



Cornell University University Assembly

Cornell University Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Minutes of the September 13, 2021 Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Bache Auditorium, Malott Hall

- I. Call to Order
 - a. Call to Order
 - i. P. Hanley called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.
- II. Roll Call
 - i. *Present* [20]: C. Day, C. Duell, R. Epstein, N. Gonzalez, P. Hanley, A. Inayatali, D. Kent, A. Khlyustova, D. Lanes, G. Li, C. Liu, P. Mehta, M. Minelli, C. O'Connor, C. Ohenewah, A. Presher, D. Sharp, C. Steingard, M. Welch, H. Williams
 - ii. *Absent* [7]: C. Anklin, M. Balch, S. Bright-Thonney, J. Dotzel, M. Drescher, J. Levin, S. López
- III. Late Additions to the Agenda
 - a. *No Late Additions to the Agenda*
- IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. August 30, 2021
 - i. The meeting minutes were **approved** by unanimous consent.
- V. Breakout Session by Division
 - a. W. Treat rose to a point of information noting that typically for in-person breakout sessions, each Division would go to a separate space in the meeting room. Given the hybrid nature of the meeting, the assembly would need to revisit their approach for Breakout Sessions.
- VI. New Business
 - a. Elections
 - i. President
 1. P. Hanley noted that according to the GPSA Charter, with the Executive Vice President role being vacant and his current role being Vice President of Operations, he would assume the role of EVP and run for President from there.
 2. N. Danev nominated P. Hanley for the role of President, and the motion was seconded by D. Sharp. The nomination was accepted by P. Hanley.
 3. K. Krishnan asked for clarification on who was eligible to run for each position and who was eligible to vote for each position.



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- a. P. Hanley stated that only GPSA voting members were eligible to run for a position on the Executive Committee given a vacancy. However, all members of the GPSA were eligible to vote on the positions.
 - b. K. Krishnan asked if the positions on the Executive Committee were open to voting members only after the previous member resigned.
 - c. P. Hanley affirmed K. Krishnan's question and stated that would be the case for all positions being voted on at the meeting.
4. P. Hanley asked N. Danev to preside over the election of the new GPSA President.
5. P. Hanley introduced himself to the assembly.
6. J. Richards noted that it would be helpful for a member of the assembly to explain what happened to the previous President for those who did not know.
 - a. P. Hanley responded that after the last meeting (8/30/21), the previous President notified members of the assembly of his resignation. P. Hanley added that there were some concerns from other students about the previous President not being able to fulfill the duties of President.
7. A. Barrientos-Gomez asked P. Hanley what were the three issues he thought were most important for Graduate and Professional students.
 - a. P. Hanley stated that ensuring students were getting more funding whether that was through different scholarships to offset tuition cost, funding for student programs, and funding for internships that would allow students to have a more hands-on experience. Additionally, P. Hanley expressed that ensuring that the University was made aware of concerns from Graduate and Professional students regarding COVID-19 and vaccines and testing mandates. Lastly, P. Hanley stated that working with the different committees, such as the Diversity and International Student Committee, and making sure all individuals were represented at the GPSA and University-level would be a priority.
8. P. Hanley was **elected** President of the GPSA (38 in favor – 13 abstained).



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- ii. Executive Vice President (EVP)
 1. D. Sharp nominated themselves for the position of EVP; the nomination was seconded by G. Li.
 2. D. Sharp introduced himself to the assembly.
 3. N. Danev asked how an Executive Committee with only Masters students planned to represent all constituencies, particularly PhD students, in the GPSA.
 - a. D. Sharp stated that representation of both Professional and Graduate students started with communication and being an Executive Committee with only Masters students would not preclude communicating with PhD students.
 4. D. Sharp was **elected** as EVP of the GPSA (40 in favor – 6 abstained).
- iii. Vice President of Operations (VP Ops)
 1. *No Nominations*
- iv. Counsel
 1. L. Davis-Frost nominated N. Danev to serve as Counsel.
 2. N. Danev accepted the nomination and introduced himself to the assembly. N. Danev stated that as the previous EVP of the GPSA, he would be able to give procedural advice to the current Executive Committee and noted that being Counsel would not make him a Voting Member. N. Danev added that he would be able to also give PhD student representation in addition to the Masters student representation.
 3. N. Danev was **elected** as Counsel to the GPSA (41 in favor – 1 abstained).
- v. Appropriations Committee Chair
 1. P. Hanley noted that the Appropriations Committee Chair would be one of the most important vacancies to fill given the assemblies being in a fee-setting year.
 2. K. Krishnan asked for clarification on the election process for the Diversity and International Student Chair since the election was not held at a meeting and she was under the impression that the elections for the position had to be public. K. Krishnan added that since the position was open, it should have been available for the entire student body to run for.



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3. C. Ohenewah relayed to the assembly that there were no elections held for the Diversity and International Student Committee so the position would currently be vacant.
4. K. Krishnan suggested that the position be kept open until the next meeting so more people would be aware of it.
5. C. Ohenewah clarified that the position for DISC Chair was never filled and had remained open since the previous year.
6. W. Treat rose to a Point of Information, stating that there were applications submitted over the summer and that the Office of the Assemblies (OA) had received an email from C. Ohenewah stating that the position of DISC Chair had been filled by P. Mehta.
 - a. C. Ohenewah stated that she did not recall filling the position of DISC Chair.
7. G. Giambattista suggested that the assembly could take a short break to review the actions that took place over the summer and noted that if any actions were taken, the OA would have record of it.
8. N. Danev rose to a Point of Privilege and asked for the assembly to take a 5-minute recess to review the records. The motion was approved unanimously and the assembly took a 5-minute recess.
9. P. Hanley stated that there was a procedural error and that the position of DISC Chair was still vacant and their needed to be an election for the position.
10. P. Mehta nominated himself for the position; the motion was seconded by N. Danev.
11. K. Krishnan conveyed to the assembly that she believed the position should be held vacant until the next meeting. K. Krishnan added that given it was a position open to the entire student body, there could be plenty of students interested that might not be aware of the position being available.
12. N. Danev motioned for P. Mehta to be voted Interim DISC Chair until the next meeting so the committee could have functioning meetings, and then hold an election for the position at the following GPSA meeting (9/27/21).
 - a. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

VII. Business of the Day

- a. Notice to Rescind



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- i. P. Hanley stated that there were 2 resolutions passed over email voting during the summer. However, there were concerns from the body about the process and the fact that it was rushed.
- ii. N. Danev moved to reconsider the previously adopted resolutions. The motion was seconded by D. Kent and the resolutions were **reconsider**.
- iii. Resolution 1: Approving a Pre-Internal Budget Expense
 1. D. Kent asked if the resolutions were being reconsidered and not just rescinded.
 - a. P. Hanley confirmed D. Kent's statement.
 2. 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.
 3. P. Hanley noted that the GPSA currently had a website run by the OA and that the previous administration wanted to move to a different platform.
 4. D. Kent asked if the money was spent already.
 - a. P. Hanley noted that the money had not been spent yet and added that both resolutions had been sent to President Pollack's office, but had not been approved by President Pollack. He added that the first resolution was passed 19-1 over email during the summer.
 5. G. Li asked if there were specific reasons why the previous administration wanted to establish a new website.
 - a. P. Hanley stated that he believed it was just a preference held by the previous administration. P. Hanley noted that the OA currently maintained a GPSA website that holds the Charter, Bylaws, member and committee directory, an option for Graduate and Professional students to reach out or contact members, and served as a center for applications to be submitted.
 6. K. Krishnan asked if the website would be maintained by the VP of Communications.
 - a. C. Ohenewah stated that the website would be maintained by the VP of Communications. She added that the intention of the previous President was to revamp the website and establish different social media platforms to increase assembly engagement.



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7. K. Krishnan asked G. Li to state the pros and cons of having and maintaining a website separate from the OA.
 - a. G. Li stated that she was currently working on creating a LinkedIn page for GPSA members. She also noted that although the GPSA needed more advertisement, a new website would not be helpful. The Communication committee could readjust the current website and ensure the information on it was clearly presented. G. Li echoed her agreements with K. Krishnan, stating that there was not a significant benefit to establishing a new website.
 8. N. Danev stated that given the current VP of Communications did not deem the \$100 for a new website necessary, he would like to **Call Previous Question** and go into a vote for rescinding Resolution 1.
 9. P. Hanley mentioned that the assembly would need a 2/3rd majority vote to rescind the resolution and only voting members could vote.
 10. The vote to rescind **failed** (12-8).
 11. G. Li moved to **reconsider**.
 12. The resolution was **rescinded** (14-6)
- iv. Resolution 2: Resolution Establishing a Vice President for Strategy and a Vice President for Administration on the Executive Committee
1. Abstract: This resolution 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.
 2. P. Hanley stated that the Resolution was voted on by email over the summer and had been approved 20-0-2. However, it had not been accepted by President Pollack.
 3. N. Danev stated that based on the GPSA Charter, specifically Line 390, any changes to the Charter would need to be presented in writing at least 1 regularly-scheduled meeting prior to the vote. Given that there were no regularly-scheduled meetings over the summer, the resolution was illegally voted on and therefore, invalid.
 4. The resolution was **rescinded** per the GPSA Charter.



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VIII. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee – P. Hanley
 - i. P. Hanley noted that he had recently sat in on the University Assembly meeting and one of the topics discussed was vaccine mandates for the Cornell community with high vaccination amongst students and faculty, but lower vaccination rates amongst employees. He noted that the next University Assembly meeting would focus on mitigating the difference in vaccination rates.
- b. Operations – P. Hanley
 - i. P. Hanley stated that the next important appointment would be to fill the position of Appropriations Committee Chair.
- c. Appropriations – *Vacant*
- d. Communications – G. Li
 - i. G. Li introduced herself and mentioned some initiatives she was planning including a GPSA LinkedIn page and working the rest of the Executive Committee and P. Mehta to focus on issues of diversity and issues effecting international students.
- e. Finance – C. Steingard
 - i. C. Steingard noted that meetings were held the first Tuesday of every month and encouraged members to attend if they were interested. C. Steingard also encouraged members to run for the two open positions for Commissioners.
- f. Student Advocacy – D. Kent
 - i. D. Kent stated that the first meeting had been held last week and encouraged members to share any concerns they had by email or at the next meeting.
- g. Diversity and International Students – P. Mehta
 - i. P. Mehta introduced himself and expressed his belief that no individual should be prevented from progressing because of a lack of inclusion.
- h. Faculty Awards – C. Duell
 - i. C. Duell clarified that he was the Acting Chair of the Faculty Awards Committee. He noted that awards had been given out last year after the final GPSA meeting and mentioned that the ceremony had been postponed to the fall in hopes that in-person celebrations could be held to some extent. The committee was currently in the process of planning an in-person celebration.
- i. General Committee – S. López/N. Danev

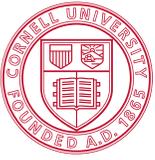


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- i. N. Danev noted that the General Committee of the Graduate School had not met this year, but encouraged members to reach out to him or S. López with any initiatives or concerns.
- j. Graduate School – J. Allen
 - i. *No Updates*

IX. Open Forum

- a. G. Li asked if she could still nominate people for the Master's Student Representative and if it was a vacancy.
 - i. N. Danev stated that filling the position was typically done in Division Breakouts and that the Division would elect the individual internally. Since there were no Division breakouts at the current meeting, it would be up to G. Li to decide if she wanted to hold a GPSA-wide election or wait until the next meeting to do an internal election.
- b. K. Krishnan asked if no voting members were interested in the unfilled positions, would the position then be open to the GPSA membership or the entire student body.
 - i. P. Hanley stated that at that point, the position would be open to the entire student body.
- c. B. Harrison informed the assembly of the two resolutions, related to GPS students with teaching responsibilities, recently passed in the Faculty Senate over the weekend. B. Harrison stated that the first resolution was about adopting University policies for reasonable accommodations for faculty, instructors, staff, and students during the pandemic. The second resolution would provide instructors the discretion to teach online if students were infected or if social distancing was difficult or impossible. B. Harrison also expressed her belief that the GPSA should follow-up with a similar resolution acknowledging support for the resolutions passed by the Faculty Senate.
- d. N. Danev informed the assembly of openings on the UA committees and added that they needed to be staffed by GPSA members. Specifically, the GPSA needed to appoint one member to the CJC; one member to the Campus Welfare committee; and one member to the Campus Infrastructure, Technology, and the Environment committee as well as one general Graduate or Professional student to each of the three committees. N. Danev added that P. Hanley could appoint members to the committees.
- e. G. Li asked if there was a method to get a full list of all members names for the LinkedIn page.
 - i. P. Hanley stated that the LinkedIn page could be advertised after it was made for members to join. Additionally, he noted that he had spoken to G.



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Li about sending out a newsletter after each meeting to increase transparency. Currently, the assembly only had one use per month for the Listserv and that a potential future resolution might be petitioning for one or two more uses of the Listserv per month.

- f. A member of the assembly asked when there would be an opportunity for Divisions to meet.
 - i. P. Hanley stated that with the hybrid model, the mode for Division Breakouts needed to be discussed.
 - ii. A member of the assembly suggested that the various committees and divisions could meet ahead of the GPSA meetings.
 - iii. C. Steingard noted that the procedure of committees meeting ahead was already outlined in the Bylaws.
- g. C. Ohenewah also asked for clarification on whether or not there was a vacancy on Programming Board.
 - i. P. Hanley stated that it was unclear if the Programming Board was a part of the GPSA or a separate Byline funded organization.
 - ii. G. Giambattista stated that the Programming Board was a Byline-funded organization and not a part of the GPSA.

X. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Auriole C. R. Fassinou
Clerk of the Assembly