

Originally Presented on:	December 5 th , 2019
Type of Action:	New Business
Status/Result:	Internal Policy

S.A. Resolution 23

Establishing the Position of the Vice President of Research & Accountability and the Creation of the Research & Accountability Committee.

ABSTRACT: This resolution seeks to create the executive position of the Vice President of Research & Accountability and the Committee of Research & Accountability.

Sponsored by: Gavin Martin '20, Ian Wallace '20, Joe Anderson '20, Cat Huang '21, Uche Chukwukere '21, Indigo Pavlov '22, Moriah Adgehe '21, Colin Benedict '21, Masa Haddad '21, Debbie Nyakaru '20

Whereas, the Student Assembly is not immune to concerns regarding: blind spots in accountability, and lack of needed research;

Whereas, the concerns of research and accountability permeates and pertains to all committees and assembly members;

Whereas, research and accountability are intrinsically tied to one another;

Whereas, *research* is needed to: inform the general public and ensure that assembly policies reflect the public interest; gather information to develop new legislative proposals or to amend existing resolutions; ensure executive compliance with constitutional intent; ¹

Whereas, *accountability* is needed to: empower members, groups, or committees to not only recognize the critical gaps between current and desired results, but to also take ownership for closing those gaps; ²

Whereas, this is not a direct effect from the actions taken by specific assembly members or committee chairs, rather concerns coming from committees, committee presenters, and the general voting body in very recent history regarding, but not (in the slightest) limited to;

1. Racist and sexist dog whistle terminology used by committee members when referencing presentors;
2. Comments about fellow Assembly members that are perceived as derogatory, circulating intra-assembly;
3. Certain conduct and behavior exhibited by committee chairs;
4. The demographic composition of certain committees;
5. The low retention rates of people of color on both committees and the Assembly;
6. Apportionment of the college based seats when compared to the number of students in each college; ³
7. Disruptive behavior during committee meetings towards presentors; ⁴
8. Rude behavior while citing future committee decisions outside of the formal S.A forums; ⁵

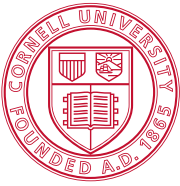
¹ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/97-936.pdf>

² <https://www.partnersinleadership.com/insights-publications/why-is-accountability-so-important/>

³ <https://cornellsun.com/2019/11/01/dyson-school-to-receive-their-own-representative-on-the-student-assembly/>

⁴ <https://cornellsun.com/2017/11/14/students-criticize-s-a-conduct-at-community-engagement-forum/>

⁵ <https://cornellsun.com/2017/11/14/students-criticize-s-a-conduct-at-community-engagement-forum/>



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43 9. The historic underlying distrust of the Student Assembly, its intent, and actions on
44 campus.

45
46 **Whereas**, we understand that each committee and member practices research and accountability
47 individually or in collective ways—but we also know the value of a holistic sense of accountability;
48

49 **Whereas**, there is no standardized system and accompanied person in place to address sensitive concerns
50 that impact the innate nature and dynamic composition of the assembly;

51
52 **Whereas**, the Vice President of Research & Accountability (VP of RA) will have a system set up to address
53 related external and internal requests that are seen as affecting the day-to-day or holistics functions of the
54 assembly in terms of research and accountability;
55

56 **Whereas**, the position would not resemble a human resource department in a corporate office, the likes of
57 risk management, a codified form of therapy, or an outlet for emotional or mental relief—rather it will
58 function as a source of advocacy, a voice for Student Assembly’s accountability, and an avenue to create
59 intra/external-assembly research;

60
61 **Whereas**, historically, these unique concerns of research and accountability have been unfairly burdened
62 upon the President, Parliamentarian, and Executive Archivist—in which it is none of their duties or
63 responsibilities;

64
65 **Whereas**, the holder of this seat will not be the standard bearer of ethics or morality, rather will act as (1)
66 a form of accountability that has not been given and can not be had until the creation of this position; (2)
67 an internal monitor for accountability when addressing potentially sensitive subjects; and (3) an avenue of
68 reform for the Student Assembly bylaws, internal conduct, Charter, and potential future governing
69 documents;

70
71 **Whereas**, an fact finding action or inquiry at the behest of the Committee of Research & Accountability
72 will not be viewed as a strictly bad inquiry—rather an expressed want to better our Assembly;

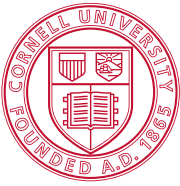
73
74 **Whereas**, due to the nature of an inquiry or investigation by the Committee of Research &
75 Accountability—meetings will be closed to the public and members will be required to sign non-
76 disclosure agreements (NDAs);

77
78 **Therefore be it resolved**, the Cornell Student Assembly establish the Committee on Research &
79 Accountability—to be chaired by the newly established Vice President of Research & Accountability;

80
81 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Bylaws, Article II, Section 1 be amended to read:

82
83 The officers of the SA shall be a President, an Executive Vice President, a Vice President of Internal
84 Operations, a Vice President for Finance, a Vice President of External Affairs, a Vice President of Diversity
85 and Inclusion, a Vice President of Research & Accountability; a Director of Elections, a Parliamentarian,
86 and an Executive Archivist. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by this Charter and by the
87 parliamentary authority adopted by the SA.

88
89 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Bylaws, Article III, Section 7 be amended to read:



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90 Article 7: Vice President of Research & Accountability;

- 91 1. The responsibilities of the Vice President of Research & Accountability are as follows:
- 92 2. Chair the Research & Accountability Committee;
- 93 3. Establish the working rules of the Research & Accountability Committee that are distributed to
- 94 the entire Student Assembly (including committee members) and undergraduate students elected
- 95 directly to the University Assembly to ensure transparency;
- 96 4. To lead the inquiries, and/or fact finding actions at the behest of the Research & Accountability
- 97 Committee with as much discretion and anonymity as possible and used when needed;
- 98 5. To, when necessary, report finding and recommendations for actions to be made to the Student
- 99 Assembly;
- 100 6. Work in conjunction with the Vice President of Internal Operation to oversee all attendance and
- 101 outreach requirements;
- 102 7. Work with the Parliamentary and Executive Archivist to annually evaluate the appropriation of
- 103 college seats, the creation of positions, and the overall composition of the Student Assembly;
- 104 8. Work in conjunction with the Vice President of Finance to assist, if needed, with accountability
- 105 of Byline funded organizations including: funding/ spending research and Appendix B
- 106 recommendations;
- 107 9. Work with the Vice President of External to coordinate any public release of reports, if deemed
- 108 necessary and in the most appropriate way possible.

109 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Standing Rules, Section 2, Subsection B, Rule 10 be
110 amended to read:

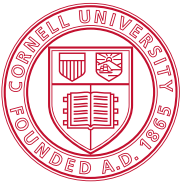
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112 10. At the discretion of the Vice President of Research & Accountability—requests can be issued in
113 ordered to appear before the Committee to any and all Student Assembly members or directly elected
114 undergraduate representatives to the UA in efforts to further a fact finding action or inquiry as seen needed
115 by the Research & Accountability Committee.

116
117
118 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Bylaws, Article V, Section 3 be amended to read:

119 The Executive Board shall hold meetings at least once a week during the academic year. Special meetings
120 of the Board may be called by the Executive Vice President and shall be called upon the written request
121 of ~~four~~ five members of the board.

122 **Be it further resolved**, that the Committee of Research & Accountability be established by amending
123 the Student Assembly Bylaws, Article VI, Section 3, Subsection F to be:

124
125 **Research & Accountability Committee** - The committee will pursue any necessary accountability and
126 research concerns of SA members and directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA. Research
127 and accountability concerns consist of, but are not limited to: general body attendance, resolution voting,
128 liaison role accountability, committee attendance, committee conduct, and general representative
129 accountability. The committee will also evaluate all requests submitted by community members that are
130 against any SA member, SA committees, or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA. The
131 Vice President of Research and Accountability shall serve as chair with a vote only in the event of a tie.



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132 The committee shall consist of ten voting members, four of which are current SA members and/or directly
133 elected undergraduate representatives to the UA and six undergraduate community members. The
134 composition of the committee can change for specific meeting types, in which members of the SA
135 Executive Committee or other student representatives can be given an ex-offio status—this is to be voted
136 on by the RA committee as a whole and only when initially decided on by the Chair. The committee has
137 the obligation, if decided upon, to conference any SA member, directly elected undergraduate
138 representative to the UA, S.A. affiliated committee, or Committee Chair if they have received a notice
139 from any member of the Cornell Community. After a full inquiry or fact finding action—a written report
140 may be presented to the SA, which will include a brief summary of the situation being investigated and
141 any necessary actions the committee recommends. The requesters name and others that are not SA
142 members or directly elected undergraduate representatives to the UA shall be redacted from the report if
143 permission from any the individual(s) is not given. Adoption of the (possible) recommendation(s)
144 requires a three quarters majority vote of SA voting members. Rejection of the (possible)
145 recommendation(s) requires three quarters of SA voting members. If recommendation or report are not
146 approved or rejected, it will be tabled indefinitely. The Vice President of Research and Accountability
147 shall present reports to the SA at both the requester (s), RA Committee’s, and Chair’s discretion.

148

149 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Election Rules, Article 1, Section B, Subsection 6 be
150 amended to read:

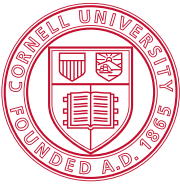
151 10. No previous or current holder(s) of the Cornell Student Assembly Vice President of Research and
152 Accountability are eligible to run for President of the Student Assembly.

153 **Respectfully**, many times executive committee positions, including: Executive Vice President, Vice
154 President of Internal Operations, Vice President of External Operations, Vice President of Diversity
155 & Inclusion, and Vice President of Finance—are seen as direct stepping stones to the Presidency. And
156 where this is not illogical or reprehensible in any capacity, the exact nature of aspirational progress
157 when mixed with politics directly conflicts with the principles of accountability. As such, the Vice
158 President of Research and Accountability, will be barred from running for the President of the
159 Student Assembly after or during their term.

160

161 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly Bylaws, Article II, Section 2 be amended to read:

162 The SA will, as soon as possible after the spring election, hold an organizational and planning meeting in
163 executive session. At this meeting, the voting members will elect from among themselves the offices of
164 Vice President of Internal Operations, Vice President for Finance, a Vice President of External Affairs, a
165 Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, and a Vice President of Research and Accountability. At this
166 meeting or a meeting soon after, the voting members will elect from the Cornell community (student,
167 employee, faculty, alumnus living in Ithaca) the office of Director of Elections. Self-nomination will be in
168 order in each of the elected offices. Elected officers should be approved by a majority vote of SA
169 members present at organizational meeting. Additionally, at this meeting or a meeting soon after the
170 members will affirm the appointments of Parliamentarian and Executive Archivist. The offices of
171 Parliamentarian and Executive Archivist will be appointed by the SA President. Each nominee for the
172 respective offices shall be subject to majority approval of the SA voting members. The newly elected
173 officers will undertake the responsibilities of their position at the start of their term on the SA. Elections



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174 for officers shall be by secret ballots. SA voting members may have one vote for each position to be filled
175 but may not vote for any one individual twice on any ballot.

176
177 By a unanimous vote of the entire Executive Committee (including ex-officio and normally non-voting
178 members), they can recall the Vice President of Research and Accountability. The individual will
179 continue to hold their elected seat, but a new internal election will take place.

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181
182 **Be it further resolved**, that the election process for the Vice President of Research and Accountability,
183 will take effect after the elections in the Spring of 2020 for the next calendar year, similar to a timeline of
184 electing Vice President of Internal Operations, the Vice President for Finance, the Vice President of
185 External Affairs, and the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion. That being said, the initial holder of
186 the Vice President of Research & Accountability will be nominated based on the entirety of the executive
187 committee (voting and non-voting members) by a two thirds majority vote, to then be voted on and
188 installed by majority vote of the entire assembly for the duration of the Spring 2020 semester;

189
190 **Be it further resolved**, that any numbering or lettering changed by these above amendments in the
191 Student Assembly Bylaws, Student Assembly Standing Rules, and/or the Student Assembly Election
192 Rules be amended to allow for correct sequential order and aestheticism;

193
194 **Be it finally resolved**, that this resolution in its entirety is to be used as the initial framework for the VP and
195 Committee of RA, in terms of limits to the office stated in the “whereas” statements, the conduct of the VP
196 of RA, and to understand the great importance of this role.

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198

199 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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201 Gavin Martin ‘20
202 *College of Arts & Sciences Representative, Student Assembly*

203

204 Ian Wallace ‘20
205 *Executive Archivist, Student Assembly*

206

207 Joe Anderson ‘20
208 *President, Student Assembly*

209

210 Cat Huang ‘21
211 *Executive Vice President, Student Assembly*

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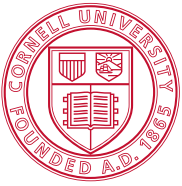
213 Uche Chukwukere ‘21
214 *Undesignated Representative At-Large, Student Assembly*

215

216 Indigo Pavlov ‘22
217 *Vice President of External Operations, Student Assembly*
218 *Women’s Issues Liason At- Large, Student Assembly*

219

220 Moriah Adgehe ‘21
221 *Vice President of Finance, Student Assembly*



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- 222 *Minority Liasion At-Large, Student Assmembly*
223
224 Colin Benedict '21
225 *Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion, Student Assembly*
226 *Minority Liasion At-Large, Student Assmembly*
227
228 Masa Haddad '21
229 *College of Human Ecology Representaive, Student Assembly*
230
231 Debbie Nyakaru '20
232 *Parliamentarian, Student Assembly*
233