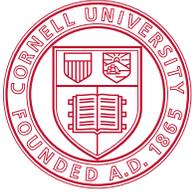
17 **Whereas,** voter turnout in Employee Assembly elections was 14.55% during the Fall 2020
18 semester,

19 **Whereas,** students lack faith in shared governance due to the lack of transparency between the
20 legislative bodies and the general population,

21 **Whereas,** secret ballots and non-roll call votes lessen transparency and reduce the Cornell
22 community’s ability to hold elected representatives accountable,

23 **Whereas,** Section 2.4 of the Cornell University Assembly Bylaws requires adherence to
24 Robert’s Rules of Order for all things not addressed in Article II of the Bylaws,

25 **Whereas,** Robert’s Rules of Order does not mandate recorded votes on all voting matters of the
26 body,



Cornell University University Assembly

27 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the University Assembly will amend its Bylaws by adding the
28 existing language to Article II immediately following Section 2.14, to read:

29 **“Section 2.15: Voting Protocol**

30 The Assembly will require votes be recorded in such a way that the names of the yeas, nays, and
31 abstentions are accessible to the Cornell community for all voting matters except during
32 executive session or organizational meetings. How the votes are taken will remain at the
33 discretion of the Assembly and should be decided upon during the first organizational meeting;
34 however, in the event that no decision is made, the Chair is encouraged to decide how voting
35 should take place.”

36 **Be it finally resolved**, this change to the Cornell University Assembly Bylaws shall remain
37 active beyond the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, or until it is removed by a subsequent
38 amendment.