



Resolution 22: Dissolving the Research and Accountability Committee and Creating the Office of Ethics

Abstract: This resolution is intended to dissolve the Research & Accountability Committee and create the Office of Ethics to preserve accountability measures.

Sponsored by: Morgan Baker '23, Duncan Cady '23, Lucas Smith '22

Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 09/07/2021

Type of Action: Internal Policy

Originally Presented: 09/09/2021

Current Status: New Business

Whereas, the Vice President of Research and Accountability position and its respective committee were created in January 2020 in an effort to increase accountability amongst members of the Student Assembly and its committees;

Whereas, the Vice President of Research and Accountability and the Research and Accountability Committee served necessary and important roles at the time of their creation, as they created an unbiased arm of the Student Assembly tasked with handling matters of internal Student Assembly affairs and general representative accountability;

Whereas, the Vice President of Research and Accountability position was dissolved in December 2020, and the Research and Accountability Chair position was thereafter reserved for a community member;

Whereas, the Research and Accountability Committee fulfilled its purpose of holding Student Assembly members accountable during its first few months of existence, directly preceding the onslaught of the pandemic;

Whereas, there is no longer a shared sense amongst current Student Assembly members that this committee must continue to exist in its current form;

Whereas, current Student Assembly members have largely adopted a new guided philosophy to refrain from outsourcing research to a committee;



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Whereas, Student Assembly members have the Executive Archivist as a resource to research historic Student Assembly legislation to support current legislative efforts;

Whereas, each committee and Student Assembly member practices research and accountability individually or in collective ways;

Whereas, any necessary accountability and research concerns of SA members and directly elected Undergraduate representatives to the UA should be brought forward to an independent body;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Research and Accountability Committee will be dissolved effective immediately and replaced with the Office of Ethics to preserve accountability measures;

Be it further resolved, that “Section 3: Operational Committees” of “Article VI: Committees” lines 435-459 of the Student Assembly Bylaws be amended as follows:

~~H. Research & Accountability Committee—The committee will pursue any necessary accountability and research concerns of SA members and directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA. Research and accountability concerns consist of, but are not limited to: general body attendance, resolution voting, liaison role accountability, committee attendance, committee conduct, and general representative accountability. The committee will also evaluate all requests submitted by community members that are against any SA member, SA committees, or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA. The Chair position can be held by any non-Student Assembly member of the Cornell undergraduate student population and the committee will be under the supervision of Executive Vice President. The committee shall consist of ten voting members, two of which are current SA members and/or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA and eight undergraduate community members. The chair shall only vote in the event of a tie. The composition of the committee can change for specific meeting types in which members of the SA Executive Committee or other student representatives can be given an ex-officio status—this is to be voted on by the RE committee as a whole and only when initially decided on by the Chair. The committee has the obligation, if decided upon, to conference any SA member, directly elected undergraduate representative to the UA, SA affiliated committees, or Committee Chair if they have received a notice from any member of the Cornell Community. The committee is restricted from passing resolutions due to the necessary impartial nature of the committee. However, after a full inquiry or fact-finding action—a written report may be presented to the SA, which will include a brief summary of the situation being~~



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~~investigated and any necessary actions the committee recommends. The requester's name and others who are not SA members or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA shall be redacted from the report if permission from any of the individual(s) is not given. Adoption of the (possible) recommendation(s) requires a three quarters majority vote of SA voting members. Rejection of the (possible) recommendation(s) require three quarters of SA voting members. If recommendation or report are not approved or rejected, it will be tabled indefinitely. The committee chair shall present reports to the SA at both the requestor(s), RA Committee's, and Chair's discretion.~~

Be it further resolved, that "Section 5: External Committees" of "Article VI: Committees" line 586 of the Student Assembly Bylaws be amended as follows:

C. Office of Ethics

a. Name, Mission, and Affiliation

- i. Name – the name of the office shall be the Office of Ethics
- ii. Mission – the mission of the Office of Ethics shall be to pursue any necessary ethics concerns of SA members and directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA. The Office will evaluate all requests submitted by community members that are against any SA members, SA committees, or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA.
- iii. Affiliation – The Office of Ethics shall be affiliated as an external executive office of the Cornell Student Assembly.

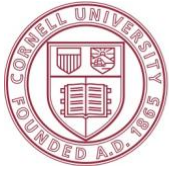
b. Roles, Responsibilities, and Restrictions

i. Director of the Office of Ethics

1. The Director of the Office of Ethics will chair all Office of Ethics meetings.
2. The Director of the Office of Ethics shall only vote in the event of a tie.

ii. Voting Members of the Office of Ethics

1. The Office of Ethics shall consist of seven voting members
2. All voting members shall serve for the duration of one academic year unless their term is renewed by the incoming Director of the Office of Ethics.
3. Voting members can be removed before their term expires by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Office.
4. All voting members shall be non-Student Assembly and non-University Assembly members of the Cornell undergraduate student population.



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5. Voting members may not seek SA or UA office for the academic year following their term of service in the Office of Ethics.

c. Recruitment of the Office of Ethical Conduct Members

- i. The first seven voting members shall be appointed individually by any SA member and confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Assembly.
 1. A week-long period in-between nominations and appointments shall be dedicated to giving SA voting members the opportunity to speak one-on-one with each nominee.
- ii. The first slate of voting members must select the Director of the Office of Ethics internally by a simple majority vote of the entire voting membership of the Office before the end of the semester.
- iii. Before the conclusion of each academic year, the outgoing voting membership of the Office of Ethics must select the Director of the Office of Ethics internally by a simple majority vote of the entire voting membership of the Office.
- iv. The Director of the Office of Ethics shall decide upon the voting membership of the incoming Office before the conclusion of each academic year.

d. Vote of Confidence

- i. The Student Assembly will assess the work of the Office of Ethics during the previous academic year and conduct a vote of confidence by one of the first three general assembly meetings of each SA term.
- ii. In the event of a failed vote of confidence, steps (i) and (ii) outlined in the Recruitment of the Office of Ethical Conduct Members section shall be repeated.
- iii. In addition to the annual vote of confidence, an additional vote of confidence can be called at any point during the academic year.

e. The Student Assembly Code of Ethics

- i. Before the conclusion of the 2021-2022 academic year, the Office of Ethics will be charged with creating a Student Assembly Code of Ethics that must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Assembly.
- ii. The SA Code of Ethics should include, but is not limited to including:
 1. An expansion of the language outlined in the Student Assembly Standing Rules, Section 2: Ethical Standards and Attendance Policy, Section A
 2. An overview of possible ethical conduct offenses
 3. The process of determining a violation of ethics
 4. The process of recommending the appropriate disciplinary action to a third party



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iii. The Office of Ethics will be charged with interpreting and applying the guidelines set forth in the SA Code of Ethics.

Be it further resolved, that before the conclusion of the 2021-2022 academic year, the Office of Ethics will be charged with creating a Student Assembly Code of Ethics that must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Assembly.

Be it finally resolved, that in the Fall 2021 semester, the Student Assembly must approve the membership of the Office of Ethics by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire voting membership of the Student Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Vice President for Finance, Student Assembly

Duncan Cady '23

Students with Disabilities Representative At-Large, Student Assembly

Lucas Smith '22

Undesignated At-Large Representative, Student Assembly