



**Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly**

Agenda of the March 21, 2022 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

701 Clark Hall | Zoom

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Late Additions to the Agenda
- IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
  - a. March 7, 2022
- V. Presentation
  - a. Martha E. Pollack, President, Cornell University
- VI. Breakout by Division
- VII. New Business
  - a. Elections
    - i. Vacancies - Student Advocacy Committee Chairperson
    - ii. Resolution 14: Support for Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the 'Do the Greatest Good' Capital Campaign
    - iii. Resolution 15: Increasing the Number of Sustainable Waste Receptacles on Campus
- VIII. Business of the Day
  - a. Resolution 10: Resolution Establishing Vice President of Finance
- IX. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates
  - a. Executive Committee
  - b. Operations
  - c. Appropriations
  - d. Communications
  - e. Finance
  - f. Student Advocacy
  - g. Diversity and International Students
  - h. Programming
  - i. Faculty Awards
  - j. External Committees
  - k. General Committee
  - l. Graduate School
- X. Open Forum
- XI. Adjournment

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Please join us for drinks and conversation at the Big Red Barn following the meeting. First round on us!

*If you are in need of special accommodations in order to fully participate, please contact Student Disability Services at (607) 254-4545 or the Office of the Assemblies at (607) 255-3715 or [assembly@cornell.edu](mailto:assembly@cornell.edu) prior to the meeting.*



## Resolution 14: Support for Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the ‘Do the Greatest Good’ Capital Campaign

**Abstract:** The current conditions of the pools at Cornell have left students, faculty, staff, and varsity athletic teams from being unable to use them.

**Sponsored by:** Kyle Karnuta, Melia Matthews, Preston Hanley

**Reviewed by:** Executive Committee, 03/20/2022

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**Whereas,** the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly endorses the Faculty Senate Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the ‘Do the Greatest Good’ Capital Campaign, included here as an Addendum to this resolution, and

**Whereas,** the F.S. Proposed Resolution outlines specific background on the current situation and that context which remains unsatisfactory, and

**Whereas,** the needs of the Cornell community for universal access to free, indoor recreation, sporting event facilities, and exercise facilities are not being satisfied, and

**Be it therefore resolved,** the GPSA aligns its support with the F.S. Proposed Resolution imploring the administration to include and prioritize a new natatorium to the list of fundraisings items donors may directly contribute to in Cornell University’s ‘Do the Greatest Good’ capital campaign for the benefit of the University and the community the University serves.

**Be it further resolved,** that a new natatorium should be of sufficient size and quality to meet the current and future needs of the Cornell community. To help ensure this, the planning needs to involve Cornell leaders with knowledge and expertise in this area including the Directors of Athletics, Aquatics, Cornell Wellness, Physical Education, Recreational Services, and Head Varsity Swimming Coaches.

**Be it finally resolved,** that the president of Cornell University support the faculty, students and staff communities and constituencies represented through the University Assembly by advocating for the inclusion and prioritization of a new natatorium in the “Do the Greatest Good” capital campaign. A copy of this resolution shall be shared with the Provost and the Vice President for Alumni Affairs.

Respectfully Submitted,



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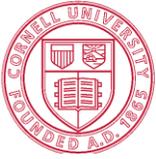
Kyle Karnuta

Chair, GPSA Programming Board; Member, University Assembly Campus Welfare Committee

## **Appendix A: Background**

### **Background**

This resolution arises from the imminent need for Cornell University to develop plans, fundraise, and construct a new natatorium. This resolution seeks to support the F.S. Proposed Resolution,



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sponsored by Faculty Senate senators Ashleigh Newman, Yuval Grossman, and at least 11 other faculty senators.

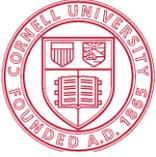
The Campus Welfare Committee (hereby, the Committee) is charged with ensuring that diversity and inclusion, family support, and health services for the Cornell student body, faculty, and staff is prioritized in both conversation and action. The F.S. Proposed Resolution advocates for the construction of a new natatorium to benefit the mental and physical health of the entire Cornell community. As such, the Committee is compelled to support the F.S. Proposed Resolution.

As outlined in the F.S. Proposed Resolution, swimming and access to water-based exercise have proven benefits for mental health. These benefits include increasing self-esteem among college students, combatting Seasonal Affective Disorder (common in climates similar to Cornell's), and potentially alleviating mental health concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indoor swimming facilities play a key role in providing access to free, indoor recreation and exercise options for students seeking to exercise their mental and physical well-being.

Unimpeded access to swimming facilities (meaning indoor swimming facilities, given Cornell's climate during most of the academic year) is also an equity concern. As outlined in THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, people of color make up the majority of enrolled students in beginning swimming classes offered at Cornell. Citing the Resolution, "students who have completed this course out of necessity report undergoing a transformative experience starting with reluctance, fear, and dread to one of immense pride and accomplishment when they learn how to swim and pass Cornell's swim test."

Additionally, the Committee has been made aware that, due to a limitation of access to the pools made in part to extend the lifespan of the existing pools, women's open swimming hours have been cut. Women's swim hours have historically provided a safe space for women to access swimming facilities, to network, and to build community at Cornell. The elimination of this program has been met with disappointment from the female aquatic community at Cornell.

As a result of decreased pool hours, unexpected pool closures, and an overall reduction in pool availability, the aquatic community and culture is being pushed out of Cornell. Specifically, many faculty, staff, and retirees are now swimming off campus (YMCA, Island Fitness, Borg Warner). In addition, the Cornell Varsity swimming and diving teams had to hold all home fall meets at Ithaca College, and the Cornell water polo team is only able to obtain one hour of practice time per week at



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Ithaca College. In an effort to attract and retain both academic and athletic talent, the offerings must improve.

In alignment with THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, the Committee recommends incorporating the construction of a natatorium at Cornell within the scope of the “Do the Greatest Good” campaign. To quote THE F.S. Proposed Resolution, “a modern natatorium is an eight-lane, 50-meter by 25-yard pool that is at minimum 9 feet deep, with 14-foot depth in the diving well (for 3-meter springboard diving).”

Appendix B: Faculty Senate Proposed Solution

Proposed Resolution: Inclusion and Prioritization of a New Natatorium in the “To Do the Greatest Good” Capital Campaign

Faculty Senator Co-sponsors:

Ashleigh Newman

Yuval Grossman

Doug Antczak

Elizabeth Bunting

Thomas Bjorkman

Abigail Cohn

Kelly Hume

Carolyn McDaniel

Thomas Overton

Itziar Rodriguez de Rivera

Tracy Stokol

Joe Wakshlag

David Zax

**Committee Sponsor:**

Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education



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### **Background:**

This resolution arises from the imminent need for Cornell University to develop plans, fundraise, and construct a new natatorium.

Many Cornell community members utilize the aquatic facilities on Cornell's campus including students, faculty (both current and Emeritus), and staff. It is estimated that over 600 students use Cornell's pools from the following groups: varsity swimming and diving teams, physical education classes (beginner, intermediate, and conditioning swimming; diving, scuba diving, lifeguarding, synchronized swimming, and kayaking), swimming and water polo club teams, physical therapy, inner tube water polo intramural, naval reserve officer training corps (ROTC), and autonomous underwater vehicle club. In addition, in fiscal year 2018-2019, 1,875 students and 742 faculty, staff, and retirees swam during open swim offerings resulting in 23,987 total swims (43% of which were students, 57% non-students). Cornell recreation services also offers Aqua Fit and Zumba classes.

Swimming and other water-based exercise have proven benefits for both physical and mental health, including an increase in self-esteem in college students. In particular, swimming during the winter has been shown to improve general well-being. This is relevant for the Cornell community, as many suffer from the winter blues and Seasonal Affective Disorder due to Ithaca's long, cloudy winters. The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in an increase in depression symptoms, bringing to the forefront the need to prioritize preventative measures that benefit mental health.

While Cornell has three pools on campus [two in Teagle Hall (1951) and one in Helen Newman Hall (1963)], they are 71 and 59 years old, respectively, and no longer meet industry standards for a modern facility. Two are six-lane, 25-yard pools, and the third is a "learn to swim" four-lane, 20-yard pool, all with insufficient surrounding deck space. A modern natatorium is an eight-lane, 50-meter by 25 yard pool that is at minimum 9 feet deep, with 14 foot depth in the diving well (for 3-meter springboard diving). The main pool in Teagle Hall is the sole facility that can be used for swimming and diving competition, as Helen Newman lacks diving boards and swimming starting blocks, with undersized swimming lanes that are too narrow and shallow. Even at Teagle, the varied depth is not ideal for water polo play, and swimming and diving cannot occur concurrently, as the diving well is integrated into the 25-yard main pool footprint. The smaller pool in Teagle Hall is used for physical therapy, physical education classes, and aspects of varsity use (e.g., cooling down for meets), but cannot be used for competition, water polo play, or the underwater vehicle club, due to the truncated length and/or insufficient depth.



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While Cornell's current aquatic facilities have long been out-of-date and inferior to our Ivy League and many non-Ivy League peers (see Appendix 1), in recent years, there has been increased closures of the pools, including those of longer duration, due to unsafe water quality conditions and failed regular maintenance. A 2019 study of the pools concluded the pools do not meet current New York state standards for swimming pool turnover rates, contributing to the poor water quality. Decreased pool usage was recommended as one way to prolong the life of these facilities. As a result of this recommendation and the frequent, unexpected pool closures, there has been progressively reduced pool availability for all the stakeholders detailed above. This has been the source of increasing frustration for Cornell pool users, as publicized in the Cornell Daily Sun. In 2020, 1.1 million dollars were invested in all three pools for new sand filters and the repair of some plumbing. These improvements are expected to extend the life of the pool by approximately five years but are in no way a permanent solution to the aging facilities' problems. Cornell Facilities Management warns that the pools may fail at any time despite these recent palliative measures. No other college or university in Appendix 1 is without a functioning pool.

One consequence of no pool on campus would mean the termination of the beginning swimming class (PE 1100), in which people of color represented 89.7% of enrolled students from 2018 – 2020. Students who have completed this course out of necessity report undergoing a transformative experience starting with reluctance, fear, and dread to one of immense pride and accomplishment when they learn how to swim and pass Cornell's swim test (see Appendix 2). By having this requirement, Cornell University makes a statement that swimming is an important life skill that will help break the cycle of parents who do not know how to swim and therefore do not encourage their children to learn to swim. In the United States, an average of 3,957 unintentional drowning deaths occurred each year from 2010-2019. Drowning death rates for American Indian or Alaska Native and non-Hispanic Black persons are higher than that of White persons, likely due to generational inequities in access. Implementing community-level interventions such as basic swimming instruction are encouraged as means to reduce racial disparities in drowning rates. Therefore, providing Cornell students access to pools and swimming instruction is a matter of diversity, equity, and inclusion importance, as well.

Even if all three existing pools were fully operational, they no longer meet the ever-expanding needs of the Cornell community. Due to the limited number of lanes and inability to have multiple groups in a pool at one time, the pools are used up to 15.75 hours per day (6:00 am – 11:15 pm) to accommodate all stakeholders. Whereas at Ithaca College, for example, their natatorium can accommodate eighteen, 25-yard, lanes of swimming, as well as diving at the same time. This



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maximizes the number of occupants in the facility at one time, allowing for increased availability and at more ideal times of day.

In addition to the inadequate swimming pools, the programmatic changes over the life of the facilities no longer provide sufficient and equitable use for visitors. When Teagle Hall was originally constructed, it was built as a male-only athletic facility and the modifications for female and transgender and gender non-conforming persons are inequitable and insufficient. In 2018, the University Assembly passed U.A. Resolution #12: Increasing Access to Gender Neutral Bathrooms on Campus to expand inclusion and comfort. The Student Assembly similarly passed S.A. Resolution #21: Availability of Accessible Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Locker Rooms on Campus. Although the current facilities have been either modified or are being prioritized to meet this resolution, they will not be equitable in their distribution to all parties due to design and structural limitations to the buildings. A new facility designed with these programmatic requirements would be the most cost efficient and effective way to address this University priority.

In April 2020, Cornell University published its Mental Health Review Final Report. It was stated that Cornell has a “culture of competition [that] may take on an unhealthy cycle of expectation and behavior that can reach traumatizing levels for students, faculty, and staff.” In examining and exploring the ways to improve the mental health of the Cornell community, the report was broken down into four sections: A) foster a healthy educational environment; B) promote social connectedness, and resilience; C) increasing help-seeking behavior, and identifying people in need of care; and D) provide mental and medical health services. In Section B under Opportunities, it reads, “It is important to note that when asked for their recommendations, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students consistently prioritized the need for access to free physical fitness opportunities to cope with stress and build resilience. With Ithaca’s climate, students want free and convenient indoor fitness options.” The report acknowledged “the challenge that this presents given both financial and facility constraints.” Recommendation B.2.2 under Wellbeing reads, “Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign.” It is important to note that pool access is free to all Cornell students, unlike other fitness centers on campus that require a paid Cornell Fitness Center membership. Ideas such as “virtual fitness classes” and the use of “virtual and augmented reality” were proposed in the report as alternatives to fitness centers on campus. There is no virtual equivalent for aquatic activities, and these suggestions simply fail to meet the mental health needs of Cornell’s students, as well as faculty and staff.

In an email to the Cornell community on October 18, 2021, President Martha Pollack announced Cornell University’s new capital campaign project, “To Do the Greatest Good.” The campaign’s



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official website lays out the goal of raising at least \$5 billion over the next five years through the connections of at least 200,000 Cornellians. This campaign provides the rare opportunity to reach major donors across all of Cornell and finally raise the funds necessary to make this long overdue project a reality. A modern natatorium on par with our peers both in Ithaca and beyond, would do an enormous amount of good for Cornell and the broader Ithaca community benefitting physical and mental well-being. The fact that this need is not even listed as a university priority is disgraceful. The process of project approval, architectural planning, demolition, and construction is likely to take 7-10 years. If this process began today, this timeline is well beyond the estimated 5-year remaining lifespan of the pools. Our aged, failing facilities cannot wait.

The thought of a Cornell University with no functioning pool is unfathomable and unacceptable.

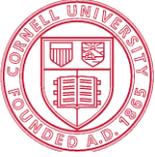
### **The Resolution:**

**Whereas**, the pools in Teagle Hall and Helen Newman Hall (further referred to as “the pools”) serve a large and diverse population of Cornell community members including students, faculty, and staff in endeavors including varsity athletics, physical education classes, aquatic-based physical therapy, clubs – both academic and athletic, open lap swimming, ROTC training, and group fitness classes.

**Whereas**, the pools no longer meet the needs of the Cornell community as detailed above, and have a finite lifespan, which are estimated to end at any time between now and 2025.

**Whereas**, approving, planning, fundraising, and building a new natatorium can take up to ten years. Cornell University faces the certain reality of having no operational pool on its campus.

**Whereas**, Cornell University has long valued swimming as an important life skill to prevent fatal unintentional drowning, as demonstrated by its graduation requirement for all undergraduate students to swim 75 yards.



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**Whereas**, providing an inviting, modern, safe, and accessible environment for aquatic activities provides Cornell students, faculty, and staff the ability to exercise year-round, which is a proven positive contributor to mental health.

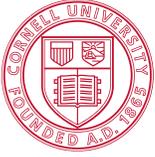
**Whereas**, recommendation B.2.2 of the Cornell University Mental Health Review Final Report reads, “Prioritize fundraising for free physical fitness under Affordability within the capital campaign.”

**Whereas**, we recognize there are many needs of the University, it would be in the University’s best interest to serve those that are of the most imminent need to its community.

**Be it resolved**, that the Faculty Senate implore the administration to include and prioritize a new natatorium to the list of fundraisings items donors may directly contribute to in Cornell University’s ‘To Do the Greatest Good’ capital campaign.

**Be it further resolved**, that a new natatorium should be of sufficient size and quality to meet the current and future needs of the Cornell community. To help ensure this, the planning needs to involve Cornell leaders with knowledge and expertise in this area including the Directors of Athletics, Aquatics, Physical Education, Recreational Services, and Head Varsity Swimming Coaches.





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25 **Whereas**, in their November 16, 2021 visit to the Assembly, President Pollack and Vice President  
26 Malina expressed their support for the sustainable development of campus, noted the important role  
27 that sustainable infrastructure plays in the daily happenings of the Cornell community, and  
28

29 **Whereas**, the installation of such “smart” waste and recycling infrastructure has the potential to  
30 “measure diversion rates,”<sup>4</sup> by employing using self-harnessed solar power to continuously provide  
31 waste accumulation metrics, resulting in informed decision making with respect to collection times,  
32 cycles, and/or patterns, and  
33

34 **Whereas**, “smart” waste management and recycling infrastructure are similarly outfitted with the  
35 technology necessary to “periodically compact[s] the trash inside, creating space for more,”<sup>5</sup> and  
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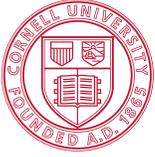
37 **Whereas**, in the current absence of a similar method of remotely tracking metrics of waste  
38 accumulation, our current waste disposal and recycling system inefficiently and unnecessarily burns  
39 fossil fuels and wastes financial resources surveying and collecting waste from receptacles that are  
40 not fully filled, and  
41

42 **Whereas**, in the current absence of a similar method of remotely tracking metrics of waste  
43 accumulation, admirable attempts to conserve financial resources and reducing greenhouse gas  
44 (GHG) emissions inadvertently neglect overfilled waste receptacles, resulting in a greater likelihood  
45 of wildlife accessing waste, posing a potential danger physical danger, as well as perpetuates existing  
46 issues of waste ending up in our local waterways and natural environment(s), resulting in devastating  
47 environmental/ecological consequences, and  
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<sup>4</sup> <https://bigbelly.com/solutions/campus/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2011/02/belly>



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49 **Whereas**, our peer institutions, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology,<sup>6</sup> Brown  
50 University,<sup>7</sup> and Boston University<sup>8</sup> have all implemented “smart waste & recycling” initiatives on  
51 their campuses with phenomenal success, and

52  
53 **Be it therefore resolved**, Cornell University shall efficiently invest the funds and resources  
54 necessary for the full, successful implementation of a campus-wide network of solar-powered waste  
55 receptacles, outfitted with monitorization technology allowing for the efficient tracking of waste  
56 receptacle capacity in order to strategically plan collection timing, ultimately reducing greenhouse gas  
57 emissions necessarily involved in waste collection and processing, and

58  
59 **Be it further resolved**, such waste receptacles must be limited in quantity as a means of reducing  
60 greenhouse gas emissions and the financial burden of sustaining this initiative, however, these  
61 installed “smart” receptacles ought to be strategically placed with respect to foot-traffic and living  
62 spaces, facilitating practical, equitable access to proper waste disposal, in totality ensuring adequate  
63 waste and recycling disposal is rationally incentivized, limiting the propensity for littering and  
64 dumping, and

65  
66 **Be it finally resolved**, the commencement of this initiative will continue to support the historic and  
67 thriving environmentalist values of Cornell University, making good on promises of sustainable  
68 development.

69  
70 Respectfully Submitted,  
71 Josh Washington  
72 Master’s Representative

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<sup>6</sup> <https://news.mit.edu/2011/bigbelly-solar-at-mit>

<sup>7</sup> <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2011/02/belly>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2009/big-bellied-trash-eaters-arrive/>



## Resolution 10:

### Resolution Establishing a Vice President of Finance on the Executive Committee

**Abstract:** The GPSA Charter (hereafter ‘the Charter’), Article V, Section 5.01 establishes four officers, including: (1) the President, (2) the Executive Vice President, (3) the Vice President for Operations, and (4) the Vice President for Communications. This resolution seeks to establish a Vice President of Finance to be occupied by the Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee (referenced Article III, Section 3.05 of the GPSA Bylaws AMD 09/26/16) providing said Chairperson with a seat on the Executive Committee (referenced in Article V, Section 5.01 of the Charter).

**Sponsored by:** Damien R. Sharp, Executive Vice President & Executive Committee Chair; Niamh Moore, Appropriations Committee Chairperson

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**Whereas**, the Charter—as currently written—omits a financial hand on the Executive Committee, leaving the Executive Committee with little knowledge of the Assembly’s financial state during Committee meetings and when carrying out day-to-day operations for the Assembly.

**Whereas**, Article III, Section 3.05 of the GPSA Bylaws as amended September 26, 2016 provides the Appropriations Committee and its Chairperson authority over all aspects of the Graduate and Professional Student Activity Fee, including review of the GPSA Byline Allocation Procedures, the GPSA Eligibility Criteria and Obligations for Byline Funded Organizations, the GPSAFC Funding Guidelines, and the GPSA Internal Budget.

**Whereas**, the Charter affords the Appropriations Committee and its Chairperson the aforementioned authorities but does not afford said Committee Chairperson an Executive Committee Position.

**Be it further resolved**, that the Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee will serve as the Vice President of Finance (VPF), be provided a seat on the Executive Committee as such, and the VPF position be written into the GPSA Charter under Article V, Section 5.01.

**Be it finally resolved**, that the outlined changes of this resolution take effect immediately following the Assembly’s passage of it.

Respectfully Submitted,

Damien R. Sharp



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- 39 Executive Vice President & Executive Committee Chairperson
- 40
- 41 Niamh Moore
- 42 Appropriations Committee, Chairperson