



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly
Minutes of the February 14, 2018 Meeting
12:15-1:30 PM
401 Physical Sciences Bldg.

I. Call to Order

- a. C. Wiggers called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.
- b. *Members Present:* I. Allen, C. Dawson, H. Depew, K. Fitch, A. Haenlin-Mott, A. Hourigan, A. Howell, L. Johnson-Kelly, J. Kruser, B. Roebal, C. Sanzone, K. Shiels, H. Sheldon, P. Thompson, C. Wiggers, S. Willcox
- c. *Members Absent:* P. Andersen, B. Ayanfodun, M. Carcella, T. Grove (excused), D. Harris, K. Mahoney, M. Mosereiff, B. Nicholson, S. Vaccaro

II. Call for Late Additions to the Agenda

- i. No late additions.

III. Business of the Day

- a. Presentation from the Chair
 - i. C. Wiggers asked EA members to communicate with their constituents and focus on the impacts they can make, including making sure communities are included in resolution discussions. C. Wiggers requested agility and flexibility from the assembly, reminding that their impacts will be determined by how quickly they respond, asking them to utilize the bylaws, such as calling for special meetings when needed. He acknowledged they were volunteers who wanted to make contributions and pass enthusiasm. He pushed the EA to motivate and inspire others to be active in doing things out of their comfort zone. C. Wiggers also announced that the Board of Trustees will be on campus from March 21-23. The EA committee chairs have been invited to a reception on the afternoon of March 21 between 3-4pm.
 - ii. P. Thompson clarified that it was the Trustee committee chairs and the whole EA assembly invited to the reception.
 - iii. C. Wiggers said the Kudos link on the EA page is not active yet. T. Grove, C. Wiggers, and the OA are meeting Friday morning to discuss the rewards and recognition process.
 - iv. C. Wiggers said he and C. Sanzone discussed that some people were left off the newsletter distribution list. They will try to be more detailed and work with OA. Last night, the UA met and discussed UA Resolution 11 concerning the terms of the time frame for the university judicial administrator. The resolution was tabled, but they are looking at an extension of perhaps a year. Law School Dean Eduardo Peñalver also came to speak about the presidential task force sub-committee on free speech, a relatively small group of 2 undergraduates, 2 graduates, 2 staff, and 2 faculty, and the dean. They have had one meeting, but are expected to have recommendations to the president by the end of academic year. This is not a decision-making body.
- b. Discussion: EA Representation and the Staff Survey

- i. J. Kruser requested a discussion about EA representation on the staff survey regarding how and when they are involved, and further changes down the road. There were some concerns expressed on the staff survey.
- ii. C. Sanzone clarified the question on the 2016 staff survey that asked whether employees felt they were being represented. This question was not covered in the sub-committees that made recommendations to the university.
- iii. C. Sanzone said the total response to the survey was 4,309 from the web and 523 surveys from paper. This was one of the multiple-choice questions.
- iv. K. Mahoney said about 28% of the respondents believe the EA represents their interest.
- v. C. Sanzone showed the data results that came in and pointed out that this question had the most neutral responses than any other with 58% of respondents.
- vi. J. Kruser said people are not aware of what the EA is doing on their behalf, which probably drives neutral responses. He requested this same question placed on the next survey, or even a whole survey regarding this issue. He said the efforts C. Sanzone and the communications team have been making the last year have been significantly more than anything in the past, but everyone is responsible for outreach.
- vii. K. Mahoney questioned whether constitutions know who they are and what they do. She has felt for a while that their engagements in resolutions only represent a narrow portion of the staff body.
- viii. C. Wiggers questioned why the EA was not a sponsor of the Employee Celebration on Saturday. He did not think it was too late if any EA member wanted to volunteer. This event is driven by HR, but they should also be considering participating, both physically and monetary.
- ix. L. Johnson-Kelly said they were given little time to make additions to the survey and was told the survey had to stay largely the same as it did in the past. She said the EA should be involved in survey planning months in advance, perhaps a year.
- x. P. Thompson added it was Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) that works on this survey.
- xi. A. Haenlin-Mott asked what more could be done about visibility and presence, as well as what they individually can do. She suggested something more strategic as opposed to adding to the survey, bringing up the possibility of a task force or a sub-committee.
- xii. C. Sanzone said it is hard with a single question worded like that to get at what the neutrals are saying. She does not think they can write all those off as negatives, but there are multiple things, including awareness, they need to address. When the results first came out, they talked about requesting IRP for some data breakdown and thinks they should still pursue this.
- xiii. L. Johnson-Kelly said they did ask for that information and were told some of them would not be forthcoming. She pushed for a targeted and specific question.
- xiv. C. Wiggers asked L. Johnson-Kelly to discuss this at her next committee meeting.
- xv. N. Doolittle supported having a poll.
- xvi. K. Mahoney said polls have shown a tremendous amount of engagement, from the perspective of the Transportation Task Force. She wondered if they should do more community events, such as tabling on Willard Straight, to create opportunities for receiving feedback in other ways than just the newsletter.

- xvii. K. Fitch brought up that a lot of time, the EA does not know where their impacts are. He pushed for finding and showing their constituents where impact was seen and what their contribution was after a resolution goes through and is posted. Neither they nor the constituents see this. They can say the president responded in this way by posting it on the OA website, but we do not see this impact in policy changes.
- xviii. H. Sheldon emphasized working on presence. He has been here for 36 years but it was not until a few months before he was retired that they had someone from the EA come and talk about what it was. There is not a lot of presence on EA business, so he urged EA members to attend meetings and report on accomplishments. The only email he recalls receiving from the EA in 36 years was running for elections, but there was not any detail about month-to-month business.
- xix. C. Dawson said brought up how Cornell employees get information. It is good to have the EA website, but she questioned how many people go to it. She asked how they could communicate more broadly and in what variety of ways.
- xx. H. Depew said having public results and providing updates is helpful to show staff that they are making progress and doing impactful work. She received an email about the results Resolution 6 and asked how they can make this information public.
- xxi. H. Sheldon said every department has one to four personnel type meetings per year. He urged members to request to be invited and do presentations.
- xxii. J. Kruser said he recently got an opportunity to do that at the CIT staff meeting which was hugely successful. He got a lot of contact and feedback from constituents and has someone who will be running from CIT as a result. He strongly recommended EA members to reach out that and represent the EA and shared governance.
- xxiii. P. Hampton said this has been an ongoing question. Previously, they did a series of frontline feedback, partnering with HR and VP Mary Opperman, who along with Chair of the EA, facilitated a luncheon where people of a department were invited to come for Q&A time. There was no formal presentation, but just a face-to-face opportunity they did across campus, and each department did the publicly on behalf of the EA. They also sponsored coffee chats with different administrators about once a month in Willard Straight Memorial Room. P. Hampton pointed the importance of a face-to-face presence, which is how they did a lot of committee signups.
- xxiv. N. Doolittle said she worked in HR at the time of frontline feedback and one thing that was helpful was presenting a summary of the major issues facing staff.
- xxv. P. Hampton said this was also a form of data collection and ad-hoc subcommittees formed out of that.
- xxvi. C. Wiggers asked committees to brainstorm on this topic and bring concrete steps back to the next meeting. They are having a retreat this summer and will try to plan one when they have a majority of folks able to attend.
- c. Discussion: President's response to EA R7: "Advancing a Comprehensive Transportation study for the Ithaca"
 - i. K. Mahoney gave an update on transportation and the poll. She asked what everyone thought of President's Pollack response what actions to take.
 - ii. L. Johnson-Kelly said she was asked by Head of Transportation Bridgette Brady to co-sponsor a resolution and support their request of President Pollack for a survey. They already had funding and plans, but wanted EA to be a part of it. She first viewed

- the response as negative as it seemed that the transportation task force was already doing these things.
- iii. K. Mahoney asked if there is anything the transportation task force should be doing.
 - iv. K. Shiels suggested following up again and doing more surveys. The president made it clear what they are going to do, none of which including a system of parking for employees. It is important for the president to understand that a lot of people are not driving to campus because they want to, but because they have to.
 - v. K. Mahoney said the study will take 4-6 months and the consultant has been selected, but not begun engagement. The contract is not completely routed, but due here in perhaps the next month.
 - vi. K. Fitch said they were already told that because of the high rises going up, they are getting rid of 500 spaces. They cannot ask for a moratorium on something that has been set in place three to four years ago. His suggestion is to drop the moratorium.
 - vii. C. Coates said regarding asking for this particular study, in terms of how she has phrased it, it is eventually going to be embedded into a wider study. They are looking at a broader transportation study that will include much of what is being asked for but not in the timeline being asked. He read this as a positive response.
 - viii. C. Sanzone said she was expecting the response they got. There is wiggle room for potential responses, perhaps a relief parking lot, shuttle, or circulator, which was not mentioned in the response. She suggested a meta-study of past studies and then another study. She feels for people paying hundreds of dollars every year who feel they are paying for nothing when they try to park on campus. Someone mentioned many do not mind parking on the fringe if provided shuttles. She urged getting a conversation going, even if people come up with temporary relief solutions. When they opened the East Hill Office building, an independent shuttle with four stops coming every 10 minutes was suggested. She is not sure why it stopped, but there is room for the university to do something in the interim while waiting for results.
 - ix. K. Mahoney said Transportation does not communicate about what they are doing. She wondered if they should offer, through the EA, a newsletter to give information about what the EA knows about transportation currently, as well as what they learned about the poll survey and how the information is being played out.
 - x. J. Kruser urged finding a way to open a line of communication with transportation. He suggested recognizing they have a tough job, and helping them communicate the things they are doing that are protecting employees, which will help the impression of the office. They may be able to partner with them to share some of that positive information the community never hears about transportation.

IV. Old Business

- a. C. Wiggers skipped Old Business and New Business.

V. New Business

- a. Skipped.

VI. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes of the meeting of January 31, 2018 meeting.

- i. Motion to approve – minutes passed with no dissent.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Communications Committee
 - i. C. Sanzone said the committee is developing content for the next mailing. They discovered some people are not receiving newsletters and will try to address that. They are also following up on ideas they talked about before, such as non-digital alternatives. The poll closed and analysis will be done, and those results will be shared with everyone. The next mailing is scheduled for February 22, 2018.
- b. Employee Education & Development Committee
 - i. Nothing to share.
- c. Employee Welfare Committee
 - i. L. Johnson-Kelly said an issue was brought about lactation rooms, especially about the etiquette surrounding them. The positive thing is that they are about to open the 40th room where women working at Cornell and breastfeeding children can go into the room and pump. However, a lot of people do not understand what they are for. One woman came forward and was concerned because a lot of women kept walking in on her as some of the rooms do not have locking doors. She complained of the noisiness that destroyed her ability to pump effectively. Pawprint is going to advertise and celebrate the opening of the room, and she is hoping they will cover etiquette. Women who want to use the rooms reserve it with the university room reservation system. Many women see these as mother's rooms and relax in there without realizing other women are reserving those rooms so they can pump. However, other people can actually go in there at other times when the room is not reserved. She is trying to work to get better signage for privacy.
 - ii. EA member brought up the rooms not being consistently labeled, whether it be "Mother's Room" or "Lactation Room."
 - iii. L. Johnson-Kelly said they are working on scheduling for the next meeting and putting together a resolution for non-exempt retirement contributions. It has gone through the Personnel Policy Committee once and will have to go through it again, as well as the Employee Welfare Committee.
- d. Elections Committee
 - i. P. Thompson said there was nothing to report but would like to defer her time for an update from the Consensual Relationships Policy Committee. The EA approved D. Harris, L. Johnson-Kelly, G. Giambattista, and herself to participate. She allocated all the meetings to have two individuals present at each. The first meeting was last week and D. Harris and L. Johnson-Kelly went.
- e. Personnel Policy Committee
 - i. L. Johnson-Kelly said staff was mentioned only in one word at the end of one paragraph. They may want to consider whether they want this to apply as some of these supervisor-supervisee issues could be faced by staff that do not concern students. This policy only concerns a student as one end of the relationship. The language could easily be extended to staff.
 - ii. C. Sanzone said she asked that question several weeks ago and cannot remember who replied, but was told there already is an existing policy that covers staff.

- iii. L. Johnson-Kelly there is already an existing policy that covers students and faculty as well. This new policy is further defining the definitions of different. This is a working progress, but there are circumstances where people would be permitted to have a relationship, but it must be disclosed.
 - iv. C. Sanzone said she wrote to Co-chair Charlie Van Loan and his response was that they were intentionally focusing on students, because they felt this was where it impacted academic progress and were intentionally not focusing on staff.
 - v. L. Johnson-Kelly said that was what President Martha Pollack directed them to address in this policy. They were not present at previous meetings.
 - f. Staff Recognition, Awards & Events
 - i. K. Mahoney said she is working with C. Sanzone to create a report on the poll survey and identify the winner of the \$25 gift certificate.
 - g. Employee-Elected Trustee
 - i. C. Coates has no update.
 - h. Cornell Retiree Association Liaison
 - i. H. Sheldon said he and P. Andersen attended the REAC (Retirement Engagement Advisory Committee) on Monday. This committee is made up of P. Andersen and himself, representatives from HR, senior director of Benefit Services and Administration Gordon Barger, his predecessor Paul Bursic, and four people from the Cornell Association of Professor Emeritis. They have tried to be more inclusive so they are accepting people who are academically inclined, but are staff. They are a committee of oversight for an advisory committee with no power for Cornell's retirement plan, instead giving advice and recommendations. P. Andersen would like to be more involved in the Employee Education and Development Committee, and there was discussion about the way they should treat retirement savings. They also discussed transportation. The largest employer in Schuyler County is Cornell University, so commuting is a big regional issue and they should try to get someone from the legislature to come to the next meeting.
 - i. Executive Committee
 - i. J. Kruser said they talked about communication and transparency, and how they can share information.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. C. Wiggers reminded that Saturday was the Employee Celebration and urged members to attend. Between now and April 18, there are no guest speakers lined up for meetings, so he suggested EA members to nominate people to come and provide a presentation. If not, they can use that time for committees and take a look at past business to get information out about passed resolutions.
 - i. N. Doolittle said all tickets are sold out for the Employee Celebration, but if EA members call Cheryl McGraw from HR and offer to volunteer, she would be glad to give a ticket and put them in the drawing.
- b. C. Wiggers adjourned the meeting at 1:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Catherine Tran
 Clerk of the Assembly