



Cornell University Student Assembly

Cornell University Student Assembly

Minutes of the Thursday, September 26th, 2019
Meeting, 4:46-5:22 pm in Memorial Room, Willard
Straight Hall

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. J. Anderson called the meeting to order at 4:45 pm.
- b. Roll Call:
 - i. Present: M. Adeghe, J. Anderson, C. Benedict, U. Chukwukere, J. Clancy, O. Egharevba, J. Feit, M. Haddad, C. Huang, J. Kroll, Y. Li, G. Martin, N. Matolka, I. Pavlov, L. Smith, P. Solovyeva, N. Watson, K. Wondimu, V. Xu, J. Youngblood
 - ii. Absent: B. Weintraub (excused)

II. Approval of the Minutes

- a. September 19th, 2019
 - i. O. Egharevba moved to revise his absence to “excused”.
 - ii. V. Xu verified that O. Egharevba’s absence at the prior meeting was an excused absence.
 - iii. A member said that this particular matter can and will be revised without a formal motion.
 - iv. G. Martin moved to amend the words in section V, subsection d, subsubsection 3 to read “was needed” where they currently read “was not needed” – **amended**.
 - v. Motion to approve the minutes – **approved** 20-0-1.

III. Open Microphone

- a. No speakers at the open microphone.

IV. Announcements

- a. C. Huang asked if the assembly members were all on Slack.
- b. There was general agreement in the affirmative in this regard.
- c. C. Huang said that she would add anyone to Slack who was not already on it, and asked that those on it turn on their notifications for the app. She added that Sprint Planning will be this coming Sunday at noon in the Cook House seminar room, and that ex-officio members are not required to come.
- d. M. Adeghe said that Exec met on Tuesday and had a special projects fund (henceforth SPF) meeting with NAISAC, who asked for \$1450 for an exhibit to address sexual violence in indigenous communities. She added that the exhibition will include a presentation from a guest speaker who will speak more about the atrocities happening in those communities. She also said that Exec approved this funding amount.

V. Byline Reports

- a. Outdoor Odyssey
 - i. M. Adeghe said that Outdoor Odyssey requested \$2.50, and are currently funded at \$1.75. She added that they decided not to fund them at the full amount they requested due to a lack of explanation in their presentation given on Monday. She also said that this information is in the report, and that they had a lot of goals to support diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, but not concrete plans or actions that would be taken to achieve those goals, and that they therefore did not feel that it would be necessary to give them \$2.50 from each students given that they had no current plans.
 - ii. J. Kroll asked if M. Adeghe was referring to a lack of plans with regard to funding student experiences or how they manage trips.
 - iii. M. Adeghe said that it was in regard to how they managed funding, and that they said that they wanted to increase their financial aid for students who can't afford to go on these trips, but also wanted to lower the overall cost for everyone. She added that when they were asked how they planned on doing that, they did not give an answer, and so they were reluctant to give the full amount of money.
 - iv. P. Solovyeva asked why they were given an increase of funding to \$2.25 from \$1.75 given the inconsistencies stated. She added that she does not have an issue with this.
 - v. M. Adeghe said that, with or without a plan, they could use more money for financial aid, which is why the extra \$0.50 was allocated to them, and that they recognized a need for them to have more money.
 - vi. M. Haddad said that they did not have an exact plan to increase diversity, but that they did have one for financial aid, and that they were going to speak to Day Hall about that.
 - vii. Motion to approve Outdoor Odyssey's byline funding – **approved** 20-0-1.
- b. Orientation Steering Committee
 - i. M. Adeghe said that OSC plans and runs Orientation in August and in January, and that they were requesting to maintain their funding amount that they received in the past two years. She added that they did not see any issues in their budget and funded them at their requested amount of \$10.40.
 - ii. Motion to approve Orientation Steering Committee's byline funding – **approved** 20-0-1.

VI. New Business & Business of the Day

- a. Approval of the SA 2019-2020 Meeting Calendar
 - i. C. Huang presented the calendar and said that a meeting was added on December 10th at 4:45 pm for byline-related business. She added that Exec approved this calendar.
 - ii. O. Egharevba asked if this meeting was added solely for byline-related business.
 - iii. C. Huang replied in the affirmative.
 - iv. I. Pavlov asked whether or not the SA has to vote on the calendar.
 - v. J. Anderson said that it does.
 - vi. Motion to approve the calendar – **approved** 21-0-1.
- b. Resolution 7: Establishing the Office of the Student Advocate Bylaws
 - i. Liel Sterling introduced herself and presented the resolution.
 - ii. M. Haddad asked if the undergrad students working in the office would need

- to have a pre-law background.
- iii. L. Sterling said that it would not be necessary, but that there would need to be an extensive training program coordinated with law students, university offices, and the SA members appointed.
 - iv. N. Matolka said that he loves the idea of this resolution, and asked if the students would be handling confidential material and where the accountability would be in this regard.
 - v. L. Sterling said that confidential information wouldn't be logged, but the types of issues students are dealing with would be, so if students are coming in with a repeated Title IX issue, the correct follow-up action could be taken, and that it wouldn't necessarily log names or anything of that kind.
 - vi. J. Feit asked if the Student Advocate would be elected at the same time as the other SA elections.
 - vii. L. Sterling replied in the negative, and said that it should get started as soon as possible.
 - viii. J. Feit said that there was interest in the position being non-partisan and independent, and asked if a person running for that position could also run for an SA position.
 - ix. L. Sterling said that such a workload might be too hefty, but it would be discussed by the SA during the process to confirm them to the position.
 - x. O. Egharevba asked how many caseworkers would be the ideal amount in the office.
 - xi. L. Sterling said that she envisions 3 to 5 caseworkers in each category, of which there are three.
 - 1. The three categories are student and campus life; academic issues; and student finance.
 - xii. K. Wondimu asked if all the positions were outlined in the resolution.
 - xiii. L. Sterling said that they are selected positions, and that this year, the SA and its president would select a student advocate, and then the Student Advocate would confirm the other positions in collaboration with the SA.
 - xiv. K. Wondimu asked if students would be conducting the training programs.
 - xv. L. Sterling said that she thinks the intention would be to have law students in contact, and that there are others she would like to get involved, including different offices around Cornell, the Cornell ACLU, and SA members. She added that the Off-Campus Living Office and the Title IX Office have been good at making training materials.
 - xvi. K. Wondimu asked if the training program would be comprehensive in educating caseworkers on issues related to financial aid and its components, as well as other areas.
 - xvii. L. Sterling replied in the affirmative, and said that there are so many staffing positions so that they can have a lot of oversight, such that people aren't doing anything uninformed or inappropriate. She added that there needs to be a very comprehensive training program.
 - xviii. J. Clancy said that he does not want to seem repetitive, and asked how they are envisioning recruiting different caseworkers.
 - xix. L. Sterling said that she envisioned advertising the fact that they are looking for caseworkers, and possibly interviewing students about their knowledge of how the university works. She added that she also envisioned working with

Cornell ACLU and other organizations interested in students' rights on campus, and that she knows a bunch of students who would be interested in this.

- xx. V. Xu said that L. Sterling gave an example during Exec about grade disputes, and said that she was wondering if this would be addressed during training or if it would be more of a case-by-case basis, since it sounds more like professor policy.
- xxi. L. Sterling said that it would probably be case-by-case, and that some of the issues are with regard to the Campus Code of Conduct. She added that when she has been contacted about those things personally, she has directed them to the Office of the Ombudsman, and that with an office like that they are trying to create here, it is important to note that there are no guarantees, and that she would want to make that abundantly clear. She also said that its purpose is to help navigate the university, but that a student wouldn't be able to necessarily change their B to an A, as an example.
- xxii. Tomás Reuning asked what this office would be doing that the Ombudsman doesn't already do.
- xxiii. L. Sterling said that, from what she understood of people in contact with that office, they do what they can but it is not always enough, and that it is useful for some things, but that some offices at Cornell are specific to certain types of issues, and that it might not always be clear how to contact such an office.
- xxiv. P. Solovyeva said that this idea has a lot of potential, and asked if she could further elaborate on how they would be approaching these issues with regard to accountability and anonymity.
- xxv. L. Sterling said that, in terms of confidentiality, she wants there to be an option to submit queries anonymously, potentially with an online form that's anonymous. She added that it is important to have office hours, and that people who choose not to say their name when they come in will not have their name collected, and that it would be similar to EARS. She also said that the selection process for who is in the office would necessitate that those people can be confidential, and that they would be removed if they can't be.
- xxvi. M. Haddad asked if caseworkers can discuss these issues with each other.
- xxvii. L. Sterling said that there are ways to discuss things that do not reveal personal information, and that this is also part of why the supervising positions are there.
- xxviii. M. Haddad asked if the logging system would be related to the bias reporting system.
- xxix. L. Sterling said that its purpose is to provide info to the SA about what is going on if they choose to take action on certain issues.
- xxx. M. Haddad said that Cornell tends to get people stuck in the cycle, and asked what would happen if that turned out to be the case for this office.
- xxxi. L. Sterling said that that is exactly why she thinks that this office needs to exist, since it would provide a point of contact to get out of the cycle.
- xxxii. O. Egharevba asked what the training would be like, and asked how they plan to recruit from across different colleges.
- xxxiii. L. Sterling said that training needs to be created in collaboration with the SA and other offices, and that it would be similar to Cornell ACLU training. She described some of the facets of that training. She added that, with regard to

- recruiting around campus, having a variety of who is working is very important and should be taken very seriously.
- xxxiv. M. Haddad asked if the office would take action if a student were very stressed out by an issue and was expressing suicidal thoughts.
- xxxv. L. Sterling replied in the affirmative and said that that is more of a legal issue than anything else, and that except in certain situations, there is a legal obligation to report that, and so they would have that obligation unless they were to get a separate exemption.
- xxxvi. O. Egharevba said that he knows that they envision the Student Advocate being an elected position in the future, and asked if they plan on collaborating with the Office of the Assemblies (henceforth OA) in this regard.
- xxxvii. L. Sterling replied in the affirmative, and specified her intentions.
- xxxviii. O. Egharevba asked if they have coordinated with the OA yet.
- xxxix. C. Huang said that there will be coordination.
- xl. There was a motion to move the resolution to Business of the Day – **moved** 21-0-1.
- xli. U. Chukwukere asked what training could be given to ensure cultural sensitivity if they are unable to get people for these positions who come from diverse backgrounds.
- xl.ii. L. Sterling said that she thinks that it is super important that this office is diverse, and that she thinks that having a staff that can personally relate to this is immensely important to what the idea of this is. She added that training that makes sure students know about those issues is very important, and that working with ALANA organizations will be very important, as well as potentially having all the workers do IDP.
- xl.iii. J. Feit asked to clarify the wording of the resolution, and asked if this would be elected by the undergrad body.
- xl.iv. L. Sterling said that the position is selected, not elected.
- xl.v. J. Feit asked whether or not there would be an election.
- xl.vi. L. Sterling said that each outgoing Student Advocate would select a new one to be confirmed by the SA.
- xl.vii. O. Egharevba asked a question.
- xl.viii. J. Anderson said that this resolution does not necessitate a change in the SA bylaws.
- xl.ix. Motion to vote on the resolution – **approved** 21-0-1.
- l. J. Anderson said that the assembly will see his nomination for a Student Advocate next week.

VII. Adjournment

- a. J. Anderson adjourned the meeting at 5:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Hannan
Clerk of the Assembly