



# Cornell University Student Assembly

## Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, March 8, 2018 Meeting  
4:45pm-6:30pm in Willard Straight Hall: Memorial Room

### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. J. Kim called the meeting to order at 4:48 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
  - i. *Present*: T. Ball [0.5], D. Barbaria [0], A. Chowdhury [2], R. Cornell [2.5], V. Devatha [1], O. Din [2], H. Hassan [3], N. Hernandez [0], S. Iruvanti [0], G. Kaufman [0], J. Kim [1], S. Lim [0], D. Nyakaru [0], G. Park [0], C. Schott [1.25], E. Shapiro [1], J. Sim [1], M. Valadez [1], I. Wallace [1]
  - ii. *Absent*: O. Corn (*Unexcused*) [1], O. Egharevba (*Unexcused*) [1], R. Herz (*Excused*) [5], M. Indimine (*Excused*) [1.5], L. Lipschutz (*Excused*) [4.75], S. Park (*Unexcused*) [2.5], M. Peralta-Ochoa (*Excused*) [1]

### II. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

### III. Approval of the Minutes:

- a. March 1<sup>st</sup> Minutes
  - i. There was a motion to amend the minutes to correctly reflect Tyler Henry's title as Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion of the Interfraternity Council – **amended**.
  - ii. Motion to approve the minutes – **approved**.

### IV. Announcements & Reports

- a. Academic Policy Committee
  - i. Alexis Pollitto said that the Committee is continuing to collect results on their survey regarding course pre-enrollment, as the response rate is not what they would like it to be at. She urged the Student Assembly to continue sharing the survey with their constituents, and added that a resolution is currently being produced that would address the fact that Cornell is currently a test site for neither the MCAT nor the general GRE.
- b. Mayra Valadez
  - i. M. Valadez wished the Assembly a happy International Women's Day, and commented that this day does not empower all women. She added that she, Joseph Anderson, N. Hernandez, and I. Wallace specifically would like to celebrate women such as (but not limited to) minority women, transgender women, differently-abled women, and women who are survivors of sexual assault. She said they would also like to acknowledge the lack of representation of women on the Assembly, at Cornell, and in the United States government, and that everyone must do more to empower women across the world.

## V. Presentations:

- a. Consensual Relationships Policy Committee
  - i. V. Devatha motioned to amend the agenda to move Resolution 39 before Resolution 32 – **amended**.
  - ii. Dean Charles Van Loan and Anna Waymack presenting.
  - iii. C. Van Loan said that times are different now than they were decades ago, and that Cornell University’s policies regarding relationships between faculty and students have not changed with the times.
  - iv. C. Van Loan said that he and A. Waymack will be visiting all five assemblies, and urged the Student Assembly to vote on an edited version of the Consensual Relationships Policy Committee (henceforth CRPC)’s proposed policy. He also said that it is important that there be some sort of consensus regarding this policy when it comes out of the five bodies.
  - v. A. Waymack said that this seems to be unprecedented because of the possibility of input from all communities and giving each a say on the Committee. She remarked that multiple Committee representatives are currently on the Assembly at this time.
  - vi. A. Waymack said that the current policy in place at Cornell has no specific mention of undergraduate students, and that peer institutions either address undergraduates, or completely ban relationships between faculty and undergraduates based on age. She also said that the proposed policy intends to focus on keeping avenues of study unrestricted for undergraduates and to ensure academic freedom and integrity, and would not consider age as a reason to ban a relationship.
  - vii. Zachary Schmetterer asked about the level of discretion given the breadth of possible associations in regard to the “Undergrads as Authorities” clause. He also asked whether this policy would ban relationships between faculty and undergraduates in cases where the faculty member is neither teaching the student nor in the same department.
    1. The “Undergrads as Authorities” clause currently reads “Faculty will ask T.A.s for romantic or sexual conflicts of interest at start of semester, and arrange grading, evaluations, etc. accordingly”.
  - viii. A. Waymack said that that the policy would cover undergraduates regardless of field of study, since the relationship would prevent undergraduates from taking classes in that department, which would violate the principle of “Any Person, Any Study”. She also said that it seems to be manageable to have a different TA grade a student’s work in case of a conflict of interest.
  - ix. C. Van Loan said that this policy would be discussed in every class when the TAs meet with their professors before the beginning of the semester, and that any TA with a potential conflict of interest would talk to the professor and work out a plan in advance under the recusal plan. He added that every Cornell policy has room for thoughtful and well-reasoned exceptions.
  - x. V. Devatha asked if this policy is meant to be proactive or reactive (that is, whether faculty-undergraduate relationships have happened in the past or this is meant to prevent them in the future). He also asked how this policy would affect undergraduate-graduate relationships.
  - xi. A. Waymack said that undergraduate and graduate student relationships take many forms, and that there is no one single answer for that question.
  - xii. C. Van Loan said that this policy is 95% prevention, and that its intention is to preserve the academic environment and to make the rules clear.
  - xiii. A. Waymack added that it would not be ideal for there to be scenarios where it’s rumored that people got certain grades because they slept with the

- instructor in charge.
- xiv. N. Hernandez yielded her time to the chair.
  - xv. D. Barbaria asked the presenters to discuss where the committee is leaning regarding relationships between graduate students and faculty. He also asked how enforcement of the policy would work.
  - xvi. A. Waymack said that the aim is to encourage disclosure and recusal, and that enforcement would take this into account. She added that she cannot give solid answers in this regard due to recently received information that has not yet been incorporated, and that their focus is to remedy academic harm.
  - xvii. C. Van Loan said that the goal of the policy is to inspire ethical behavior, and that they must hit a balance in regard to enforcement in accordance with this.
  - xviii. A. Waymack said that sanctions would be imposed in cases of prohibited relationships, and that financial sanctions are a probable outcome in this regard (such as impact on salary increases).
  - xix. G. Kaufman said that he was initially skeptical about the direction that this presentation would take, but said that C. Van Loan and A. Waymack had done a good job. He asked about the aforementioned new information, and how this would impact enforcement.
  - xx. A. Waymack said that another office is currently drafting policy that would move the purview of this policy to that office.
  - xxi. C. Van Loan said that the aforementioned office is the Cornell University Title IX Office, and added that the CRPC's policy is a procedure, and that key attributes of the enforcement policy will be in any final policy, regardless of what office it goes through.
  - xxii. Z. Schmetterer said that conflicts of interest take on many forms, and that undergraduate relationships that are not sexual in nature could still influence things. He asked where this policy would draw the line, and remarked that the focus should be on actual conflicts of interest, and not on creating a wave of paperwork.
  - xxiii. A. Waymack said that as a culture, we single out three different things for conflicts of interest, namely nepotism, financial conflicts, and romantic/sexual conflicts. She said that they only have purview over conflicts of interest regarding the latter.
  - xxiv. C. Van Loan said that creating and preserving a certain type of academic climate is paramount.
  - xxv. J. Kim said that Shivani Parikh, J. Anderson, and G. Park are on the CRPC.

## **VI. New Business/Business of the Day:**

- a. Resolution 39: Making Cornell's Economics program STEM-certified
  - i. C. Schott said that limiting the opportunities for one group of international students is unfair treatment for both international students and the student body at large. He added that this resolution urges the administration to get the Economics major reclassified as STEM by New York State, as this gives international students who graduate with this major three years of work authorization in the United States.
    - 1. These students would otherwise have only one year of work authorization in this country.
  - ii. C. Schott said that this change carries enormous benefits and is fitting of the current major curriculum, and that the curriculum is more STEM-centered than STEM-certified programs at peer institutions. He also said that the College of Arts & Sciences and the International Students & Scholars Office are working on changes

- to get certified. He also commented that this is his last semester at Cornell, and urged the Assembly to continue to stand for the rights of international students.
- iii. S. Lim voiced her support for the work that C. Schott has done, and added that this reclassification will encourage more international students to attend Cornell.
  - iv. O. Din asked whether or not this resolution should be sent to other relevant parties.
  - v. C. Schott said that he does not see it as necessary, but that it could help.
  - vi. J. Kim said that when a resolution gets conveyed to President Pollack, that it is also sent to any other relevant parties.
  - vii. H. Hassan said that he knows many international students who are Economics majors, and that this resolution would be a huge benefit to them.
  - viii. G. Kaufman motioned to amend the resolution such that “Chair of Faculty Senate” reads “Dean of Faculty” – **amended**.
  - ix. C. Schott motioned to amend the resolution such that the clause “take appropriate action” now reads “apply to the New York State Department of Education” – **amended** 18-0-1.
  - x. There was a motion to vote.
  - xi. J. Kim said that any resolution under New Business normally waits a week before a vote.
  - xii. C. Schott motioned to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **approved** 18-0-1.
  - xiii. A representative of The Cornell Daily Sun asked how many international students are Economics majors, and asked whether any other majors could also be certified. He also asked whether any administrators have voiced their support for this endeavor.
  - xiv. C. Schott said that there is support, particularly from Dean Van Loan and from the Chair of the Economics Department. He added that, while there is likely a substantial number of international Economics majors, that particular information in this regard is unavailable, and that other majors could be reclassified as STEM.
  - xv. Motion to vote on Resolution 39 – **approved** 18-0-1.

## VII. Business of the Day

- a. Resolution 32: Accommodating Muslim Holidays
  - i. O. Din motioned to vote – **approved** 18-0-1.
- b. Resolution 33: Increasing Gender Neutral Bathrooms
  - i. I. Wallace said that this resolution will be one in a series that assures access to gender-neutral facilities to all on campus, and motioned to make a series of amendments – **amended** 18-0-1.
    1. Amend J. Anderson’s name to the sponsors and signatories lists.
    2. Amend line 21 to read “Whereas. Robert Purcell Community Center, Appel Commons, and the Townhouse Community Center, important community centers for freshman, contain no gender neutral bathrooms;”
    3. Amend line 32 to read “...that in buildings where there are no gender neutral or single user restrooms, Cornell University will redesignate a gendered multi-stall bathroom to be gender neutral;”
    4. Amend lines 35 and 36 such that “all-gender inclusive” reads “gender neutral”.
    5. Amend to strike line 41.
    6. Amend to add on line 46 “Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly supports the Residential Student Congress resolution entitled “Gender-Neutral Bathroom Expansion in Residence Halls and Community Center”.
    7. Amend lines 47 through 49 such that they read “...Dean Vijay Pendakur, and Vice President Lombardi...” and to strike “Shorna Allred” through

“Steven Jackson”.

- ii. J. Anderson said that he passed a resolution in the Residential Student Congress that is relevant to gender-neutral bathrooms in residential areas in parallel to Resolution 33.
  - 1. This resolution passed in the RSC 25-0-2.
- iii. Motion to vote on Resolution 33 – **approved** 19-0-1.
- c. Resolution 34: Risley Crosswalk
  - i. I. Wallace motioned to amend such that “Funding Committee” reads “Fund Commission” – **amended**.
  - ii. S. Lim said that this resolution passed 6-0-0 in the Campus Planning Committee.
  - iii. Motion to vote on Resolution 34 – **approved** 18-0-1.
- d. Resolution 35: Creating an Asian American Living Learning Unit (LLU)
  - i. S. Parikh voiced her shock that some Assembly members have questioned her credentials and ability to speak on this issue authoritatively, and asked anyone who doubts her ability in this regard to examine their bias.
  - ii. J. Kim said that he was not present at the previous meeting, but did hear that there was a tone of disrespect, and urged the Assembly to carry themselves properly, even if their disrespect was unintentional.
  - iii. C. Schott asked whether the LLU is meant for Asians or Asian-Americans, as the term is used interchangeably in the resolution.
  - iv. S. Parikh said that it is more focused on the American diaspora but anyone would be welcome.
  - v. G. Park asked whether the LLU would engage in activities representing the different cultures of Asia, and referenced the similar events that Ujamaa engages in.
  - vi. S. Parikh replied in the affirmative, but said that she could not speak on any specific plans.
  - vii. Z. Schmetterer asked whether this resolution was brought through a reviewing committee, since the resolution does not list a reviewing committee.
  - viii. S. Parikh said that the resolution was passed through the RSC, and that it therefore does not need to.
  - ix. I. Wallace advised the sponsors to have a game plan when they meet with Vice President Lombardi.
  - x. N. Hernandez said that the program houses are very important, and advised that people who do not believe people would live in the LLU to look at the success of other program houses, and that it is a big problem that people would even question the interest or necessity of the LLU.
  - xi. Motion to vote on Resolution 35 – **approved** 18-0-1.
- e. Resolution 36: Supporting the Activism of Prospective Students
  - i. J. Anderson said that the aim of the resolution is to ask for clarification surrounding Cornell’s statement regarding nonviolent protest, such as what constitutes “nonviolent” and whether prospective students will know about or see this statement.
    - 1. The statement from Cornell was made on Twitter, and reads as follows: “Cornell University values civic discourse as essential to the academic mission and promotes public engagement as critical to inspiring future leaders. Disciplinary action resulting from responsible engagement in non-violent protest will not jeopardize admission to Cornell”.
  - ii. Motion to vote on Resolution 36 – **approved** 18-0-1.

## VIII. New Business

- a. Resolution 37: Improving Communication and Access to the Student Body
  - i. V. Devatha motioned to table the resolution indefinitely.
  - ii. J. Sim said that the registrar would have to be contacted, since this is not an Office of the Assemblies issue, nor is there a single listserv that goes out to every student.
  - iii. V. Devatha said that the Assembly technically is not supposed to be sending out newsletters, and that this requires deeper discussion.
  - iv. O. Din asked if there is any harm in passing the resolution regardless.
  - v. V. Devatha said that there was no consultation of relevant bodies.
  - vi. O. Din said that this has come up before and hit various roadblocks each time.
  - vii. V. Devatha said that, in the future, they will have conversations with the registrar and other relevant bodies.
  - viii. G. Kaufman recommended that they keep the resolution on the agenda and table it until the next meeting while these discussions are underway, and advised the sponsors of the resolution to meet with the registrar. He also said that he does not believe that the Office of the Assemblies should be negotiating on behalf of the Assembly.
  - ix. V. Devatha and J. Sim voiced their support for G. Kaufman's recommendation.
  - x. Motion to table – **tabled** 18-0-1.
- b. Resolution 38: Reinstating Statement Policy
  - i. J. Anderson said that this resolution came out of a conversation that he and N. Hernandez had with the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life. He added that in the past, a statement was issued whenever an organization was put on interim suspension, and there have been no such statements this year despite there having been interim suspensions.
  - ii. N. Hernandez said that this is an issue regarding transparency.
  - iii. V. Devatha said that he has had a conversation in this regard, and advised that the sponsors reach out to Dr. Joseph Burke by next week, when this resolution will be voted on. He also said that he knows that past infractions will be published soon unless there is an upcoming hearing.
    - 1. Joseph Burke is the Executive Director of Campus & Community Engagement.
    - 2. Past infractions involving hazing will be posted on a separate website related to hazing.
  - iv. D. Nyakaru asked what organizations were suspended this semester that prompted this.
  - v. J. Anderson said that he did not know every organization exactly, but there are numerous affected organizations.
  - vi. Z. Schmetterer said that, as a member of Greek life, that he is happy to see this resolution, and that it is a real issue that Greek organizations are not holding themselves accountable.
  - vii. G. Kaufman echoed Z. Schmetterer's sentiments, and added that this resolution should not be passed today, as it needs more time to be discussed. He also asked why the statements need to come from Dr. Burke.
  - viii. J. Anderson said that it is past precedent that it came from his position, and that if it comes from him, then statements will be posted on the University statement website.
  - ix. G. Kaufman asked whether or not interim suspension was only levied on organizations before they are found to be guilty, and asked whether it would be best for this to only be for organizations that are actually found guilty.
  - x. H. Hassan said that, under interim suspension, activity must cease, and that if it is announced that an organization is under interim suspension, then students will know that they cannot associate with the organization.

- xi. V. Devatha said that interim suspension is based on information at hand, and that it is imposed when there is concern that members of an organization may be of harm to themselves or others.
- xii. J. Anderson said that in the past, to his knowledge, that when an organization was put on interim suspension and then taken off, that the statement was made.
- xiii. N. Hernandez said that this was the policy in place before, and that the sponsors are just confused as to why it has stopped.
- xiv. C. Schott asked how long interim suspensions typically last.
- xv. H. Hassan said that they usually last far shorter than an actual suspension, and that it is his understanding that interim suspensions must be resolved within the semester that they are levied.
- xvi. Travis Cabbell asked how this policy would affect non-Greek life student organizations.
- xvii. J. Anderson said that such things are under the purview of the Judicial Administrator.
- xviii. T. Cabbell asked a clarifying question.
- xix. J. Anderson said that if a non-Greek organization is placed on interim suspension, then that is levied by the Judicial Administrator. He added that this resolution uses the language “campus organization” since the sponsors did not want to single out Greek life, and that other organizations can be just as bad.
- xx. G. Park yielded her time to the chair.
- xxi. S. Parikh yielded her time to the chair.
- xxii. J. Anderson asked that an executive formally invite Dr. Burke to come to the next Assembly meeting and motioned to table the resolution – **tabled**.

## **IX. Additional Announcements and Reports**

- a. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
  - i. A member said that D. Barbaria was not present at the time to give his report.
- b. Faculty Senate
  - i. A member said that S. Romero Zavala resigned.
  - ii. C. Schott said that he is on a non-negligible amount of committees for which he is receiving no emails.
- c. Employee Assembly
  - i. C. Schott said that he missed the previous meeting because he had the wrong schedule, but that he is now on schedule and will be at the next meeting.
  - ii. T. Cabbell said that he has yet to be added to the Library Council listserv and that he knows that there are meetings coming up. He added that he had been previously referred to an alumni without a listed email.
- d. University Assembly
  - i. C. Schott said that there was no meeting this week, and that another committee passed two resolutions and discussed the issue regarding divestment from Puerto Rico distress holdings.
    - 1. The two resolutions were in regard to a crosswalk outside Risley Hall and gender-neutral bathrooms.
  - ii. O. Din asked how the University Assembly was feeling regarding divestment.
  - iii. C. Schott said that there is significant concern about aggravating alumni, especially Seth Klarman '79, and advised any Student Assembly member who wants this to pass through the University Assembly to come to the meeting and speak.
- e. Codes and Judicial Committee/Hate Speech Working Group
  - i. T. Cabbell said that the Hate Speech Working Group is holding a forum the next day in Goldwin Smith Hall from 3:00-5:00 pm, and that they are also sending out dates and locations of the rest of the forums.

- f. Diversity and Inclusion
  - i. M. Valadez said that the Diversity and Inclusion Summit is happening, and that the Assembly will be having discussions as to whether attendance is mandatory for members, but asked that all members share the event on Facebook regardless.
  - ii. J. Anderson asked if all byline organizations are going to be invited.
  - iii. M. Valadez said that there was trouble getting the invitations out, but they have been sent. She also said that there was discussion on reaching out to other organizations, since too few organizations fit the criteria of the initial plan of the summit.
    - 1. The initial plan was to invite organizations who are not necessarily known for diversity but have incorporated significant diversity initiatives into their operations.
- g. Elections Committee
  - i. T. Cabbell said that many members did not share J. Sim's flyer for the upcoming election and thanked those that did. He also said that today is the last candidate information session.
- h. Other Announcements
  - i. C. Schott said that this week is Africa Week, and said that he went to an event regarding African entrepreneurship, and urged other Assembly members to attend an event.
  - ii. N. Hernandez said that Culturefest is in two weeks.

**X. Adjournment**

- a. J. Kim adjourned the meeting at 6:27 pm.

**XI. Executive Session**

Respectfully Submitted,  
*John Hannan*  
Clerk of the Assembly