Minutes
University Assembly
Tuesday, October 7, 2014
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
401 Physical Sciences Bldg.

I. Call to Order
J. Blair called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: R. Adessa, S. Balik, J. Barnett, J. Batista, M. Battaglia, J. Blair, J. Burns, M. Hatch, E. Johnston, N. La Celle, E. Loew, C. McGrath, G. Mezey, R. Walroth, R. Wayne

Absent: C. Best, T. Bollu, R. Booker

Others Present: D. Roth, A. O'Donnell

M. Battaglia offered one late addition to the agenda. Resolution 2 welcomes the new president and invites her to participate in and support shared governance in the way President Skorton has. Consideration of this resolution was added to the agenda without objection. There were no further additions to the agenda.

II. Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the September 9, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.

III. Reports from Assemblies
Student Assembly
S. Balik reported that the SA passed a resolution regarding the new Collegetown parking solutions. The SA is also discussing whether student representatives on the UA who are not currently members of the SA should be made ex-officio members of the SA.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
R. Walroth stated the GPSA passed a resolution of its own welcoming Elizabeth Garrett, Cornell's next president. The GPSA also heard a response from the Dean of the Graduate School on the topic of graduate student workplace injuries. The workers' compensation issues from the previous academic year have been settled. GPSA members are not entirely satisfied with the solution but the situation has significantly improved. Additionally, the GPSA elected a new UA representative, T. P. Bollu. Lastly, R. Walroth reported a member of the mayor's office addressed the GPSA regarding a new off campus parking plan that would shut down a section of a street at a time.

Employee Assembly
G. Mezey reported that President Skorton's final President's Address to Staff will be on October 28. He also reported that the EA has been working on rebranding and identifying mission and vision statements. At the next meeting of the EA, D. Roth, Director of the

Campus Sustainability Office, will join in a roundtable discussion on how employees can individually contribute to making the campus more sustainable.

Faculty Senate
J. Burns stated the FS discussed a report from the Campus Sustainability Office. He also said the FS would hear a report on plans for the sesquicentennial tomorrow. In addition, J. Burns announced that the first application for the position of Professor of the Practice has been received. Lastly, he said he had been alerted that all university business matters are to take place before 5 p.m. FS meetings would need to be rescheduled as a result. J. Blair said he would look into whether or not this restriction will apply to the UA.

J. Blair asked J. Burns what the role of a Professor of the Practice is. J. Burns explained the position as akin to a clinical professor. A Professor of the Practice would not conduct very much research, instead focusing on teaching. The FS is now considering adding a complementary position, Research Professor, which would focus much more strongly on research and would not do much classroom teaching.

IV. Committee Updates
Executive Committee
M. Battaglia announced that President Skorton would attend the next UA meeting. Issues pertaining to TCAT and, separately, the advancement of the carbon neutrality schedule will likely be discussed. Lastly, he announced the remaining committee vacancies.

Campus Infrastructure Committee
N. La Celle reported that the committee began by reviewing last year's activity. Additionally, the committee members divided the charges from the UA amongst themselves.

Campus Welfare Committee
C. McGrath read the report in place of C. Best. The report noted low attendance at the meeting. The committee would like to work on several items this year including the review of a report from the University Diversity Council, reconnecting with Gannett, following up on the open access resolution, and childcare issues.

Codes and Judicial Committee
R. Wayne noted that the CJC elected J. Fridman as Vice Chair for Operations. The CJC reviewed recommendations from the UA. G. Mezey will lead a group working on limited advance notice issues. Other topics assigned included working with Policy 6.4, making sure the code is fully updated, and checking on the status of the group misconduct website. The CJC made selections to fill vacancies on the University Hearing and Review Boards. These selections will be presented as Resolution 1 later in this meeting.

V. Liaison Update
Council on Sexual Violence Prevention
No report.

Policy Advisory Group
No report.

VI. New Business
UA Resolution 1 – Appointment of University Hearing and Review Board Members for AY 2014-2015
R. Wayne introduced the resolution. The resolution provides for the appointment of UHRB members. He briefly summarized the selection process by which candidates' applications were read by CJC members and then binned into yes, no, and maybe categories. The candidates who were not immediately approved or denied were discussed further until a decision could be made.

E. Loew asked if this approval would be sought again in a year for the appointees awarded two-year terms. R. Wayne clarified that their names would automatically appear next year except if there were some reason for them not to continue on the UHRB.

The assembly voted on R1. The resolution was approved by a vote of 13-0-1.

Update on Cornell's Sustainability Efforts with Q&A (D. Roth)
D. Roth, the Director of the Campus Sustainability Office, introduced himself and reminded members of his presentation in the spring during the consideration of fossil fuel divestment. He reviewed some items from his visit to the UA in the spring and shared some new information, partially the result of work catalyzed by the recent requests to accelerate Cornell's carbon neutrality timeline.

First, he introduced three rankings of universities by sustainability. Generally, Cornell does very well in these rankings.

Student sustainability literacy is encouraged through programs aimed mainly at freshmen. Data is being collected from seniors and incoming freshmen on sustainability knowledge, opinions, and attitudes.

Next, he discussed the 2013 Climate Action Plan. The office does an update every two years and publishes the report online.

D. Roth also reported on the 2 MW solar energy farm and announced that funding has been approved for the installation of an additional 8 MW of capacity.

The newly formed Climate Neutrality Acceleration Working Group has identified certain requirements for Cornell to meet an accelerated neutrality schedule. Meeting such a goal will require university wide commitment, integration of the climate action plan with the university's academic mission, and fundraising and partnership development to assist in the implementation of recommendations. Benefits to Cornell for achieving climate neutrality include becoming a more aggressive leader on these issues, motivating alumni, forming new research partnerships, increased learning opportunities, and reductions in energy costs.

Six milestones were identified for successfully meeting sustainability goals.

1. A comprehensive education and engagement plan
2. Reduction in energy demand. It may be necessary to increase acceptable payback periods for certain capital improvements.
3. Incorporate carbon costs into operations. Fees discourage behaviors that do not align with neutrality goals. Collected fees can be used for further improvements.
4. Secure a renewable energy supply. This will require a large amount of land resources.
5. Feasibility studies for a deep geothermal heating project
6. Fundraising initiatives. A major capital campaign over the course of years will be necessary.

R. Wayne asked what was entailed in the Kroch library project. D. Roth said the building's heating and cooling systems were redone, adding heat recovery and humidity control capabilities.

M. Battaglia asked D. Roth whether he felt the 2035 carbon neutrality goal is feasible and if the university is on track. D. Roth noted that the transition to a new president has made quick progress difficult recently. However, he was confident in Cornell's long-term ability to meet these goals.

M. Hatch asked why Cornell needs to advance the issue of carbon neutrality. D. Roth stated that it is a part of the university's responsibility as a leader in education and research. More ultimately, it is a human social justice issue. Some people in certain regions of the world will be prone to suffer more from and be less prepared to cope with the mounting effects of climate change. Also, it is worth being proactive so that if widespread carbon taxes are administered, the university will not face a great liability.

G. Mezey asked about how the carbon fee would work. He wondered if the fee would be returned to improve the systems that were the cause of the emissions leading to the fee in the first place. D. Roth said that although such details have not been fully agreed upon, such a system is certainly possible and brings favorable results.

J. Barnett noted that most of the information presented pertains only to the Ithaca campus. D. Roth said that major carbon neutrality work has only focused on the Ithaca campus to date, although Cornell's other locations do have significant sustainability policies both in place and under development.

R. Walroth asked whether the carbon fees would be assessed at a college, department, lab or other level. D. Roth said the current plan is a utility based fee and a travel fee. The utility fee would most likely be assessed to whomever pays that utility bill, usually at the college level. Travel fees are a bit more difficult. Individuals could be reimbursed for the fees incurred from their travels or travelers could be aggregated.

J. Blair clarified that no commitment to the accelerated carbon neutrality schedule has been made and that the university is still planning on the original 2050 deadline while looking at the possibility of accelerating the process. D. Roth agreed with this assessment.

J. Blair told D. Roth that the UA would be interested in hearing from people working on progressing toward the aforementioned six milestones.

Open Discussion on Promoting Constructive Dialogue
J. Blair introduced the issue of civility and a discussion on the assembly's role in promoting constructive dialogue around contentious issues. President Skorton's recent op ed acknowledged renewed activism on campus and a need for such dialogue. In it, he also suggests discussion of appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions. This is connected closely with the CJC's work of late and what they have been asked to look into going forward. Also included in President Skorton's statement is a call to shared governance to talk about these issues and how they affect the assemblies' discussions of difficult topics. J. Blair asked for members' opinions on this.

G. Mezey observed that action is sometimes delayed by bringing issues in front of an excessive number of groups before submitting to those who are entrusted with making the decisions. Further, he was concerned that certain issues are not appropriately vetted by an assembly. Instead, a person or group who has long been dedicated to related research should do this.

J. Blair suggested increasing dialogue with the other assemblies.

C. McGrath said it is important for activist groups to have dialogue, but much of the public protest that is seen on campus does not fulfill this need. He suggested a moderated platform for civil dialogue.

G. Mezey expressed a wish that wide engagement in dialogue would come sooner in the development of a complex issue.

E. Loew noted that the UA's main input is via the Campus Code of Conduct. He is unsure how the assembly can work to foster civility.

J. Blair asked members to email the UA Executive Committee with action items. There was insufficient time to consider Resolution 2.

VII. Adjournment
J. Blair adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Noah Wegener
Assemblies Clerk