Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
Agenda of the September 13, 2021 Meeting
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

   I.   Call to Order
  II.   Roll Call
 III.   Late Additions to the Agenda
  IV.   Approval of the Meeting Minutes
         a. August 30, 2021
   V.   Presentations
  VI.   Breakout Session by Division
 VII.   New Business
         a. Elections
               i.   President
              ii.   Executive Vice President
             iii.   Vice President of Operations
              iv.   Counsel
               v.   Appropriations Committee Chair
VIII.   Business of the Day
         a. Notice to Rescind
               i.   Resolution 1: Approving a Pre-Internal Budget Expense
              ii.   Resolution 2: Resolution Establishing a Vice President for Strategy and a
                    Vice President for Administration on the Executive Committee
  IX.   Reports of Officers and Committee Updates
         a. Executive Committee – Preston Hanley
         b. Operations – Preston Hanley
         c. Appropriations - Vacant
         d. Communications – Genesis Li
         e. Finance – Caroline Steingard
         f. Student Advocacy – David Kent
         g. Diversity and International Students – Parshard Mehta
         h. Faculty Awards – Cody Duell
         i. General Committee – Stephanie López/Nikola Danev
         j. Graduate School – Jan Allen
   X.   Open Forum
  XI.   Adjournment

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 prior to the meeting.
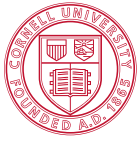
Minutes of the August 30, 2021 Meeting
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

I. Call to Order
   a. J. Rowe called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and proceeded to introduce himself. He noted that he would do everything possible to assist members in policies that assist the Graduate and Professional student (GPS) community including improving the governing documents and processes of the GPSA. He encouraged all members to step out of their comfort zones to make a positive impact on their friends and colleagues in the GPS community.

II. Roll Call
   a. *Present* [23]: C. Anklin, S. Bright-Thonney, C. Day, J. Dotzel, C. Duell, R. Epstein, N. Gonzalez, P. Hanley, D. Kent, A. Khlyustova, D. Lanes, J. Levin, C. Liu, S. Lopez, P. Mehta, M. Minelli, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, A. Presher, D. Sharp, C. Steingard, M. Welch, H. Williams
   b. *Absent* [3]: M. Balch, M. Drescher, R. Morrow

III. Moderated Q&A with Provost Michael Kotlikoff and Dean Kathryn Boor
   a. J. Rowe introduced Provost Kotlikoff and Dean Boor.
   b. J. Rowe asked Provost Kotlikoff to share with the GPSA any current developments regarding the Covid-19 virus along with the general strategy being followed by University leadership regarding the virus.
      i. Provost Kotlikoff began by thanking the assembly members for all they continued to do for Cornell on the research and education side while being on the front lines of both aspects. Provost Kotlikoff reminded members that the US was currently dealing with a highly infectious variant, and noted that the University's strategy involved combining vaccination, masking, and testing unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals. He underscored the importance of testing specifically, mentioning the impact it had since the Delta variant was highly infectious and vaccination did not provide complete protection. Testing provided information on the prevalence of the virus in the community and allowed for limiting asymptomatic to mildly symptomatic infection from individuals testing positive. The steps being taken by University leadership and Public Health officials were leading to extremely low risk of infection on campus and even lower risk of disease. Provost Kotlikoff acknowledged the current increase in cases and attributed it to social groups, adding that the adaptive testing was allowing the University to quickly identify positive cases that were connected. He stated that there was no evidence of significant transmission outside of the social
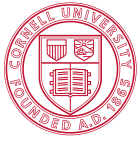
groups with high clustering of cases. Additionally, there had not been any transmission in the classroom. Provost Kotlikoff stated that the University would continue to closely watch surveillance, test around the social networks of infected individuals, making ongoing decisions that continue to prioritize safe conditions on campus in addition to prioritizing education and discovery. Provost Kotlikoff acknowledged the increased stress associated with the pandemic and the lost experiences on the part of both Undergraduate and Graduate students. He stated that the University leadership, while committing to the health of the campus, would also try to preserve as much of the discovery and laboratory environment as possible. Lastly, he said that the University leadership was also paying attention to the number of students in isolation and trying to make the necessary adaptations to promote their learning.

ii. M. O'Leary noted that many Graduate students were incredibly disheartened and disappointed in the language that was released in an email from the Provost Kotlikoff's office to Faculty. The email stated reluctance to make classroom-based accommodations for persons even with documented disabilities. M. O'Leary asked Provost Kotlikoff to provide the assembly with concrete means by which Graduate instructors can pursue disability-based accommodations as instructors.

1. Provost Kotlikoff agreed with M. O'Leary, noting that the original language did confuse people. However, he added that the University would provide disability-based accommodations. The process for accommodations would involve going to the Medical Leave Administration (MLA) to determine the basis of the requested accommodation. Then, if it was a disability or medical accommodation that would be pursued. However, if it did not reach the disability or medical accommodation, there would be other accommodations that could be pursued in a discussion with a faculty member or instructor around what was required and in the best interest of students and/or instructors. Provost Kotlikoff stated that the University was working to serve the instructors as best as possible and providing undergraduates an in-class experience.

iii. B. Harrison noted that since Graduate students were not employees, when asking questions of the Medical Leaves Office, students were being sent to the Student Disability Services (SDS) directly. B. Harrison added that there were no available accommodations for Graduate students serving as Instructors of Record through SDS. The available accommodations did not apply to Graduate student workers. B. Harrison also mentioned that she did
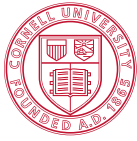
not know of any Graduate students serving as instructors who had received accommodations.

1. Provost Kotlikoff stated that he would look into what the appropriate process would be for Graduate TAs.
2. Dean Boor said that the accommodations process for Graduate TAs should be parallel to that of Faculty but as noted by B. Harrison, the SDS website did not lay out the process. Dean Boor added that conversations were currently being initiated about these types of accommodations.
3. B. Harrison emphasized that Graduate students serving as instructors were not looking to take medical leaves, but rather still teach their classes in a manner that was safe. B. Harrison also asked if Provost Kotlikoff's office would commit to sending a direct communication to Graduate students outlining the process once it was clarified.
   a. Provost Kotlikoff responded with a yes.

iv. J. Rowe asked Provost Kotlikoff to speak about how the move towards virtual work may affect Higher Education.

1. Provost Kotlikoff stated that there was now a vastly increased recognition of the value of remote learning in certain contexts. Remote learning could be an extraordinary utility in increasing the learning process and address issues of preexisting educational inequality. Provost Kotlikoff stated that the move towards virtual work could increase access across Higher Education. He then added that there would most likely be a long-term impact on the University system in terms of work environment. However, he noted that the transformational experience students receive from the University relied on direct interface with other students, Faculty, staff, and Graduate students which would impose constraints on the idea that University jobs could be done at a distance.
2. H. Williams commented that there had been communication before the semester started stating that remote access would not be allowed, and this direction seemed at odds with Provost Kotlikoff's vision of the future.
   a. Provost Kotlikoff noted that he had heard from an overwhelming number of students, that they wanted in-person instruction. Additionally, many Faculty and Graduate student instructors had experienced difficulty in hybrid teaching. Faculty had requested to have a learning
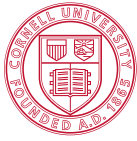
environment where they could focus solely on in-person learning given that it was safe.

b. H. Williams expressed how useful recording could be for classes and in learning the material, especially technical classes.

c. Provost Kotlikoff expressed agreement with H. Williams stance on class recordings and noted that microphones had been provided to faculty for that purpose and the purpose of aiding isolated students. He added that on-campus the norm was to record the lectures, but there was also an opt-out choice since many Faculty did not like to be recorded.

v. L. Davis-Frost asked what the threshold for going to "Red" on the COVID dashboard would be and how far in advance would students and the campus be informed of shifting their mindset.

1. Provost Kotlikoff noted that it would not take going to "Red" for the University to move to partial or full remote learning. He added that through testing, there would also be more information available on the prevalence of cases outside of the clustering in certain social groups and how the case numbers were changing. The University response would be based on the prevalence and testing data and could include going remote for all classes or some classes.

2. L. Davis-Frost raised the suggestion of receiving a Cornell Alert rather than just an email in the case of a move to "Red" or remote learning.

3. K. Krishnan asked if Faculty were empowered to make the move to remote learning if a substantial amount of their students were in isolation.

a. Provost Kotlikoff stated that decisions regarding a move to remote were still being made and that the University leadership would be mindful of what the best solution would be.

vi. J. Rowe asked Dean Boor if there were any new developments regarding Cornell's ITAP policy.

1. Dean Boor noted that concerns about the ITAP had been raised last year and in communication with Provost Kotlikoff, administration in Day Hall, and the Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI), there were a number of steps that were proposed and were important in changing the perception of the program. One of the important steps was clarity in the letters sent to students to make sure they understood exactly what the ITAP did. Additionally, students would
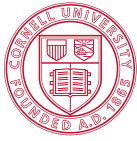
get feedback on the specifics of their results and especially points where they struggled. Students would also have access to two courses.

vii. J. Rowe asked Dean Boor what the status of the University's initiatives to assist doctoral students to find jobs beyond academia was.

1. Dean Boor mentioned the program developed by Cornell called "Careers beyond Academia" and it had two major pathways. The first focused on students in STEM majors and the second focused on students in humanities and Social Science. Some of the programming for the program involved bringing speakers to campus, practicing interview strategies, developing CVs, and a variety of other opportunities geared towards preparation for employment outside of academia in addition to programs for those looking for employment in academia.

viii. J. Rowe asked Provost Kotlikoff what his thoughts were on developing a Task Force to encourage diversity of thought and honest dialogue, while maintaining respect for all.

1. Provost Kotlikoff noted that he believed the University to be quite polarized and it was a trend that needed to be remedied. Additionally, he noted that the University was viewed externally as being one-sided in terms of political thought. However, he stated that he did not think a Task Force would be the correct approach to counter it because it would provoke the same polarization seen in the past. He noted several undertakings that had moved the University towards more civil dialogue such as the two-year conversation regarding the Campus Code, extending IDP to all incoming Freshman, bringing in speakers from the political Right and Left and trying facilitate the exchange of dialogue.

ix. J. Rowe asked how COVID-19 had impacted his and President Pollack's medium and long-term goal.

1. Provost Kotlikoff noted that it had certainly slowed their agenda down and noted that they were about to enter a major campaign pertaining to access. He noted that the issue of access was a major topic for both Cornell and the Ivy League and having it not viewed as an entirely elite place. He told members that they would be hearing more as the Fall semester progresses about a big campaign for Financial Aid, access, and the University's ability to diversify socioeconomically by increasing access to individuals from all backgrounds. Another goal was around academic excellence, focusing on key strengths of the University, and trying to bring
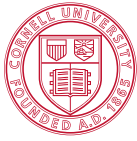
together elements across the University. He then gave examples of some of the undertakings aimed at facilitating collaboration across disciplines and focusing on real issues that are challenges for the world. Provost Kotlikoff noted that overall, COVID-19 had not changed the long-term goals, but certainly made implementing and achieving those goals more complicated. He expressed that the University had succeeded substantially in trying to maintain a residential transformation that was as close to normal as possible for students.

x. J. Rowe as Dean Boor to discuss on efforts to foster community between students based at Ithaca, Geneva, and the Cornell Tech campuses.

1. Dean Boor stated that conceptually, the Graduate field structure was designed precisely to create a sense of community by having students select members of their special committee that include minor fields that are across campuses. This ability would allow students to have access to Faculty regardless of their physical location. Dean Boor noted that another thing that was observed and would be kept from the virtual world would be the social and career development opportunities.

xi. J. Rowe asked Provost Kotlikoff to discuss the general trends in Graduate education and how they affect GPS students at the University.

1. Provost Kotlikoff echoed Dean Boor, noting that a large trend was thinking of Graduate School education as being a route to other career paths and fields rather than just a route to academia. He encouraged Graduate students to think broadly about what possibilities existed beyond academia. Another trend that Provost Kotlikoff noted that the University was trying to pursue was interdisciplinarity and broadly training students because of the constantly changing environment.

xii. B. Harrison expressed the discomfort felt by students in the University continuing to expect them to simply trust the modeling for COVID-19 without seeing what the assumptions and factors of it were. B. Harrison asked Provost Kotlikoff to provide the source of the data pertaining to in-class transmission of COVID-19. B. Harrison also asked Provost Kotlikoff to commit to providing access to the studies and data about classroom transmission.

1. Provost Kotlikoff stated that all the models being used by the University were developed by Peter Frazier and his team and noted that Dr. Frazier had also published many papers on the matter.

2. There was further discussion on transparency of data being used for modelling. Provost Kotlikoff stated that he would provide students with the data being used in Dr. Frazier's modelling.

xiii. M. Pacheco asked about the process of data sharing between the University and Tompkins County, coting discrepancies between case totals on the Cornell campus and in Tompkins County over the past few days.

1. Dean Boor stated that the data was being released as it was rolling out and that the University was collaborating hand-in-hand with Tompkins County in constant communication. However, Dean Boor noted that it did take time to process the data. She also reminded the assembly that the University had shut down some of the testing sites earlier and it would take time to re-staff.

IV. New Business

    a. Elections

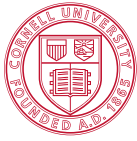   i. Executive Vice President

            1. There were no nominations.

        ii. VP of Operations

            1. A member of the assembly nominated P. Hanley; the motion was seconded by L. Davis-Frost and the nomination was accepted by P. Hanley.

            2. J. Rowe and C. Ohenewah introduced P. Hanley and provided their support for the nomination.

            3. P. Hanley introduced themselves.

            4. A member of the assembly asked if there was quorum to vote.

                a. The Office of Assemblies responded that there was a quorum.

            5. A member of the assembly asked for specification on who could vote and who could not vote.

                a. C. Duell and W. Treat stated that only Chairs of Committees and elected voting members from the previous term could vote.

                b. D. Kent noted that there were several appointments to interim positions over the summer and asked if the interim positions would be voting and if so, the assembly would need to discuss the positions.

                c. J. Rowe noted that the interim positions would not have voting membership.

            6. P. Hanley was ==elected== as VP of Operations 14-0-9.

            7. A member of the assembly moved to extend the meeting and the motion was seconded.

        a. N. Danev rose to a point of privilege and asked how long the meeting would be extended.

            i. The assembly member stated 15 minutes.

        b. The motion was ==approved== 13-2-8, and the meeting was extended by 15 minutes.

    iii. VP of Outreach and Communications

        1. P. Hanley nominated G. Li for the role; the nomination was seconded by D. Sharp and accepted by G. Li.

        2. G. Li introduced themselves.

        3. N. Danev asked what program G. Li was in.

            a. G. Li noted that they were in the Master's in Public Administration (MPA) program.

        4. G. Li was ==elected== as VP of Outreach and Communications 13-0-10.

V. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

    a. Monday, May 3rd, 2021

        i. N. Danev moved to amend the minutes to strike out "N. Danev was elected to the University Assembly" and replace it with "N. Danev was elected to the University Assembly for the next two years with a term ending on May 31st, 2023".

            1. The amendment was seconded, and the minutes were ==amended== 14-0-9.

        ii. The minutes were ==approved==, as amended, by unanimous consent.

VI. Open Forum

    a. K. Krishnan asked if the Finance Committee chair had been instated as part of the Executive Committee and if that was an allowed action. K. Krishnan also asked for clarification on the Council appointment.

        i. J. Rowe noted that there were two resolutions that had been approved over the summer, neither of which President Pollack had signed off on. The first resolution was for a small budget request to improve the GPSA website and the second was for approving the two new positions (Vice President of Strategy and Vice President of Administration).

        ii. K. Krishnan clarified that they were asking specifically about the Council position and the Finance Commission position. K. Krishnan asked for clarification on the procedure for being appointed to the Council position as well as clarification for including the Finance Commission Chair on the Executive Committee.

            1. J. Rowe stated that the Finance Commission Chair being part of the Executive Committee was an idea and that the chair was not currently part of the Executive Committee. In addition, J. Rowe stated that for the Council position, those eligible did not have to be
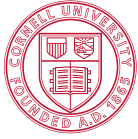
part of the GPSA, must be a matriculated Graduate or Professional student, and the Council must have served as an officer. J. Rowe noted that there was an appointed interim Council that would be voted on at the next meeting.

VII.   Adjournment
   a.   The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou
Clerk of the Assembly

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly
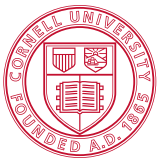
Resolution 1: Resolution Approving a Pre-Internal Budget Expense

Abstract: "Resolution 1: Resolution Approving a Pre-Internal Budget Expense" approves funding in the amount of $100.00 USD for costs associated with obtaining the services of an internet domain host to support the new GPSA website.

Sponsored by: James A. Rowe in his capacity as President of the GPSA to sponsor resolutions on behalf of the GPSA Appropriations Committee while the committee is absent members.

Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 07/28/2021

Vote: Approved (19-1-0)

Whereas, the GPSA Bylaws require that the Appropriations Committee propose and present, by the end of the second GPSA Assembly meeting of the fall semester, an internal budget for the GPSA based on the consolidated budgets of each of the GPSA's respective committees; and

Whereas, the GPSA does not have access to funds during the period beginning July 1 until the end of the second GPSA Assembly meeting of the Fall semester; and

Whereas, the GPSA requires funding for summer projects that benefit recruiting and communication efforts of the Assembly; and

Whereas, the only alternative to requesting a pre-internal budget expense is the use of the personal funds of individual GPSA members; and

Whereas, any request, by members, for reimbursement of funds used in lieu of approved funding is subject to the risk of being voted down and forcing individual GPSA members to bear the cost of a pre-internal budget expense

Be it therefore resolved, that the GPSA approves $100.00 in pre-budget approval funding for the purpose of retaining a domain host with the intent of creating and upgrading the GPSA website;

Be it further resolved, that the pre-budge expense will be charged to the GPSA Communications Budget;

Be it finally resolved, that the GPSA adopts this recommendation for pre-budget funding for the purposes outlined in this resolution

Respectfully Submitted,

James A. Rowe, President, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

July 28, 2021

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

Resolution 2: Resolution Establishing a Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President for Administration on the Executive Committee

Abstract: The GPSA 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. These GPSA Officers all serve vital functions for the GPSA, but they do not fulfill all functions needed to serve the graduate and professional community. Additionally, the small size of the Executive Committee, relative to our competitor schools, prevents the GPSA from recruiting volunteers to fill all of the vacant roles that make up the GPSA. This phenomenon is attributable to the workload expected of the Executive Committee Officers, as well as the various Standing Committee (SC) Chairs and Members. Therefore, the Assembly moves to create the roles of Vice President for Strategy and Vice President for Administration to perform vital functions that have thus far been filled on an ad hoc basis by the current Executive Committee Officers. The Vice President for Strategy and the Vice President for Administration will assume all responsibilities that are traditionally affiliated with managers of strategy and administration, thus ensuring that all GPSA business is administered by graduate and professional students with the proper expertise. The residual effects will be a better work product, a reduced workload on all Executive Committee Officers, and an increased pool of volunteers who want to serve.

Sponsored by: James Rowe, President, GPSA

Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 08/05/2021

Vote: Approved/Disapproved (Vote)

Whereas, the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.01 establishes the GPSA Executive Committee (EC) and four EC Officers, including: (1) the President, (2) the Executive Vice President, (3) the Vice President for Operations, and (4) the Vice President for Communications.

Whereas, the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.03 establishes the responsibilities of each EC Officer.

Whereas, the EC Officers and SC Chairpersons additionally are responsible for ad hoc assignments that are often critical for University operations, including: (1) serving on working groups and committees of the broader University, (2) socializing and gaining the support of the graduate and professional student body for various University actions, and (3) assisting
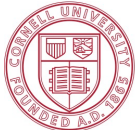
32 administrators, staff, faculty, and students with various requests that fall under the GPSA
33 purview.

34 **Whereas,** the responsibilities assigned to each of the EC Officers and SC Chairpersons make it
35 difficult for each of them to balance GPSA responsibilities, coursework, other extracurricular
36 activities, and their personal lives.

37 **Whereas,** the responsibilities assigned to each of the EC Officers and SC Chairpersons often
38 include responsibilities that would be more appropriately assigned to a different role that has the
39 necessary expertise to successfully carry out those responsibilities.

40 **Whereas**, the responsibilities assigned to each of the EC Officers and SC Chairpersons prevent
41 students, who would otherwise be interested and qualified, from volunteering to serve in some
42 vital GPSA roles.

43 **Be it therefore resolved,** that the GPSA Executive Committee will be expanded to include a
44 Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President for Administration.

45 **Be it further resolved,** that the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.01 will be revised to include
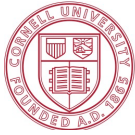46 a Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President for Administration.

47 **Be it further resolved,** that the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.02 be revised to include
48 Officer Election procedures for a Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President for
49 Administration.

50 **Be it further resolved,** that the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.03 be revised in the
51 following ways:

52   1. Include a portfolio of responsibilities for a Vice President for Strategy,
53   2. Include a portfolio of responsibilities for a Vice President for Administration, and
54   3. Reflect the changes in the responsibilities of the President, Executive Vice President,
55   Vice President for Operations, and Vice President for Communications, resulting from
56   the reorganization and expansion of the EC.

57 **Be it further resolved,** that the GPSA Charter, Article V, Section 5.04 be revised to include
58 procedures for the replacement of the Vice President for Strategy and the Vice President for
59 Administration. The procedures for replacing a Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President
60 for Administration are as follows:

61   1. Pertaining to the Vice President for Strategy
62   a. The Vice President for Communications shall assume the position of the Vice
63   President for Strategy.
64   b. If the Vice President for Communications declines the position, the GPSA
65   members will elect a new Vice President for Communications from among the
66   Voting members.

67   2. Pertaining to the Vice President for Administration:
68   a. The GPSA Voting Members will elect a new Vice President for Administration
69   from among the Voting Members.

70 **Be it finally resolved,** that the GPSA Charter, Article V, Sections 5.01-5.04 will create a new
71 hierarchical organization chart that includes a Vice President of Strategy and a Vice President of
72 Administration. The new hierarchy within the EC will be as follows:

73   1. President
74   2. Executive Vice President
75   3. Vice President for Operations
76   4. Vice President for Strategy
77   5. Vice President for Communications
78   6. Vice President for Administration

79 Respectfully Submitted,

80 James Rowe

81 President, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly