

Minutes – October 2, 2014
Cornell University Student Assembly
4:45pm – 6:30pm, Willard Straight Hall Memorial Room

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

S. Balik called the meeting to order at 4:48pm.

Members present: S. Ali Khan, B. Bacharach, S. Balik, J. Batista, Y. Bhandari, W. Bitsky, B. Brown, M. Chak, R. Gademsky, L. Goldman, M. Henderson, E. Johnston, G. Kaufman, D. Li, E. Liu, L. Liu, M. Stefanko, T. Talbot, S. Tayal, P. Titcomb, D. Vakili, L. Wershaw, A. Zhou

Members tardy unexcused: F. Yang

Members excused: R. Raglin, S. Tayal

Members unexcused: V. Kejariwal, M. Masson

II. Oath of Office

S. Balik led the new members (B. Bacharach, M. Chak, G. Kaufman, E. Liu) in the Oath of Office

III. Approval of the September 25, 2014 Minutes

Minutes approved by unanimous consent

IV. Open Microphone

None

V. Dr. Renee Alexander: Review of the Hurtado Study on the Climate for Diversity at Cornell

The report was released last Spring. The goal of the study was to better understand less positive responses to the environment and how to support an inclusive climate for students. Engagement and Inclusion were the foundation of the study (two of the pillars of Toward New Destinations).

Five critical areas to be worked on:

1) Authentic forms of engagement

There should be more of this, especially post-Tapestry of Possibilities. There is currently the expectation for the student to reflect individually, and that should not be the case. Looking for more leadership to help students engage.

2) Diversity skills and knowledge

Need to provide tools and learning opportunities for students.

3) Bias, discrimination, and harassment

It exists everywhere around campus, and there is a report system. There is a concern that there appear to be no consequences for perpetrators of bias or discrimination.

4) Power dynamics and equity

There is a concern that students/faculty/staff are fearful of reporting bias incidents. This is likely the hardest one to tackle.

5) Bridging diverse communities

Few students have common educational experiences., and many do not know about the opportunities that exist to engage across difference.

J. Fridman observed that more reports are published for incidences against men (eg: hazing), and not for incidences against women (eg: sexual incidences). Also, the executive summary mentions "Greek" twice, and not "fraternity" or "sorority" whereas the actual report mentions those words hundreds of times. The filtered version feels a bit like white-washing and makes it difficult to confront the real issues.

M. Asamoah-Mensah mentioned that she knows the Greek community has a long way to go, but the Breaking Bread program has been implemented within IFC, Panhel, and MGLC.

M. Henderson asked about the progress of United Student Body. Response: There is definitely progress, but of course change takes time.

Y. Bhandari asked how to measure the success of events, as that is always a challenge. Response: It is definitely difficult, and a good idea is to have a focus group post-event for the people that attended.

S. Ali Khan asked for advice regarding situations where students are divided. Response: It's good to err on the side of conversation, to allow for dissent and discussion even though it might be uncomfortable.

P. Titcomb mentioned that incidences of a physical nature are very common among the Queer community on campus. How does the University plan to respond to this when they don't even offer any options other than "Male" and "Female" on many forms? Response: That's the hardest issue to work with – how do we hold students accountable? How do we educate them? How do we get them to report incidences? Those are the things that need to be improved upon.

L. Liu asked what the Student Assembly can do to extend conversation post-Tapestry other than through programming. Response: Her interest is held in the freshman experience and how to create events that involve them.

F. Yang suggested that, regarding the freshman experience, to look into housing. While places like HILC and the Latino Living Center are important to have for their respective communities, it also takes away from the opportunity to engage across difference.

R. Gademsky highly recommends encouraging or in some way mandating classes like Intergroup Dialogue, as that course is a very good experience.

D. Li recommends working with the Orientation Steering Committee and Housing to better educate the transfer student community regarding the opportunities present on campus.

VI. Announcements/Reports

Haven Announcement - M. Stefanko

Appropriations Committee met with Haven this week. Felt they were a great resource to the community and their events are well done. They talked a little bit about efficiency and improvement of transparency. Seeing CU Tonight and Slope Media Group next week.

Outreach Announcement – Y. Bhandari

3 outreach events in the next few weeks: Into the Streets (Friday 10/24), Voter Registration Rally with the Cornell Democrats and Cornell Republicans (Friday 10/3), EzRoots (Sunday 10/5)

Elections Announcement – B. Asamoah-Mensah

K. Aniket could not be present at the meeting. The elections process went well, and the committee will be reviewing the process to make improvements for the next time around.

Ombudsman Announcement – Gina Giambattista

Ombudsman Office has an open house tomorrow (10/3), and recommends that SA members publicize that, as the office is a resource for the entire university.

Sesquicentennial Announcement – Gina Giambattista

Aerial video photography will be taken for the sesquicentennial celebration, and she will be requesting student actors to participate and asks SA members to help publicize that information.

VII. Business of the Day

R.14: Repealing Odd-Even in the 4th Ward – M. Henderson and Max Weisbrod

The city created a task force to look into improving parking rules, especially regarding odd-even. New proposal: Each fifth of the streets will have no parking on one day of the week. There's a \$150,000 up front cost, but would save over \$200,000 over a course of 8 years. The task force meetings have only been attended by full-time residents in the city, and they would appreciate feedback from students.

The task force has spent many months on this proposal and they are best equipped to work out implementation details and assess disadvantages. It's important to consider the benefit this new proposal will provide for students and trust that the people with the most knowledge will work out issues within their area of expertise.

M. Stefanko voiced his concerns regarding the proposal. The cost is huge, and the students have yet to be polled for their opinion. Representatives from the city have said that actions won't be taken until the beginning of 2015, so it's best that this be discussed and researched with more diligence over the next few months instead of rashly passing it after a couple SA meetings.

E. Johnston mentioned that this proposal sounds like it would make things easier for students. With odd-even, students have to remember if the date is odd or even, and if they park or don't park. The proposal would make it so that students only have to remember that they cannot park on one day of the week. Also, difficulty of implementation should not be the barrier for passing policy.

Gina Giambattista mentioned that it is the responsibility of the SA members to reach out to their constituents and bring their opinions back.

Call to question, seconded, dissent expressed: This proposal has only been presented by people in favor of it, and it's important that more research and discussion be had regarding other opinions and other possibilities.

Vote to vote: 16-5-2, moving on to voting on the resolution.

Community vote: 5-1-0, contributes 2-0-0 total.

Roll call vote: 20-2-1

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| S. Ali Khan | No |
| B. Bacharach | Yes |
| J. Batista | Yes |
| Y. Bhandari | Yes |
| W. Bitsky | Yes |
| B. Brown | Yes |
| M. Chak | Yes |
| J. Fridman | Yes |
| R. Gademsky | Yes |
| L. Goldman | Yes |
| M. Henderson | Yes |
| E. Johnston | Yes |
| G. Kaufman | Abstain |
| V. Kejariwal | Absent |
| D. Li | Yes |
| E. Liu | Yes |
| L. Liu | Yes |
| M. Masson | Yes |
| R. Raglin | Absent |
| M. Stefanko | No |
| S. Tayal | Absent |
| P. Titcomb | Yes |
| D. Vakili | Yes |
| L. Wershaw | Yes |
| F. Yang | Yes |
| A. Zhou | Yes |

Resolution passes by a total vote of 22-2-1.

S. Balik adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea Cheng