

## U.A. Resolution # 6

### Requesting Specific Information on Labor Practices at Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar

February 9, 2016

1 **Sponsored by:**

2 **Alexander Thomson, Graduate/Professional Student; Executive Vice Chair, University**  
3 **Assembly**

4 **Matthew Indimine, Undergraduate; Undergraduate Representative, University Assembly**

5  
6 **On Behalf of:**

7 **UA Campus Welfare Committee (Passed 6-0-0 on 2/2/2016);**

8 **Cornell Organization for Labor Action: Carunya Achar, Michael Ferrer, Allison**  
9 **Considine, Xavier Eddy, Deepa Saharia**

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11 **Whereas,** Article III of the University Assembly Charter grants the University Assembly the  
12 authority to “examine, on its own initiative, matters which involve the interests or  
13 concern the welfare of a substantial segment of the campus community;” and  
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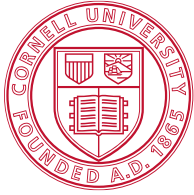
15 **Whereas,** Recent protests have revealed among students, staff, and faculty a substantial interest  
16 in the labor practices and conditions at Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar (WCM-Q); and  
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18 **Whereas,** WCM-Q shares not only the Cornell name, but also its common values, educational  
19 mission, excellence in research, and commitment to bettering the global community;  
20 furthermore, WCM-Q draws faculty from both the Ithaca and New York City campuses;  
21 and  
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23 **Whereas,** According to the Operating and Capital Budget Plan FY-2016, WCM-Q contributes  
24 over \$88 million annually to Cornell’s operating budget, which directly affects the  
25 financial position of the university as a whole; and  
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27 **Whereas,** Cornell’s practices both at home and abroad reflect upon the institution as a whole,  
28 impacting the prestige and the reputation of the broader Cornell community, including its  
29 administrators, faculty, staff, and students; and  
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31 **Whereas,** Qatari labor practices enforce the kafala system, a migrant-labor monitoring process  
32 which requires all unskilled laborers to have an in-country sponsor, usually their  
33 employer, who is responsible for their visa and legal status. This system creates



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34 opportunities for employers to commit massive labor exploitation with minimal legal  
35 repercussions. Migrant workers compose 94% of the Qatari labor force and ubiquitously  
36 suffer under a system in which employer consent is required to change jobs, leave the  
37 country, get a driver's license, rent a home, or open a checking account; and  
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39 **Whereas,** An initial investigation into working conditions in Education City by the International  
40 Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) - a global confederation of workers' organizations -  
41 found instances of forced labor, cramped living conditions, low wages, and passport  
42 confiscation. The results of this investigation were sent to the presidents of universities  
43 present in Education City in March of 2014, including Cornell, with only Georgetown  
44 responding to the letter; and  
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46 **Whereas,** Cornell University, as an institution, has a moral obligation to ensure that its  
47 community members are treated with dignity and afforded the same basic human rights,  
48 no matter where they are in the world or in what capacity they serve the university; and  
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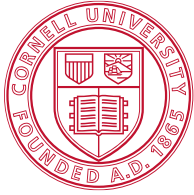
50 **Whereas,** WCM-Q recognizes its positive role in society, stating in its mission a commitment  
51 "to provide the highest quality of care to the community;" and  
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53 **Whereas,** The 2022 World Cup will place Qatar in the global spotlight, likely exposing  
54 Education City, WCM-Q, and Cornell University to increased scrutiny by the media and  
55 viewers around the world; and  
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57 **Whereas,** President Garrett responded to these concerns in two letters to Cornell Organization  
58 for Labor Action (COLA) in September and October 2015, a response to Student  
59 Assembly Resolution 16 in November 2015, and a letter to the Coalition Against Gulf  
60 Exploitation (CAGE) in January 2016. However, these responses about labor practices  
61 and conditions at WCM-Q have lacked sufficient detail for the University Assembly to  
62 objectively evaluate the issue; therefore  
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64 **Be it resolved,** that the University Assembly, in order to promote transparency, requests  
65 information about workforce policies and practices at WCM-Q, specifically:

- 66 • The composition of the workforce at WCM-Q, including the number of Cornell  
67 employees and contracted employees and the roles these worker groups fulfill (e.g.  
68 job group and job family analysis),
- 69 • The names and affiliations of third party employers contracted by WCM-Q,
- 70 • The policies and standards used by WCM-Q to choose third party employers,
- 71 • The specific worker protections stipulated in contracts between WCM-Q and third  
72 party employers, and Cornell's options for redress if those stipulations are violated,
- 73 • Any and all policies and practices WCM-Q uses to ensure Cornell's standards are  
74 being upheld, including the resources available to workers with grievances; and  
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76 **Resolved**, that the information in lines 64-74 be made publicly available and presented to the  
77 University Assembly by the May 3rd, 2016 meeting; and

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79 **Resolved**, that the University Assembly requests the details of any and all previous labor  
80 investigations or audits conducted at WCM-Q by Cornell, including the investigators, the  
81 date(s) of investigation(s), and the conclusions made by the investigation(s); and

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83 **Resolved**, that the University Assembly requests the details, where known, of any and all  
84 previous labor investigations or audits conducted at WCM-Q by external organizations,  
85 including the investigators, the date(s) of investigation(s), and the conclusions made by  
86 the investigation(s); and

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88 **Resolved**, that the University Assembly requests, where not in conflict with the law, the details  
89 of any and all contact regarding salaries, policies, and protections with contracted staff at  
90 WCM-Q; and

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92 **Resolved**, that the University Assembly requests the protocols and results of any and all  
93 monitoring of the working conditions of contracted staff conducted by the WCM-Q  
94 administration; and

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96 **Resolved**, that the University Assembly requests the details of any and all contact with vendors  
97 regarding benefits and protections mandated for contracted staff; and

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99 **Resolved**, that the information requested in lines 79-97 be made publicly available and presented  
100 to the University Assembly during a regularly scheduled meeting no later than February  
101 2017; and

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103 **Be it Further Resolved**, that the University Assembly will maintain impartiality on the issue of  
104 labor conditions at Cornell's international facilities until further information becomes  
105 available; and

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107 **Be it Finally Resolved**, that this resolution will be transmitted to President Elizabeth Garrett  
108 (upon her return), Acting President Michael Kotlikoff, Weill Cornell Medicine Dean and  
109 Provost for Medical Affairs Laurie Glimcher, WCM-Q Dean Javaid Sheikh, WCM-Q  
110 director of human resources Omar Baki, and any individuals or organizations involved in  
111 gathering the requested information.

**Adopted by Vote of the Assembly (10-0-1), February 23, 2016,**

*Matthew Battaglia*

**Matthew Battaglia**  
Chair, University Assembly