

Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, November 18, 2021 Meeting

4:45 PM – 6:30 PM

Memorial Room, Willard Straight Hall

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. J. Bansah called the meeting to order at 4:47pm (EST).
- b. Roll Call
 - i. *Members Present:* M. Baker, J. Bansah, D. Cady, P. Da Silveira, D. Eisman, A. Gleiberman, P. Gronemeyer, D. Ilango, J. Jiang, A. Juan, C. León, Y. Logan, M. Louis, L. Lu, B. Luckow, J. Mullen, N. Overton, N. Reddy, K. Santacruz, L. Smith, C. Tempelman, V. Valencia, H. Wade, A. Williams, E. Yan
 - ii. *Members Absent:* J. Kim, A. Lampert, M. Song, A. Ononye

II. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (Cayuga Nation)

- a. Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq̓ (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq̓ are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York State, and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq̓ dispossession and honor the ongoing connection of the Gayogohó:nq̓ people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

III. Late Additions to the Agenda

- a. Motion to add the swearing in of B. Luckow – amended by Unanimous Consent
 - i. B. Luckow was sworn in as a member of the Student Assembly.
- b. Motion to add Resolution #34 to the agenda – amended by a vote of 23-0-2.
- c. Motion to add a nomination for the Office of Ethics after Announcements and Reports – amended by a vote of 24-0-1.

IV. Consent Agenda

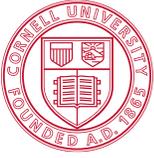
- a. Approval of the Minutes
 - i. November 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes
 1. Motion to approve the minutes – approved by Unanimous Consent

V. Open Microphone

- a. There were no speakers present at open microphone.

VI. Announcements and Reports

- a. President Pollack provided updates regarding Cornell's admission statistics, the university's sustainability plan, including the comprehensive plan for renovations of dorms, the continuing pandemic and mask mandates, and plans to improve mental health on campus. President Pollack also discussed the recent campus events on November 7th and November 9th and the administration's response to these events. President Pollack acknowledged the recent large growth to the university's endowment and provide clarification on how the endowment works. Finally, President Pollack addressed Cornell's newest campaign "To Do the Greatest Good" and its goal of continuing to make Cornell the model of a leading research university.



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- i. D. Cady asked what the university's next steps were pertaining to student mental health.
 1. Vice President Lombardi answered that the university recently did an extensive mental health review to obtain guidance from the community about mental health. The staff have been taking on much of the work and currently students have not been pulled into the conversation of implementations. Students completely shaped the report and the findings about what the university needed to do and in terms of implementation, Vice President Lombardi stated that they would like to bring more students into that process.
- ii. H. Wade asked what the reasoning is for the Student Contribution fee from summer savings, especially in recent years it seems that the university was able to waive it.
 1. President Pollack explained that taking away that fee would basically be offering each student an extra \$3,000 of financial aid and Cornell cannot offer that. In the past, it was able to be waived because of federal funding from the Cares Act.
- iii. A. Williams asked if there are any plans to adjust housing costs and if the building updates will displace students.
 1. VP Lombardi answered that the plan will take 20 years, as the scope of the problem is very big. Cornell does not differentiate housing rates based on the quality and newness of housing, as it prevents a socioeconomic stratification among students.
- iv. J. Mullen expressed over the concerns about the funds for the "To Do the Greatest Good" campaign that are directly given to Cornell Tech, given Cornell Tech's relationship with companies invested in the illegal occupation of Palestine.
 1. President Pollack rejected the premise of the question and explained that they are not an isolationist and it is important to remain involved in countries around the world.
- v. A. Juan asked if the length of time to complete the after-action report from the events of November 7th and 9th is a sign of slow-moving bureaucracy and how the administration plans on increasing communication.
 1. President Pollack stated that it has only been a week since those events and the after-action report must be comprehensive.
 2. Vice President Lombardi stated that there will be immediate changes following the events, especially on the communication front.
- vi. A. Gleiberman asked if there was timeline of when the recommendations from the mental health review will be implemented.
 1. Vice President Lombardi explained that they would like to engage more students and the length of time varies on each initiative.
- vii. D. Hernandez explained that they are the Student Advocate and one the issues that students have brought up is the accessibility of the Title IX office and that is not in a very accessible location.



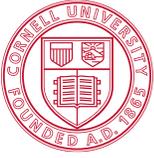
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1. Vice President Lombardi stated that they had not heard that year and would be glad to take that back to the Title IX coordinator.
- viii. M. Louis asked if the university has consider having prescheduled emergency mental health days, just in case an emergency in the future occurs and the institution has a prescheduled emergency day that could be used.
 1. President Pollack answered that there were mental health days last year because there was not a spring break because of the pandemic. They have not considered this idea and will take it under advisement.
- ix. J. Jiang stated that President Pollack mentioned that the endowment had phenomenal growth of the past year, however financial situations around the world have been suffering significantly and many students have complained to the SA about the complicated and bureaucratic process they experience when they are engaging with the financial aid office. J. Jiang asked if the university is open to provide financial support to student activities or to provide financial resources directly to the SA to solve and address students concerns.
 1. President Pollack explained that they are currently in the process of putting the budget together and this current process has been the mechanism for covering student activities fee. There is always lot of demands on money and the endowment is not like a checking account that they can just take money out of.
- x. N. Overton expressed concerns that the university only has one psychiatrist and asked if there are any action plans to lower the wait periods for students to be able to have an appointment.
 1. Vice President Lombardi explained that there are emergency appointments available on a daily basis. In terms of psychiatry support, Cornell currently has one psychiatrist provider, but there are also psychiatric nurse practitioners who can also prescribe, and the university has contracted additional psychiatrists online through a third party.
- xi. C. León acknowledged that there are no universally desirable solutions when it comes to things like canceling classes, however the way it is right now, where a professor is getting a suggestion to be nice to students is not fair to students who need a break. Students have had experiences where their professors do not prioritize their mental health and are not flexible. C. León asked why there is not a way to hold professors accountable to the university's suggestions and recommendations.
 1. President Pollack explained that Cornell gives a lot of autonomy to their faculty, as faculty are the experts, not only in their fields but in the delivery of their education. Some classes are harder, and some classes are easier.
- b. C. Taylor stated that they are currently working on initiative to rewrite the standing rules for the next semester and stated they would love any input from any members. The goal is to make the standing rules, the bylaws, and the charter consistent.



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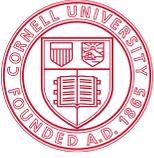
- c. D. Cady explained that they are moving forward in the early process on an initiative for adding new solar panel trash cans around campus. If anyone is interested, please reach out.
- d. J. Mullen stated that the first scheduled SA Office Hours will be on Tuesday, Nov 23, in 438 Uris Hall and there will be one the following Tuesday.
- e. J. Jiang announced that they are working on trying to get special projects funding for the Chinese New Year and they will be meeting with CSS leadership to hopefully come up with a final number of how much they need.
- f. D. Eisman stated that the first educational policy committee meeting was the past Monday and there had been a proposal out by the Provost for offering a part-time bachelor's degree for undergraduate students. This is a very big project and in very early stages, but if anyone has any input, questions, comments, or concerns that they would like brought back to the committee, please reach out.
- g. A. Williams thanked every member of the assembly for their conjoined effort on the letter written to the administration following the Nov. 7th and 9th events.
- h. Byline Reports
 - i. Professional Fraternity Council (PFC)
 1. V. Valencia explained that PFC was allocated \$0.50 in the 2020-2022 byline cycle. For the 2022-2024 byline cycle, PFC requested \$1.00 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$0.00.
 2. The Diversity and Inclusion Chair of PFC, A. Eng, explained that PFC is an important organization of the Cornell campus and is a relatively new organization. Due to COVID-19, they have not been as much impact as they would have liked, but they are still organizing events. Professional fraternities do have an important role in developing students and their leadership skills. It takes a lot to create culture change and funding is necessary to create the desired change within professional organizations. A. Eng asked for the assembly to reconsider the Appropriation Committee's recommendation, even if not the allocate the full \$1 request.
 3. D. Cady asked if the importance of the funding comes with its connection and relationship with the SA.
 - a. A. Eng explained that they would like to continue the relationship and PFC would like to increase the number of events it hosts.
 4. D. Eisman stated that \$1.00 would not be enough for each PFO to get their funding elusively from PFC and asked if there had been any reconsideration for either removing that stipulation or increasing the requested amount.
 - a. A. Eng stated that organizations do not get their funding exclusively from PFC.
 5. A. Williams asked what events PFC was hoping to plan.
 - a. A. Eng stated that the funding goes to website maintenance, hosting guest speakers, and Canvas modules on hazing



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training. As the pandemic becomes less of an issue for students, professional organizations themselves will be hosting a lot more events for both the external and internal community.

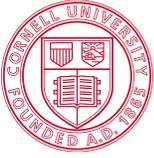
6. A. Juan communicated that it seems unfair to completely defund PFC and stated that the assembly should at least fund them at \$0.50 to maintain that relationship.
 7. The advisor for PFC stated that they are here to help answer questions and that PFC was voted into existence to help combat the elitism in the organizations and standardize procedures. These changes cannot occur without funding.
 8. H. Wade asked how PFC can make their members take the various trainings more serious.
 - a. A. Eng stated that PFC cannot enforce people to do anything.
 - b. The advisor for PFC explained that PFC cannot necessarily mandate these trainings goes back to the funding and PFOs can decide to not be a part of PFC. recruitment, after you get members to have open convos
 9. C. Tempelman asked what beyond trainings PFC does to promote diversity and inclusions in their trainings, especially as the presidents of PFC came to the SA earlier in the semester to ask to not be required to report diversity statistics.
 - a. A. Eng stated that they cannot speak for previous presidents, but PFC is working to make measurable steps to improving PFOs. One recent development has been recruitment buddies to help students who are applying to be in a PFO. There is much work to be done, but PFC has holds events that benefit the external and internal Cornell community, held diversity roundtables, and implicit bias trainings.
 10. Motion to overturn the recommendations – **failed** by a vote 7-12- 4
 11. D. Hernandez asked if there was a way to gear funding to both external and internal events.
 - a. A. Eng explained that their goal is to hold two external events each semester in each field.
 - b. H. Wade explained that that would be an Appendix B change.
 12. Motion to vote on the recommendation – **approved** by a vote of 12-7-4.
- ii. Students Helping Students (SHS)
1. E. Ononye, the Chair of FARC, stated that they are appealing the Appropriations Committee allocation. SHS is one of the few funds that are available for students who are in an emergency, such as for travel expenses due to unknown circumstances, basic living expensive needed during a fire destruction or natural disaster, and emergency medical or dental expenses that are otherwise not covered by



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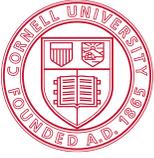
insurance. The Cornell classes of 2023, 2023, and 2025 have had very limited exposure to the campus and its amenities that the university provides. FARC strives to increase awareness of this fund. Money is a consistent barrier to students' education and by decreasing this fund, it is directly contradicting the Cornell motto of 'any person, any study'.

2. A. Gleiberman stated that this is not about limiting students' access to the fund, SHS has significant rollover. A. Gleiberman asked members to read the full report.
 - a. E. Ononye stated that there is a large rollover, however the Classes of 2023, 2024, and 2025 have had limited exposure and knowledge of these funds.
3. A. Williams stated that they are someone who would have benefited from this fund and stated that the assembly should allocate the full \$5.00 to SHS.
 - a. E. Ononye explained that their primary goal is to work with the Student Advocate to make these funds more widely known to students.
4. E. Yan stated that this is an important fund, however its responsibility should not fall on the students. The university should provide the funding for this fund.
 - a. E. Ononye answered that the university does not provide the funding and the university does not give financial aid for emergency.
5. C. Tempelman asked, that given the low demand for the fund, has there been any steps to increase applications or any plans for an advertising the fund.
 - a. E. Ononye stated that those steps will be taken soon, by meeting with the Office of the Student Advocate, attending townhalls, and communicating with other clubs and communities on campus.
 - b. V. Valencia stated they are planning on partnering with ALANA.
6. H. Wade stated that last year they had to travel home due to an emergency and was funded by the university and something different that the SHS fund.
 - a. E. Ononye stated that the SHS puts more of a humanistic approach to getting emergency funding, as the Financial Aid Office does not always understand what students are going through.
7. L. Smith stated that the SHS is fantastic, however the rollover is extremely large. L. Smith encouraged FARC to prove the SA wrong and spend down their rollover.



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8. D. Ilango stated that it is clear that the university will not necessarily pick up these burdens and this fund primarily helps underprivileged students.
9. There was a motion to overturn the recommendation.
 - a. A. Gleiberman dissented.
 - b. Motion to overturn the recommendation – **overturned** by a vote of 13-3-5.
10. Motion to allocate SHS \$5.00 – **approved** by a vote of 12-6-4.
- iii. Cornell University Programing Board (CUPB)
 1. V. Valencia communicated that CUPB requested \$13.56 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$13.56.
 2. Motion to vote on the recommendation – **approved** by a vote of 17-0-2
- iv. Cornell Concert Commission (CCC)
 1. V. Valencia explained CCC requested \$13.50 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$13.50.
 2. Motion to vote on the recommendation – **approved** by a vote of 15-1-2.
- v. Class Councils
 1. V. Valencia stated that Class Councils requested \$8.35 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$7.40.
 2. Motion to table the recommendation – **tabled** by Unanimous Consent
- vi. CUTonight Commission
 1. V. Valencia explained that CUTonight Commission requested \$9.00 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$7.00.
 2. There was a motion to table the recommendation by unanimous consent.
 - a. L. Smith dissented and stated they had second thoughts about immediately tabling the recommendations. With the previous recommendations, the assembly has been discussing them at both the first and second meetings the recommendations are introduced at and it is a disservice to these organizations to table their allocation recommendations without discussion on them.
 3. Motion to table the recommendation – **tabled** by a vote of 13-3-2.
- vii. Club Insurance
 1. V. Valencia explained that the Appropriations Committee changed their decision on Club Insurance's recommendation after learning that the University is unable to cover the cost of club insurance. Club Insurance requested \$5.50 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$5.50.
 2. Motion to table the recommendation – **tabled** by a vote of 17-3-2.
- viii. Cornell Minds Matter (CMM)



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1. V. Valencia stated that CMM requested \$2.50 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$1.63.
 2. Motion to table the recommendation – **tabled** by a vote of 14-3-2.
- ix. Outdoor Odyssey
1. V. Valencia communicated that Outdoor Odyssey requested \$2.50 and the Appropriations Committee recommended \$2.00.
 2. Motion to table the recommendation – **tabled** by a vote of 12-3-2.

VII. Adjournment

- a. J. Bansah adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ciara Shanahan
Clerk of the Student Assembly